

The Genesis of Heidegger's Reading of Kant

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Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Philosophy

December, 2014

Nashville, Tennessee

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1921 – 2012

Acknowledgements

This project was originally conceived in the depths of winter 2008 in Oconto, WI. My interest in Kant had been sparked the year before by Julius Sensat and others at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. My interest in Heidegger is of longer standing, and I thank John Dreher of Lawrence University for having had the patience to put up with me while I insisted on reading the entirety of *Being and Time* over the course of a tutorial that was not really designed with anything like that in mind.

I would like to thank my committee members for the time they have invested in my project, especially my dissertation director, Jeffrey Tlumak, whose understanding and support for me have been extraordinary over the years. I also feel as though I've been unusually blessed by having the chance to be a small part of outstanding and supportive communities of graduate students, first at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and then at Vanderbilt University. I've learned far more from them than can be put into words. Although this list cannot possibly be exhaustive, let me especially thank for their many conversations over the years R.J. Leland, Nataliya Palatnik, Adam Marushak, Justin Remhof, Nate Sharadin, Stephanie Allen, John Timmers, Patrick Fessenbecker, Rebecca Tuvel, Melinda Charis Hall, Mary Butterfield, Amy McKiernan, Sandy Skene, Sasha Alekseyeva, Thomas Dabay, Alison Suen, Trevor Bibler, Lara Giordano, Chris Wells, and, finally, Jessica Polish, whose singular intellectual energy pushed me further than I ever would have been able to go alone.

On a personal note, I would like to thank James Bredeson, Peg Bredeson, and, of course, Amanda Carrico for their love and encouragement through the years.

Finally, let take a moment to show my appreciation for the staffs of the libraries without whom none of my work on these topics would have been possible, including the libraries at Vanderbilt University, the University of Colorado, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Lawrence University, and Beloit College, as well as the interlibrary loan operations of countless others.

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List of Abbreviations

Parenthetical citations to works by Kant and Heidegger are given according to the standard reference format and in accordance with the abbreviations listed below. In Kant's case, the standard edition is *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, popularly known as the *Akademie* edition of Kant's works. All references to Kant's works, with the exceptions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Hechsel Logic*, are given according to the volume and page number of this edition. E.g., "G 4:387" refers to Kant's *Groundwork*, volume 4, page 387 of the *Akademie* edition. References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are given in standard A/B format, with "A" referring to the first (1781) edition and "B" to the second (1787) edition. The references to the *Hechsel Logic* match the marginal numbers of Young's English translation in the *Lectures on Logic*. The standard edition of Heidegger's works is the incomplete *Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe*. When included in the *Gesamtausgabe*, references to Heidegger's works, with the exception of *Being and Time*, are given according to its volume and page number (e.g., "L 21:201"). References to *Being and Time* are given according to the pagination of the standard seventh edition of 1953, and references to all other works by Heidegger are given according to the pagination of the German edition listed in the references at the end of this essay. In the references can also be found complete bibliographical information for the cited works of Kant and Heidegger, including references to extant English translations.

Works by Kant

- A *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* [1798]
- ACPR *Additions to Kant's Copy of the First Edition of the Critique of Pure Reason* [1781-1787]
- C *Correspondence*
- CPJ *Critique of the Power of Judgment* [1790]
- CPR *Critique of Pure Reason* [1781/1787]
- CPrR *Critique of Practical Reason* [1788]
- DSS *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics* [1766]
- DWL *Dohna-Wundlacken Logic* [early 1790s]
- FI *First Introduction to the Critique of the Power of Judgment* [1790]
- G *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals* [1785]
- GDS *Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Directions in Space* [1768]
- HL *Hechsel Logic* [c. 1780]
- ID *On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible Worlds* [1770]
- JL *Jäsche Logic* [1800]
- MFNS *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* [1786]
- MM *Metaphysics of Morals* [1797]
- MMr *Metaphysics Mrongovius* [1782-1783]
- MoC *Moral Philosophy Collins* [c. 1780]
- MoMr₂ *Moral Philosophy Mrongovius (II)* [1784-1785]
- MoV *Moral Philosophy Vigilantius* [1793-1794]
- MS *Metaphysik von Schön* [late 1780s]
- OOT *What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?* [1786]

- P *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* [1783]
 R *Reflexionen*
 Rel *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone* [1793]
 RH Review of J.G. Herder, *Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity* [1785]
 TP *On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory, but It Is of No Use in Practice* [1793]
 TPP *Toward Perpetual Peace* [1795]
 UTP *On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy* [1788]
 VL *Vienna Logic* [c. 1780]
 WE *An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?* [1784]

Works by Heidegger

- BPP *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* [1927]
 BT *Being and Time* [1927]
 C *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* [1936-1938]
 DL *Davos Lectures* [1929]
 H *Home: The Seven-Hundredth Anniversary of the Town of Messkirch* [1961]
 HCT *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena* [1925]
 HJC *The Heidegger-Jaspers Correspondence* [1920-1963]
 HPC *On the History of the Philosophical Chair since 1866* [1927]
 IPR *Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion* [1920-1921]
 KNS *The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview* [1919]
 KPM *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* [1929]
 L *Logic: The Question of Truth* [1925-1926]
 LL Letter to Karl Löwith of August 20, 1927
 MFL *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* [1928]
 NK *Notes on the Kantbook* [1930s-1940s]
 O *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity* [1923]
 PIA *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle* [1921-1922]
 PIK *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* [1927-1928]
 RA *The Self-Assertion of the German University* [1933]
 RC Review of Ernst Cassirer, *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, v. 2: Mythical Thought* [1928]
 WCT *What Is Called Thinking?* [1951-1952]
 WDR *Wilhelm Dilthey's Research and the Current Struggle for a Historical Worldview* [1925]
 WM *What Is Metaphysics?* [1927]

Note on Translations

In the case of Kant, I have followed the generally first-rate translations of the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, and I have noted the cases in which I deviate from it. In a few cases I have benefited from consulting alternative translations, which I will list in the References. Because the available English translations of Heidegger vary wildly in both terminology and overall quality, I have modified extant translations in almost every instance, and accordingly I will not mark my deviations from extant translations. Even here, however, I have typically benefited from the available translations, and I will list those I have consulted in the References.

And so that which has at last, to my own astonishment, emerged from my hands is a thing I feel I wish to call, proudly—despite the misery and disgust of these years—a **German philosophy**.

Spengler, 1922

Introduction

In the late spring of 1929 Heidegger came back down from Davos and immediately set to work on the manuscript that would become *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, which he published later that year. It is probably safe to say that philosophers have never been quite sure what to make of this work since. The “Kantbook,” as Heidegger casually referred to it, wielded more than its fair share of influence over the course of the twentieth century, and many of the questions it raises, including the precise structure of Kant’s discursive view of human cognition, remain at the forefront of the interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. On the other hand, the questions Heidegger presses and the manner in which he presses them are, as Cassirer argued at the time, not really Kant’s. Since Heidegger’s approach has nevertheless spawned its very own cottage industry of secondary literature on Kant, much of which remains heavily influenced by both his methodology and his substantive conclusions,¹ one may well question whether Heidegger’s intervention in Kant scholarship, a province in which he was, after all, not nearly as comprehensively versed as

¹ See, for instance, the approach outlined at the beginning of Sallis (1980).

his Neokantian contemporaries, has on the whole been salutary for the contemporary understanding of Kant.

In any case, Heidegger's book itself has slowly faded away from its former preeminence in the literature on Kant. For the most part, this is for good reason: whatever intrinsic interest Heidegger's reading of Kant might retain, none of its chief interpretive claims remain tenable today.² But it is also true that Heidegger's book has fallen into an uncomfortable kind of academic limbo: it is neither a straightforward piece of Kant scholarship—thus its inherently limited utility for Kantians—nor is it a straightforward expression of Heidegger's own philosophical views—thus its limited interest for Heideggerians. The prevailing view seems to be that it is something of a mishmash of both which is therefore helpful in clarifying neither.

Such mixed methodologies are hardly unfamiliar to those conversant in the literature on Kant. P.F. Strawson's *The Bounds of Sense*, which may have done more than any other work to put the study of Kant back on the grand map of Anglophone philosophy, was unabashedly revisionist in its intentions.³ Indeed, it could never have succeeded in rehabilitating Kant any other way. Whereas Strawson's methodology is clear enough, however, Heidegger's remains something of a mystery. In no small part this is due to the fact, often recognized, that Heidegger's approach in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* can hardly be separated from his own legendarily obscure philosophical project. But to observe this is to risk immediately consigning the Kantbook, once again, to the domain of

² Among these claims I would reckon: (1) that the transcendental power of imagination is really the unknown common root of understanding and sensibility; (2) that the section on the Schematism is really the heart of Kant's problematic in the first *Critique*; and (3) that Kant's late addition of the question *What is the human being?* to his canonical list of three indicates a prior grounding role for a philosophical anthropology (really: an analytic of existence) with respect to the critical project as a whole.

³ See Strawson (1966), 11.

Heidegger scholars, scholars who, for their own part, may no longer have much use for it. The end result is that no one really knows what to do with the Kantbook. It might be used to illustrate mistakes into which a reader of Kant could easily, but ought not to, fall, or, on the other side, it might be used to illustrate a way of doing philosophy into which Heidegger himself almost fell. But few have attempted to systematically evaluate the Kantbook according to criteria for success that Heidegger himself would have recognized.

Heidegger himself is actually an exception here, and the verdict he later returned on his efforts in the Kantbook was not kind. Many of his readers have shared this sentiment and have tended to see the Kantbook—and sometimes even the entire period of his thought in which he was most influenced by Kant (roughly: 1926-1929)—as an aberration from the true path of his thinking.⁴ Kant, so the suggestion goes, turned out to be among Heidegger's least fruitful interlocutors—at least if we measure fruitfulness not in terms of sheer output, but in terms of the depth of insight the encounter afforded him.

The decision rendered here—initially, we must remember, by Heidegger himself—about Heidegger's relationship to the tradition of philosophy has had ramifications well beyond the relatively small circle of scholars interested in understanding Heidegger. The decision against Kant, and in favor, say, of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, has had important and in some cases probably irreversible consequences for the curriculum and self-conception of an entire philosophical movement in the United States. The paradigmatic figures of this tradition, at least until we get to the twentieth century, tend to be those who are “outsiders” with respect to mainstream academic philosophy—consider, for example,

⁴ See Kisiel (1993) and van Buren (1994).

the cases of Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud.⁵ Kant, modern philosophy's ultimate insider—in part, of course, since he himself did more than anyone else to shape the narrative by which we nowadays come to learn what modern philosophy is—is a part of this tradition only problematically, and more often than not by way of a negative influence. Of course, Kant has always had his admirers within this tradition, but it has generally been thought best to keep one's distance when the day is done.

This current situation was not inevitable, or at least it would not have appeared that way in 1929. By the time of his participation in the Davos *Hochschulekurse* with Cassirer, Kant had played as substantive a role in the development of Heidegger's thinking as anyone else. To be sure, the influences of Dilthey, Kierkegaard, Aristotle, and early Christianity on his thought in the early 1920s cannot be denied. But by 1929 Kant had eclipsed them all, and at Davos Heidegger wanted to show, by means of an ingenious interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, that he, not Cassirer, was the real heir of Kant and the Enlightenment.

The moment did not last long. Just four years later, Heidegger would join the Nazi party and be installed as the rector at Freiburg with a mandate to reform the university. By the end of the turbulent decade, Heidegger would have immersed himself deeply in Nietzsche's thought, and the path of his thinking would only take him further and further away from any recognizable academic tradition in philosophy. After the war it became difficult to see what Heidegger's interest in the first *Critique* had ever really amounted to in the first place. In this context the Kantbook acquired the status of a historical artifact, one

⁵ Of course, Hegel stands as a glaring exception here, even if the American phenomenological movement has maintained an at best ambivalent attitude towards him.

which perhaps warns us, above all, of the dangers of trying to insinuate one's own thought into a tradition which is not really one's own.

In the face of such historical facts it would be absurd to suggest that Heidegger's reading of Kant was anything but the failure which he himself judged it to be. At the end of the day, I am not about to suggest otherwise. But this does not mean that the Kantbook can now be closed for good. We are the inheritors of Heidegger's failure on this score, something which contemporary phenomenology must come to grips with if it wishes to clarify the terms of the obviously uneasy relationship it continues to bear to Kant. Such a clarification, I am convinced, can only begin with a return to those days in 1929 when this failure had not yet assumed the character of an unconquerable historical fact. And yet the questions of the Davos debate have receded so far from our philosophical memory that it takes as much effort as we can muster even to recover its stakes.

Why did Heidegger have to read Kant? Why did he have to interpret him so "violently," as he would later acknowledge? Could Heidegger have approached any nearer to Kant's thought while remaining himself? And what was the inner movement of Kant's thought that Heidegger could not quite grab a hold of?

Each of these questions, considered on its own, could well be the subject of a substantial volume. My goal here is to lay the groundwork which must be laid if we are to make the stakes of Davos intelligible, and thus to take the first tentative steps towards returning to Heidegger's reading of Kant its power to provoke. It is in this sense that I call this essay a "genesis." I do so not because I aim to trace completely the historical story that would chronologically display Heidegger's Kant interpretation over the course of its development. In fact I am not going to pursue the various fine distinctions between

Heidegger's Kant interpretation as it first appeared in 1926 and as it would finally appear in the Kantbook. Instead, what I am offering is a kind of conceptual genesis of Heidegger's interpretation. I will do so by beginning with Kant himself. In the first part of my essay, I examine the place of the power of judgment in Kant's philosophy, which, I will argue, ends up playing foundational, and connected, roles both at the beginning of Kant's critical system—in the first *Critique*—and at its end—in the third. In the second part I will train my attention on Heidegger, examining the development of his philosophical methodology in the early 1920s up through *Being and Time*, an aspect of his thought that is of decisive importance if we want to understand his interpretation of Kant. Finally, I will turn to the Kantbook itself. Although it failed in its primary task, an appreciation of its goals and methodology sheds new light, I hope, on the questions that animated the discussion at Davos, and with which phenomenology will once again have to reckon if it will come to grips with its place in the tradition.

In Chapter I I will trace the role the power of judgment plays in the first *Critique* in grounding the objective validity of the pure concepts of the understanding. The unity characteristic of concepts in general, I will argue, is essentially dependent on the unity of action for which the employment of our power of judgment is first responsible for bringing into the field of cognition. Since the power of judgment cannot, as Kant insists, be governed by the application of rules, this means that the objective validity of our rational norms is possible only on the condition that we have already assumed the responsibility for some judgment that rests on the nonconceptual subsumption of an intuition under a concept. Neither the clarity and distinctness of our concepts nor the mere deliverances of our faculty of feeling could compel us to judge (as the rationalists and empiricists had supposed), and

yet we must do so nonetheless if we are to be able to relate ourselves cognitively to the world of objects at all.

In Chapter II I will investigate the (essentially limited) unity of theoretical and practical philosophy that Kant seeks to attain in the third *Critique*. I will argue that Kant, pressed by Herder to acknowledge a deeper unity between the two, defends his dualistic view by critiquing the role our power of judgment plays with respect to our faculty of feeling. This critique is by no means only negative, however, for it turns out that the faculty of feeling actually makes possible a kind of transition between the standpoints of theoretical and practical philosophy. Precisely because it is rooted in the faculty of feeling, however, this transition is nothing like Herder's natural-historical teleology. In fact, Herder's vitalism is something like a cognitive image of the true transition. It turns out that Herder has simply attempted to make an objective use of a (properly) subjective principle of the power of judgment. It is in its subjective use alone that such a principle could provide the means for the kind of unity towards which Herder was pressing Kant. Understanding what this unity is supposed to consist in for Kant is crucial for understanding the overall shape of his critical system. Above all, it is not by accident, but for essential structural reasons, that the power of judgment, which played the foundational role in the critique of cognition, now plays the final role in uniting Kant's critical philosophy as a whole.

In Chapter III I will follow out the development of Heidegger's early reflections on philosophical methodology, especially as they are manifest in his Freiburg seminars from 1919 to 1922. Heidegger's development of the method of "formal indication," which will be decisive for his work for years to come, can best be seen, I argue, as a response to the demands of life philosophy, as well as to the worries about the "givenness" of the

phenomenon brought forward by the Neokantians. In this regard, Natorp's critical review of Husserl's *Ideas* and Heidegger's (not yet adequate) response to it are crucial for understanding the shape his thought would take in the years to come. Finally, I will begin laying out the connection between Heidegger's conceptions of philosophical methodology and the history of philosophy, a connection that will prove decisive for the projected structure of *Being and Time*.

In Chapter IV, then, I turn to *Being and Time*, where we find Heidegger's methodology deployed to its fullest potential, even if the historical part of the work to which that methodology pointed never actually came to fruition. My interpretive focus will fall on Heidegger's methodological introductory sections, as well as on the role which the second division of the work was supposed to play. I will try to explain how Heidegger's term "*Dasein*" functions for him as a formal indicator and why the results of the inquiry it opens (i.e., the preliminary analytic of existence) must necessarily be exhausted by the directive they were supposed to provide us with for the historical inquiry into which *Being and Time* was originally designed to be resolved. With respect to this historical research, which Heidegger referred to as the *Destruktion* of the history of philosophy, Kant was assigned a privileged role: Heidegger had come, by 1927, to consider Kant to be his proximate historical forebearer, and for Heidegger, this meant that a deeper understanding of his own phenomenological project would only become available to him if he first went all out after an understanding of Kant. The final goal, to be sure, was to recover the stakes of the Greek inquiry into being, but an encounter with Kant would serve, or so he thought at the time, as the unavoidable first step on that journey which would link the existential analytic to the grand tradition of Western metaphysics.

In Chapter V, finally, I turn to the encounter with Kant to which Heidegger was thus led. At Davos, I will stress, the stakes were high for Heidegger indeed. Only by showing that it was he who stood in the Kantian tradition could he succeed in connecting the published torso of *Being and Time*, which had already garnered him considerable international recognition, with the ancient question of being to which that project was, from the start, supposed to be oriented. As I have already indicated, Heidegger did not really succeed in his attempt to locate the Kantian origin of his own thought, and perhaps he could not have. I will suggest, however, that Heidegger left some important resources on the table at and after Davos, depriving him of the best chance he would ever have to connect his thought up to the Enlightenment tradition. In fact, I will suggest, it may well be that it was Heidegger himself who “shrank back” from the encounter with Kant which he had almost concluded, a shrinking back which has continued to haunt the phenomenological tradition to this day.

Part One

On the other hand, precisely this section is especially charming in that we see Kant immediately at work, oblivious of any regard for the reader.

Heidegger, 1928

The *Social Contract* opens with a simple observation which concisely expressed the deepest preoccupation of the eighteenth century. “Man is born free,” Rousseau observes, “and everywhere he is in chains.”⁶ And yet the century never lost its confidence that it must be possible to preserve the inner freedom of mankind despite the external conditions that had distorted it beyond recognition. Kant would soon emerge as the leading voice in defense of the centrality of freedom to a proper conception of the human being, and the coherence of his critical system was seen by many—both in his own time and in the years that followed—as the articulation and defense the Enlightenment had been waiting for. And yet the basic tension noted by Rousseau is not so much overcome in Kant’s thought as it is more or less peacefully accepted by it. Even Kant’s grandest architectonic ambitions never led him completely away from Rousseau’s insight; in fact, those very ambitions turned out to depend upon it, requiring a sharp distinction between the world as it is and the world as we ought to make it. In the one man’s chains are given their due, in the other his freedom.

It is in the latter—and only there—where the satisfaction reason has vainly sought in its cognition of the natural world can finally be met with. Until now reason has entertained only a confused presentiment of its own freedom in its theoretical endeavors (CPR A796/B824; see also CPrR 5:107), but Kant has finally collected the critical resources necessary to turn its attention, forcibly if need be, to its final end. In this regard Kant goes so far as to grant that the “greatest and perhaps only utility of all philosophy of pure reason is . . . only negative” (CPR A795/B823). In this way the entire edifice of critique finally leads to the unobscured contemplation of freedom, which is accordingly the keystone of its

⁶ Rousseau (1762b), 141.

system (CPrR 5:3).⁷ Freedom is “the capacity which confers unlimited usefulness on all the others” and represents our highest and final vocation as human beings (MoC 27:344).

Now, Kant was well aware that the Enlightenment attempt to install freedom as the highest principle of natural philosophy⁸ had led the latter into a series of seemingly intractable difficulties. Releasing human reason from its servitude to the once-eternal species forms of the Scholastics—and compelling it instead to seek its ultimate principles in the form of its own operations (whether we take the latter in the manner of Descartes or Locke)—had reanimated long-dormant questions about the ability of the human mind to grasp the basic principles of nature. Where it did not invite skepticism, however, the permission granted to human reason to take its instruction in the first and final instances from itself proved to open the door to an ambitious metaphysics whose connection to the real world remained unconvincing to so many. When Kant warned in the *Dreams* of the “fantastical visionaries” residing in a paradise of shadows without frontiers (DSS 2:317), he was merely warming up for the sustained assault on rational metaphysics which would earn him the epithet “*alles zermalmend*” (“all-crushing”) from Mendelssohn.⁹ Kant’s worry reflected the lesson he had absorbed through the experience of reading Rousseau: reason’s unconvincing conquest of the kingdom of nature threatened to tarnish its good name in the realm of practical action. The lasting achievement of the first *Critique*, Kant hoped, rested on the security it would be able to provide for an inquiry into reason’s practical use in which the deep connection between reason and freedom could be irrevocably established.

⁷ This is not to say that the “natural dialectic” of practical reason can be overcome by practical philosophy alone; at best, through science we can escape the “ambiguity” into which practical reason falls and clear the way for wisdom to prevail in the midst of sensible incentives which never cease to assert themselves. See G 4:404-405.

⁸ For a particularly vivid illustration of this, see Malebranche (1674-1675), in particular, Bk. I, Chs. 1-2.

⁹ Mendelssohn (1785), 3.

Kant's critical thought is often identified straightaway with the image of the "tribunal of reason" so characteristic of the Enlightenment (see, e.g., CPR Axii, Bxiii). The idea is that the venerable traditions bequeathed to modernity, whether they be religious or political institutions, or even idols of the mind, must be subjected to a question so basic that no external authority could claim a special privilege in answering it, namely, *Are they reasonable?* Far from originating with Kant, however, the image of the tribunal of reason had been in circulation for some time,¹⁰ although it did, to be sure, take on a somewhat different inflection in Kant's work. For Kant, reason is no longer merely assigned the task of criticizing the institutions and doctrines handed down by tradition and experience. Instead, reason is asked to sit in judgment first and foremost over its own pretensions;¹¹ if the tacit emphasis of the seventeenth century was on the tribunal of *reason*, Kant subtly shifts the discussion to the very idea of a *tribunal* and the attendant task of *judgment* with which reason finds itself burdened.

Witness, for example, the manner in which Kant in 1781 publicly introduces the task of a "critique of pure reason" and proclaims it as the manifestation of the genuine spirit of his age. On the surface, he concedes, it may appear as though the enthusiasm for reason, so palpable among the men of letters in the previous century, had run its course, dissolving into the democratic but shallow program of the *philosophes* and *Popularphilosophen*, a

¹⁰ Locke had already referred to reason's judgeship at the end of the seventeenth century; see Locke (1689), 693 (IV.xviii.6) and 704 (IV.xix.14). In the *Encyclopedia* article on *Liberté de penser*, Abbé Mallet refers, in a similar context, to the "*tribunal de la fiere raison*," albeit it in a negative manner, defending the prerogative of religious faith in matters of revelation (Mallet [1751], IX.472b-473a, quoted at IX.473a). The more liberal attitude towards freedom of thought shared by most of the encyclopedists, including Diderot and d'Alembert, was, however, scattered throughout the volumes of the *Encyclopedia* and occasioned a good deal of public controversy. See Lough (1971), 137-140.

¹¹ Cassirer makes a similar point. For the eighteenth century reason is no longer a tool for criticism, but rather something the deepest mystery of which lies in itself. "The age of d'Alembert feels itself impelled by a mighty movement, but it refuses to abandon itself to this force. It wants to know the whence and whither, the origin and the goal, of its impulsion" (Cassirer [1932], 4).

program marked by indifference, if not outright hostility, to the traditional problems of philosophy and metaphysics. Kant is convinced that beneath the surface, however, lies something deeper: the feigned indifference towards metaphysical questions so characteristic of the late eighteenth century should not be mistaken for shallowness, for it

is evidently the effect not of the thoughtlessness [*Leichtsinn*s] of our age, but of its ripened **power of judgment** [*gereiften Urteilskraft*], which will no longer be put off with illusory knowledge, and which demands that reason should take on anew the most difficult of all its tasks, namely, that of self-knowledge, and to institute a court of justice, by which reason may secure its rightful claims while dismissing all its groundless pretensions, and this not by mere decrees but according to its own eternal and unchangeable laws; and this court is none other than the **critique of pure reason** itself. (CPR Axi-xii)

According to Kant, then, the rise of indifferentism,¹² properly understood, reflects not the rejection of the ambitions of reason in the Enlightenment, but rather the maturation of the intellectual public over the course of the eighteenth century, the century which for this very reason has at last made itself worthy of the title of the “age of **criticism**” (CPR Axin; JL 9:33).

Kant’s reference in this passage to the age’s “ripened” power of judgment is no accidental or rhetorical flourish. The proper name for the growth of judgment, Kant tells us in the *Anthropology*, is “maturity [*Reife*],” the growth of which “comes only with years” (A 7:199; cf. G 4:407). This corresponds precisely, it should be noted, to Kant’s most famous characterization of his age as the “age of enlightenment” (WE 8:40), for “enlightenment [*Aufklärung*] is the human being’s emergence from his self-incurred minority [*Unmündigkeit*]” (WE 8:35), his coming of age, we might say. In the *Anthropology*, Kant connects the power of judgment, just as he had in the first *Critique*, to the political climate

¹² Kant remarks ruefully that nowadays “it seems to be taken as an honor to speak of metaphysical investigations contemptuously as mere **caviling** [*Grübeleien*]” (JL 9:32).

of his age: “[Judgment] is based on one’s long experience, and it is the understanding whose judgment [*Urteil*] even a French Republic searches for in the assembly of the so-called Elders” (A 7:199).¹³ Kant emphasizes that the faculty of judgment, in comparison with that of reason, is a humble faculty: it is “aimed only at that which is feasible, what is fitting, and what is proper” and “is not as lustrous as the faculty that extends knowledge” (A 7:199). Nevertheless, the rootedness of the eighteenth century in the faculty of judgment constitutes its essential step forward in stabilizing the ground for the pursuit of freedom. If freedom is the keystone of reason’s systematicity and corresponds to the highest point to which we can aspire, judgment, we might say, constitutes the fundament which secures it against its inevitable lapses into enthusiasm, as well as its inherent proclivity to mistake the nature of its vocation.

In what follows I will offer an analysis of the power of judgment in Kant’s first and third *Critiques* insofar as it is necessary to establish two points, the goals of the first two chapters, respectively. First, it is through the mere act of exercising our power of judgment that we first ground the objective validity of the pure concepts of the understanding. Judging that something is the case requires the nonconceptual recognition that an intuition is subsumable under a concept, and only the primacy of such a subsumption, which was reduced or eliminated by Kant’s early modern predecessors, explains the possibility of objective cognition. Second, the power of judgment is called upon in the third *Critique* as

¹³ Here I follow the *Handschrift* edition, which adds “even” to the sentence, an addition which surely indicates the force of Kant’s point more clearly. The idea is that even the Republic, which initially announced itself as nothing less than the rejection of all traditional wisdom, has learned by way of the hard experience of the Reign of Terror that an irreducible political role remains for mature judgment. The *Haus der so genannten Ältesten* is the upper house of the Directory (established in 1795), the *Counseil des Anciens*, which wielded veto power over the legislation of the *Counseil des Cinq-Cents*. Thus Kant’s association of judgment with the promising new spirit of the age was not just a naïve hope that carried him away in 1781; it survived even through the waxing and waning of Kant’s enthusiasm for the political developments in France. For a thorough account of the latter, see Beiser (1992), Ch. 2.

the faculty which is to provide an *a priori* principle for the faculty of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. In doing so, Kant says, it provides for a necessary moment of transition between theoretical and practical philosophy. Thus it is the faculty which is called upon at the decisive points both at the beginning (in establishing the basic thesis of the first *Critique*) and at the end (in circumscribing the possibility and limits of scientific philosophy) of the critical philosophy. This, I will argue, is no accident, for only because judgment is characterized in the first *Critique* as a power of subsumption that is not rule-governed can it legislate *a priori* for the faculty of feeling. Furthermore, this connection between the first and third *Critiques* is crucial for understanding the significance of Kant's critical project in its historical context. For the double task assumed by the faculty of judgment in Kant's theory reflects the two fundamental pressures brought upon the Enlightenment by eighteenth-century thought, although it is only the galvanization of the second of these problems by the events of 1785 that provided the occasion for Kant to offer his decisive solution to it.

Historical Precedents

Whatever else it may have been, the Enlightenment was a movement focused on understanding the world through a rational lens and, in turn, reshaping the world where it was found wanting according to rational principles. Even from such a schematic definition, however, certain tensions in its self-conception can already be discerned. First, the tasks of recognizing reason in the world and refashioning it in on this basis require that in some sense the world both is and ought to be rational, assumptions which drew fire from various quarters in the eighteenth century, beginning already with the first appearance of Bayle's *Dictionary* in 1697 and extending through Hamann and the *Sturm und Drang*. The defense

of the Enlightenment project in the face of such criticisms was an undertaking with which Kant shared broad sympathies, but an eighteenth-century observer could easily be forgiven for regarding its defense—until Kant, at least—as incoherent, if not schizophrenic. Empiricist and rationalist strategies for defending Enlightenment principles—associated, for Kant, with the work of Locke and Leibniz, respectively—set out in diametrically opposed directions to accomplish their goal. Kant would sum up the situation succinctly in the Amphiboly chapter of the first *Critique*: “Leibniz **intellectualized** the appearances, just as Locke totally **sensitized** the concepts of understanding” (CPR A271/B327). Both paths, unfortunately, led to what in Kant’s mind proved to be insuperable difficulties.

Secondly, supposing that we grant that the world is and ought to be rational, it is still not altogether clear that the task of the Enlightenment does not contradict itself: if we succeed, after all, in recognizing the world as rational, what task could possibly remain for us to remake it in reason’s image? In other words, the rationality of nature appears to be the condition of the possibility of our cognition of it, but at the same time, and for the same reason, the condition of the impossibility of action, or at least of the rational motivation to act, within it. It was this question which, a generation later, would lead Hegel to the conclusion that the role of philosophy can only be to recognize, as he puts it, the rose in the cross of the present: the actual is rational, and the rational is actual.¹⁴ But Hegel’s solution reflects a concern that had festered for half a century. In different, yet subtly related ways, Rousseau and Voltaire had waged a half-philosophical, half-popular battle against the encroachment of principles proper to cognition into the realm of practice. In their view, the

¹⁴ Hegel (1821), 22.

ascendancy of reason threatened to obscure the authentic principles of action rooted, but increasingly concealed, in the heart of human beings.

Reason against the Senses. To say that Leibniz “intellectualized” appearances is to say that Descartes’s focus on ideas as *forms* (distinguished from corporeal images)¹⁵ as the bearers of cognitive content available for rational purposes¹⁶ becomes completely decisive for Leibniz’s account of cognition. For Leibniz, sensible and intellectual representations differ not in species, but in degree, with the consequence that the former are only confused versions of the latter. Even in its confused perception of the world, then, each soul can nevertheless be said to cognize, however imperfectly, the infinite.¹⁷ For Leibniz, the totality of our sensible perceptions can be analyzed as an intelligible order that manifests the

¹⁵ See, e.g., the geometrical presentation of the argument of the *Meditations* in his reply to Mersenne: “*Idea*. I understand this term to mean the form of any given thought Indeed, in so far as these images are in the corporeal imagination, that is, are depicted in some part of the brain, I do not call them ‘ideas’ at all; I call them ‘ideas’ only in so far as they give form to the mind itself” (Descartes [1641], 113 [VII:160-161]). See also his reply to Hobbes (Descartes [1641], 127 [VII:181]) and his later clarification of the sense of his innatism (Descartes [1647a], 303 [VIII:357-358]). Descartes is, of course, expanding upon his remarks on imagination and understanding at the opening of the Sixth Meditation (Descartes [1641], 50-51 [VII:71-73]). Later in the seventeenth century, the authors of the *Port-Royal Logic* would follow Descartes closely on this point (see Arnauld & Nicole [1662], 25-26).

¹⁶ This is not to imply that the “intellectualization” of appearances is already complete in Descartes. In the *Discourse on Method* Descartes imagines long chains of reasoning, along which all truths falling within the scope of human cognition can be located. At the top of these chains stand the most general laws of nature, which can be discovered *a priori* so long as we keep to the proper method in natural philosophy (Descartes [1637], 132, 143-144 [VI:42-43, 64]). Descartes nevertheless acknowledges that observations become increasingly necessary as we “advance in our knowledge,” i.e., move down the chain from the general to the particular (Descartes [1637], 143 [VI:63]). Because, for Descartes, general and particular are related as cause to effect, and because there are often several ways in which a less general law can be a consequence of a more general one, the specific way in which the particular depends upon the general can be ascertained only by utilizing the hypothetical, experimental method—“seeking further observations whose outcomes vary according to which of these ways provides the correct explanation” (Descartes [1637], 144 [VI:65]). Thus the relevance of the *a priori* rationalist framework to the specifically observable regularities of nature relies on envisioning a single logical chain along which both rational and empirical cognitions of nature are located. It is worth noting that for Descartes himself the potential for the strictly *rational* cognition of nature to overstep its bounds must have seemed a remote one at best. It may well be true that if the cognitive content of an empirical observation depends on the possibility of relating it logically to a chain of principles descending from clear and distinct perceptions, then a principled boundary for the *a priori* philosophical task cannot be demarcated. Given Descartes’s own conception of the breadth of the role of the natural philosopher, however, this is of little practical consequence, for we would expect her observations of the natural world to press against the chains of her *a priori* reasoning with an independent force of their own. And yet for later rationalists the relation between reason and experience would understandably remain unclarified.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Leibniz (1714), 211 (§13).

wisdom of God, and thus the task of understanding this totality is inseparable from the construction of a theodicy of the natural world. This is accomplished, however, at the cost of a distinctive, irreducible role for empirical observations, at least when the latter are taken in their character as sensible representations.¹⁸

Among empiricists, by contrast, there emerged an insistence that representations carry cognitive significance precisely *insofar* as they are sensible images. This strategy, which was of course intended to insure empiricism against the possibility of flying off into the extravagances of the rationalists, nevertheless only led the empiricists to the opposite extreme, as evidenced in particular by the attacks of Berkeley and Hume on Locke's abstractionism—attacks carried out in the name of a consistent application of the empiricist methods espoused by Locke himself.¹⁹ Locke's guiding idea was to trace all the content of our ideas back to experience, showing along the way that the doctrine of innate ideas—whatever internal difficulties might attend it—is in any event superfluous as an explanation of the phenomenon of cognition.²⁰ In the wake of Hume's *Treatise*, however, certain radical implications of the empiricist strategy began to emerge more clearly, throwing its utility as a defense of Enlightenment ideals into doubt. The enthusiastic

¹⁸ It is for the most part beyond the scope of my work here to ask about the fidelity of Kant's reading of Leibniz to the latter's actual views. I will simply point out that Leibniz's work in the *New Essays*, which was published in 1769 and which Kant read in 1773, and which had argued clearly and forcefully (in its preface) for a continuity underlying sensible and intelligible representations, was paradigmatic for Kant's interpretation. See Wilson (2012).

¹⁹ It is worth emphasizing that for neither Berkeley nor Hume was the overcoming of Locke's doctrine of abstraction a mere scholastic matter. According to Berkeley, Locke's view "occasioned innumerable errors and difficulties in almost all parts of knowledge" (Berkeley [1710], 76 [Int §6]). Hume, for his part, credits Berkeley with "one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries that has been made of later years in the republic of letters" (Hume [1739-1740], 17 [1.1.7]).

²⁰ Thus, at any rate, goes the program laid out at the very beginning of Book II of the *Essay* (Locke [1689], 104 [II.i.1-2]).

reception of Hume by Hamann (and later Jacobi) was just one outward sign of this.²¹ If the rational content of our cognition is nothing above and beyond its origin in experience, an origin for which we can hold ourselves responsible no further than for the mere undergoing of it, then the rational normative commitments which Descartes sought to secure—and which appear to be necessary to ground any strict science—are threatened.

Thus if the effect of Leibniz's intellectualization of appearances is to (implausibly) subject the observation of the natural world to the abstract and (for us, at least) insufficiently determinate deliverances of reason, then the effect of Locke's empiricist method is to reduce reason to the natural rhythms of our receptive faculty. In either case, the Enlightenment project of recognizing and cultivating *reason*—and recognizing and cultivating it, moreover, *in the world*—increasingly found itself threatened by the very forces which were seeking to defend it. It will come as no surprise, then, that the attempts of theoretical reason to defend the Enlightenment would themselves begin to fall under suspicion.

Reason against Action. Given the climate, it was perhaps inevitable that philosophy in general would come under attack for harboring a destructive cognitive bias. Hume is an important forerunner of this concern, too,²² although given the relatively modest early impact of the *Treatise*, it is probably inadvisable to separate this charge from the explosive appearance of Rousseau's first *Discourse* onto the popular scene in 1750.

²¹ It is important to keep in mind that Hamann's letter to Kant of July 27, 1759 is the earliest document linking Kant to Hume. See Beiser (1987), 22-24 for an account of the peculiar circumstances surrounding Hamann's letter.

²² See, in particular, the conclusion of the first book of the *Treatise*: "Where reason is lively, and mixes itself with some propensity, it ought to be assented to. Where it does not, it never can have any title to operate upon us" (Hume [1739-1740], 270 [1.4.7]).

For Rousseau, the question—at least as the Academy of Dijon intended to pose it—is not whether modern thought can *account* for practice as well as theory; it is whether advances in the arts and sciences have, as a matter of fact, led to an improvement or degradation of morals. That said, Rousseau’s emphatic negative answer to the latter question conveys an unmistakable internal criticism of modern philosophy, as well: if philosophy has in fact led our hearts astray, it cannot have been the “true philosophy” in the first place. True philosophy Rousseau instead identifies with virtue alone, the “sublime science of simple souls” the principles of which are “engraved in all hearts.” It is a science, however, which is accessible not to keen and refined intellectual insight, but only to the sound and humble understanding that has reconciled itself to its very commonness. Reason, whatever the subtlety of its constructions, must fit itself to the simplicity of virtue, not the other way around. Rousseau leaves us with two alternatives, *speaking* well, i.e., letting theoretical reason be our highest guide, and *acting* well.²³ It is clear in which direction virtue inclines, and if reason cannot reconcile itself to it, well, then, so much the worse for its own pretensions.

It is this standpoint, too, which, a decade later, would inform the satirical standpoint of Voltaire’s *Candide*. In 1756 Voltaire had sent Rousseau his poem on the Lisbon disaster,²⁴

²³ Rousseau (1750), 21.

²⁴ The historical events that horrified and fascinated Voltaire proved inescapable and formative for the young Kant, as well. Already in 1753, two years before the Lisbon earthquake and before Kant had even secured the qualifications to lecture as a *Privatdozent*, the Prussian Royal Academy had made Pope’s system the subject of its prize essay competition. Although Kant apparently mulled over the idea of submitting an essay to the academy (see R 3703-3705 [1753-1754] 17:229-239), he ultimately decided against it, steering clear of the subsequent battles between Lessing and Mendelssohn, on the one side, and Reinhard, a follower of Crusius, on the other. After the earthquake itself, however, he did address the issue, albeit somewhat obliquely: arguing that natural causes alone suffice to explain the earthquake, Kant did at least hope to quell popular fears rooted in superstition and enthusiasm. When, in 1759, Kant finally did publish a short piece directly addressing the question of optimism, he shortly came to regret it. Yet another follower of Crusius mistook it for a personal insult and retaliated by heaping public abuse on Kant, abuse to which Kant wisely refrained from responding. In fact, Kant’s biographer Borowski reported that Kant asked him quite seriously to

and indeed the final sentence of Rousseau's first *Discourse*²⁵ could well have served as a motto for Voltaire's book. It is clearly echoed, above all, in the famous final sentence of the latter: *Il faut cultiver notre jardin*.²⁶ While much of the attention lavished on Voltaire's book has understandably centered on its boisterous send-up of Leibnizian theodicy, it is in fact the distinct, though related, problem of *action* to which we are supposed to be led and which represents, for Voltaire, the crux of his attack on traditional philosophy, an attack intended to be no less radical than Rousseau's. What Voltaire takes to be pernicious is not so much Leibniz's blind allegiance to the doctrine that this is, and must be, the best of all possible worlds, but rather the presumed necessity of working out this doctrine in detail and applying it discursively to the workings of the actual world. To do so is to negate the very condition of the possibility of human action, the wellspring of which can only be the felt *division* between the world as it is and the world as it ought to have been made.²⁷ For Voltaire, as for Rousseau, the proper life is the one oriented towards simple *work*,

immediately withdraw this pamphlet from circulation if he ever happened upon an old copy of it in a bookshop. For a more comprehensive account of this affair, see Walford (1992), liv-lvii.

²⁵ "And without envying the glory of those famous men who are immortalized in the republic of letters, let us try to place between them and ourselves that glorious distinction observed long ago between two great peoples: that the one knew how to speak well, the other how to act well" (Rousseau [1750], 21).

²⁶ "'That's well said,' replied Candide [to Pangloss], 'but we must work our land'" (Voltaire [1759], 79). The proper English translation of Voltaire's final sentence is much debated, and Wootton's choice obscures the important reference to Genesis. But in any event, Voltaire's meaning is that paradise, at least such as we are entitled to it, consists in keeping our business to ourselves and cultivating our fields. The juxtaposition of discourse, on the one hand, and action, on the other, appears serially throughout *Candide*. See, most memorably, the death of the Anabaptist in Ch. 5. See also Voltaire (1757), 135 and Voltaire (1756a), 95n, where, after quoting Shaftesbury at length, Voltaire himself finally breaks in: "This is admirably said, but . . ."

²⁷ In his Preface to his poem on the Lisbon earthquake, Voltaire is explicit that neither Leibniz nor Pope is his ultimate target, but rather the *misuse* that is made of their theories (see esp. Voltaire [1756a], 97-99). Although this remains implicit in *Candide*, it cannot be doubted that his intention there remains the same. The problem in *Candide* is not so much *philosophy*; it is, rather, to use the phrase that comes up so often in the latter work, *philosophizing*. Again, see esp. Ch. 30: "'Let us work without philosophizing,' said Martin, 'it is the only way to make life bearable'" (Voltaire [1759], 79; cf. Ch. 21 [49]). Voltaire's point is that, however correct the *doctrine* of the philosophers may be, the attempt to work the doctrine out in detail distracts humanity from—and undermines its motivation for—its true vocation: the task of making the world a better place.

transforming the world without succumbing to the temptation to try exhaustively to understand it.²⁸

Faced with these two groups of difficulties, Kant worked out a response that delimited the scope and role of inquiry guided by reason. His goal was to secure through philosophy a metaphysically grounded role for mathematical natural science while staking out with principled precision the limits of reason's authority in theoretical matters. On the one hand, reason is restrained in the realm of cognition from establishing the principles, most notably the Principle of Sufficient Reason, that would ultimately align natural science with theodicy, while, on the other hand, by distinguishing reason's practical from its theoretical interests, Kant shows how action in the world can be subject to the constraints of reason while nevertheless being independent of the results of the pure natural science the possibility of which he had grounded in the first *Critique*. In each case what is crucial is Kant's careful separation of the faculties of reason and understanding and insistence on the discursive character of human cognition. Reason, Kant says, demands of objects much more than we can theoretically cognize with respect to them.²⁹ Theoretical cognition, in order to remain objectively valid, must maintain an essential reference to our receptive capacities, the forms of our human sensibility. Reason, for its part, constitutes its object in a self-sufficient manner, but it is an object for our desiderative, not our cognitive, faculty.

²⁸ For his own part, Rousseau's response to Voltaire was measured. He did not see how a self-consistent Christian could avoid commitment to the "optimistic" theses of Leibniz and Pope (Rousseau [1756], 118-119), and he complained that Voltaire's poem on Lisbon was downright cruel, depriving those who were suffering of the genuine consolation offered by religion (Rousseau [1756], 109). For Rousseau, at least, Pope's optimism is not so much an impediment to action as it is the necessary complement to it. Here Rousseau already stands in some proximity to the views Kant would subsequently elaborate in the second *Critique*.

²⁹ "What makes it so difficult for our understanding with its concepts to be the equal of reason is simply that the former, as human understanding, that is excessive (i.e., impossible for the subjective conditions of its cognition) which reason nevertheless makes into a principle belonging to the object" (CPJ 5:403).

The power of judgment plays the crucial role in both aspects of Kant's response, even if this did not become clear to him immediately. In the first *Critique*, Kant defends the claim that the power of judgment is the principle behind all acts of the understanding. Because it is not rule-governed in its task of subsumption, the power of judgment requires an *act* of the subject going well beyond what empiricist and rationalist analyses require of this faculty. All acts of the understanding have a constitutive reference back to such an act, and that is why the norms immanent in the act of judgment (expressed in the table in which its forms are ordered) govern the use of our cognitive faculty in general.

For some time this result, combined with his thoroughgoing defense of reason's legislation in practical matters, appeared to Kant to be adequate to keep the theoretical ambitions of modern rationalism at bay. But the eruption of the pantheism controversy in 1785, combined with the pressure applied to Kant by the camp of Herder and Forster, forced him to reconsider whether he had, in fact, defused the tendency at the heart of rationalist theodicy. Herder's novel, if not necessarily rigorous, employment of teleological explanation shed light, for Kant, on the connection of teleology to aesthetics, an issue in which he had maintained an interest for quite some time. He finally came to see the possibility and necessity of a third entry in the critical corpus which would explain the possibility of a transition between nature and morality by means of establishing an *a priori* principle of the power of judgment for the faculty of feeling.

Chapter I

Even before 1769, the year which “brought great light” for him,³⁰ Kant was developing a distinctive kind of response to opponents of the privilege granted to reason by the Enlightenment. While he would, of course, soon enough come to appreciate the gravity of Hume’s attack on causal concepts, it was the controversies surrounding Wolffian doctrine, in particular, the difficulties inherent in space and time as continuous magnitudes, that provided Kant with the clearest instances of the apparent misfit between reason and phenomena.³¹ In his brief 1768 essay on the directions in space, Kant concludes by urging his reader not to dismiss the concept of space solely on account of the rational difficulties it engenders. The plain reality of space is, he insists, *intuitively sufficient* for inner sense and therefore must constitute, whatever difficulties the clarification of its concept might engender, one of the ultimate data of our cognition (GDS 2:383). This immediately casts the difficulties which have attended all attempts to understand space through rational concepts in a new light: from now on they are to be taken not as indictments of this ultimate datum, but instead as symptoms of the misapplication of rational norms.

In his *Inaugural Dissertation* of 1770, Kant develops the implications of this suggestive conclusion as part of a systematic philosophy. Here he maintains that the

³⁰ R 5037 (1776-1778) 18:68.

³¹ See Jauernig (2011), 297. The paradoxes themselves, of course, can be traced back to the Eleatics, but it was Leibniz’s fascination with them, as well as the practical success of his infinitesimal calculus, that had given them a renewed currency in the eighteenth century, where they served as the basis for many of the controversies surrounding Wolff. Leibniz’s own journey through the paradoxes of the continuum is chronicled in Arthur (2001).

conditions under which sensible representations can be given to us are entirely distinct from the conditions under which intellectual representations can be given to us, and it is precisely the conflation of these two sorts of conditions that has led so many prior philosophers into apparently inextricable tangles. The only solution is to cut the knot entirely by dividing cognition into two separate species, the sensitive and the intellectual (ID 2:392).³² In accordance with this distinction, the objects of cognition, too, must be subject to a fundamental classification according to the specific mode of cognition to which they correspond. While objects are given to our senses as they *appear*, they are given to our intellect, or understanding (*intellectus*),³³ as they really *are*. Although it is not entirely clear that Kant rigorously maintains it,³⁴ in §3 he already refers to the association of sensibility with receptivity (*receptivitas*), on the one hand, and intelligence with a form of spontaneity (*facultas*), on the other.³⁵ While objects give themselves to us in appearance through our receptive, sensible faculty, the intellect, for its part, gives itself its own object, namely, when the concept of the object is not abstracted from sensible forms, but originates in the intellect's real, not merely logical, use.

³² As Lorne Falkenstein has emphasized, such a move—away from modern rationalist and empiricist trends and back towards Königsberg Aristotelianism—may make Kant more of a reactionary than a revolutionary. Nevertheless, the move is made in response to a set of distinctively modern problems. See Falkenstein (1995), 29-31.

³³ If we are concerned merely with the *Inaugural Dissertation*, it is probably a matter of indifference whether we translate "*intellectus*" as "intellect" or "understanding," although the former, to be sure, captures its philosophical heritage more transparently. "*Verstand*," Kant's German equivalent for "*intellectus*," has a strong *prima facie* claim to be translated as "intellect," as well, although given the importance of the critical distinction between *Verstand* and *Vernunft*, as well as the ordinary German meaning of "*Verstand*," I will follow the Cambridge edition in rendering it "understanding" throughout.

³⁴ Falkenstein, in particular, has denied this, holding that in the *Inaugural Dissertation* Kant reverts to the (traditional) view that sensibility is itself a discursive faculty in that it combines the basic materials from which sensations are composed. See Falkenstein (1995), 46ff.

³⁵ Kant's complete formulation runs as follows: "*Intelligence* (rationality) is the *faculty* of a subject in virtue of which it has the power to represent things which cannot by their own quality come before the senses of that subject" (ID 2:392).

This contrast between the real and logical use of the intellect will continue to play a major role in Kant's critical thought. In the *Inaugural Dissertation*, the distinction is drawn in the following manner:

By the first of these uses, the concepts themselves . . . **are given**, and this is the **real use**. By the second use, the concepts, no matter whence they are given, are merely subordinated to each other, the lower, namely, to the higher (common characteristic marks), and compared with one another in accordance with the principle of contradiction, and this use is called the **logical use**. (ID 2:393; cf. 2:411)

Notice that the logical use of the intellect is characterized by *subordination* and *comparison*. Although it is not immediately clear from the context of the *Dissertation*, subordination and comparison refer to the two different directions in which the intellect can move with respect to concepts: it moves in the direction of lower species by "determining" higher concepts and in the direction of higher species by "abstracting" from lower concepts (JL 9:99). Together, these constitute the *logical* use of the intellect. By its *real* use, on the other hand, Kant refers, here, at least, to the intellect's ability to give itself concepts independently of sensibility.

This contrast between the logical and the real use of the intellect now allows Kant to account more fully for the "difficulties" to which he had alluded at the end of his 1768 essay. So long as we rigorously distinguish between two modes of givenness, sensitive and intellectual, we can see that questions regarding the intrinsic character of representations originally given through sensibility (even if they have been taken up "logically" by the understanding) are not ultimately answerable to the demands of reason, for they will retain a permanent reference to their distinct sensible origin. To suppose they *would* be answerable to such demands would be to conflate the intellect's two distinct uses. According to its real use, the content of intellectual cognition arises from its rational form

alone, while in its logical use the intellect applies a rational form to appearances the content of which already bears the indelible stamp of sensible cognition. And when we consider the modes by which sensibility forms the contents of our cognition, that is, the forms of space and time, there is just no reason to expect or require them to have intrinsic *logical* forms of their own. Conversely, questions regarding the intuitive content (i.e., worries about the emptiness) of originally intellectual representations are altogether out of place, presupposing a sensible standard to which nonsensible things could rightfully be held (see ID 2:396). In this way the difficulties in reconciling the “intuitively sufficient” representation of space with the logical requirement of complete conceptual clarity are—or at least Kant thought at the time—entirely resolved.

At the time this result must have appeared to Kant as though it would blunt the force of the weapons the empiricists and rationalists had been wielding against each other for the better part of a century. But during the decade that separated the publication of the *Inaugural Dissertation* from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant found himself struggling to give a positive sense to the doctrine to which he now found himself committed. In particular, he realized that he was unable to make sense of the idea that the understanding can give itself its own object, that is, establish a relation to an object through its own power. In the case of sensible representations, such a question never arises: because they result from the affection of the subject in the presence of an object (ID 2:392), their objective reference is built into them from the start (even if the forms of such representations inescapably depend upon subjective conditions). But through what means, if any, could intellectual representations, which originate not affectively, but from the activity, or faculty, of the subject, attain to such objectivity? In the *Inaugural Dissertation* Kant had

been content to state that “whatever cognition is exempt from such subjective conditions [i.e., the forms of our sensibility] relates only to the object” (ID 2:392), but by 1772 he saw that such a position failed to explain how objective reference could “get into,” as it were, the representation in the first place. As he wrote in his letter to Herz of February 21, 1772, such a merely negative explanation is insufficient: “I silently passed over the further question of how a representation that refers to an object without being in any way affected by it can be possible” (C 10:130-131). This worry immediately precipitated an even deeper crisis in Kant’s thought, since among this class of representations were to be found all the basic concepts of general metaphysics. If the understanding is incapable of establishing straightaway a relation to the objects of cognition by means of its own resources, then what could possibly be the source of the validity of these concepts?

Preliminaries: Cognition and Objectivity

For Kant, the first step in an answer to this question resides in combining once again what he had so carefully separated in the *Inaugural Dissertation*. Instead of maintaining that there is a cognitive way of representing objects purely intellectually, and through which we might be able to avoid any essential reference to the form of our sensible intuition, Kant now takes discursivity, which for him requires the coordination of sensible and intellectual representations, to be a necessary condition for the cognition of a determinate object in the first place. According to the traditional conception of discursivity, to insist that human cognition is “discursive” is, at bottom, to say that it is not a case of immediate intuition. Discursion requires discourse; thus it takes time.³⁶ Kant’s appropriation of the term, however, adds a further dimension to it: human cognition is discursive because immediate

³⁶ Falkenstein (1995), 42.

intuition, as such, does not suffice to constitute a cognition. This at once stands the traditional distinction between intuitive and discursive cognition on its head: instead of discursive cognition being a mere waystation with intuition as its goal, intuition becomes a mere step on the way to that which, in order to constitute cognition, must ultimately acquire a discursive form.

As Kant now sees it, for our faculty of cognition to determinately represent an object, both understanding and sensibility—hence both concepts and intuitions—are required (CPR A258/B314, B146). Kant is thus not abandoning the distinction between the worlds of sense and intellect in the *Inaugural Dissertation*, but rather identifying the distinction with components of cognition, rather than with self-sufficient modes of cognition. As a corollary, however, the notion of two classes of objects (sensible and intelligible) must also be revised, a revision which is not, however, as straightforward as it might seem. On the one hand, Kant still holds the view—already familiar to us from the 1772 letter to Herz—that the relation of a representation to an object is not at all mysterious when we intuit a present object through our sensible faculty. On the other hand, Kant now thinks that cognition of an object, at least in the full-fledged sense of *cognition*, requires more than such receptivity. As we will see, Kant expresses this by saying that a (merely) intuitive representation of an object does not suffice for a *determinate* cognition of that object; by this he means that a merely intuitive relation to the object fails to pick it out as *an* object which could be related to or distinguished from other objects at all. We must distinguish, then, the initial mode by which objects are given to our sensibility from the establishment, through thought, of a determinate relation to that object. To relate

to an object that is genuinely given, but nevertheless determinate, will accordingly require the employment of both cognitive faculties.

This has led to some disagreement over the basic sense of the word “object” in Kant’s thought,³⁷ with some, following Strawson and what is probably rightly called a “traditional” reading of Kant, holding that appearances and things in themselves are different classes of objects altogether, and others, following Henry Allison, holding that appearances and things in themselves are merely different aspects, or ways of considering, just one class of objects, that is, the objects as they appear to us and the objects as they are “in themselves,” abstracted from the peculiar conditions of human cognition. I am by no means trying to adjudicate this dispute here, but it may be helpful to say a few words about it to help clarify the precise sense of my interpretation.

At any rate, I’m basically sympathetic to Allison’s view. I certainly do not think it succumbs to the well-known conceptual criticisms of Paul Guyer or Rae Langton,³⁸ although I do not think there is a slam-dunk textual case to be made for it (or the traditional view), either.³⁹ I’m not sure that I’m in complete agreement with Allison, though. In particular, when it comes to Kant’s proclivity to speak of things in themselves as if he *were* speaking of an entirely distinct class of objects, I am not convinced that this is simply a regrettable mistake on Kant’s part. Cognition, after all, is not the only way we comport ourselves to objects; we do this through the faculty of desire, as well.⁴⁰ To be sure, if we stick to the cognitive standpoint, the “thing in itself” is indeed only comprehended by

³⁷ I leave entirely aside here the question of the systematic distinction, if any, between “*Objekt*” and “*Gegenstand*,” a distinction defended, for example, in Allison (1983) but no longer in Allison (2004). The explanation of the shift can be found in Allison (2012), 43-44.

³⁸ See, e.g., Guyer (1987), 336-344; Guyer (2006), 68-69; and Langton (1998), 10-12.

³⁹ Here I am basically in agreement with Gardner (2005).

⁴⁰ See, e.g., MoV 27:479, where Kant distinguishes the objects of material philosophy into nature, on the one hand, and freedom, on the other.

way of abstraction from the thing as it appears to us, but from the desiderative standpoint, the “thing in itself” comes first, for reason itself is legislative with respect to the object of our desiderative faculty. In displacing the concept of the supersensible from the cognitive to the desiderative sphere, Kant is reaffirming the reality of ordinary objects like tables, chairs, and post offices in one sense while undermining it in another. Their reality is impugned not from the point of view of the rational norms of divine cognition, but from the point of view of the rational norms of the human faculty of desire.

To get a sense of my worries about Allison’s position here, consider the following description of what Allison regards as an “erroneous, albeit widely held, transcendently realistic picture of Kant’s idealism”:

Things as they are in themselves are equated with things as they “really are,” whereas things as they appear are things as they are for us, subject to the limits imposed by the nature of our sensibility. And, given this picture, Kant’s claim that space and time are merely empirically rather than transcendently real is taken as implying that they are not “fully” or “really real.” . . . According to this picture, transcendental idealism seems to require us to sacrifice the reality of either our cognition or its object.⁴¹

Although Allison concedes that Kant’s terminology often suggests just such an (erroneous) interpretation, it nevertheless distorts Kant’s own view “inasmuch as it measures human knowledge in light of the ideal of a ‘God’s eye’ view.”⁴² But Kant’s view, as I understand it, is that we cannot really help measuring our cognition against such a standard after all, for the simple reason that we *do* have such a standard—not, however, in God’s faculty of cognition, but in our very own faculty of desire.

⁴¹ Allison (2006), 12.

⁴² Allison (2006), 12.

This, at any rate, is the way I will understand objectivity. I do not think that much of what I have to say really hangs on it, but hopefully this brief digression at least makes my own interpretive standpoint clearer in what follows.

Cognition, as Kant understands it, is one of three fundamental faculties (*Vermögen*) of the human mind.⁴³ The general concept of a mental faculty, Kant tells us, is something in virtue of which the mind is *active* (A 7:140),⁴⁴ and a *fundamental* faculty is one which cannot be derived from any further ground that it would have in common with another faculty (CPJ 5:177).⁴⁵ Generally considered, then, human cognition is one of the three most basic ways the human mind is active.⁴⁶ It is distinctive in that it seeks solely to represent objects, in one or more of their determinate aspects, as the very objects they are. Now, *a*

⁴³ Kant does not consistently distinguish between a *Kraft* and a *Vermögen*. Occasionally he appears to conflate them (e.g., at CPR A262/B318) or even to explicitly identify them (e.g., at CPJ 5:287). Béatrice Longuenesse, at least, has maintained that there is—in certain contexts—an important distinction to be drawn, at least when it comes to the *Vermögen zu urteilen* and *Urteilstkraft* (where the latter is the actualization of the former with respect to sensory perceptions). As she acknowledges, Kant's texts themselves are likely too equivocal to support the distinction in any sharp form; nevertheless, she thinks it is a crucial conceptual distinction to draw in understanding Kant's argument (Longuenesse [1998], 8). As will be clear from what follows, I am unconvinced of this. But I will point out right away that I agree with Longuenesse that the question cannot be adequately settled by an appeal to Kant's terminology, but must be addressed primarily on the conceptual level.

⁴⁴ In metaphysics lectures from the early 1780s Kant defines a faculty (*facultas*) somewhat differently, namely, as the "possibility of acting" (MMr 29:772, 823). In either case, the link with activity is decisive. Note also that *facultas* is opposed to *receptivitas* in the *Inaugural Dissertation* (2:392; see p. 26 above). As Cassirer emphasizes, the idea of a faculty as a *mere* capacity is altogether antithetical to the Leibnizian-Wolffian tradition. In accordance with monadic independence and self-sufficiency, the idea of a *facultas* is opposed in the first instance to the *influxus physicus* of empirical psychology (Cassirer [1932], 120-121). It is the latter concept which reduces a "faculty" to a mere capacity and paves the way for its elimination after the manner of the seventeenth century's elimination of occult qualities. Contrast this Leibnizian-Wolffian tendency, however, with that of Descartes, for whom "the term 'faculty' denotes nothing but a mere potentiality [*ipsum nomen facultatis nihil aliud quam potentiam designat*]" (Descartes [1647a], 305 [VIII B:361]).

⁴⁵ It is for this reason that in the second *Critique* Kant remarks that "all human insight is at an end as soon as we have arrived at basic faculties" (CPrR 5:46-47; trans. modified). Wolff held that the soul must have only *one* basic power, a mistake Kant diagnoses in some detail in the first *Critique* (CPR A648-650/B676-678; see Wolff [1720], 48-49 [§745]).

⁴⁶ The other two faculties are the faculty of desire and the faculty of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. Each *Critique* deals with one fundamental faculty, showing in each case how one of the three higher cognitive faculties is legislative (or, in the case of the power of judgment with respect to the faculty of feeling, quasi-legislative) for it. See CPJ 5:198 and FI 20:245-246 for Kant's schematic representations of these relations. And see my discussion of the Introduction to the third *Critique* in Ch. II.

cognition, i.e., an act through which the capacity to cognize is actualized, consists in “the determinate relation of given representations to an object” (CPR B137). As we have seen, Kant holds that the establishment of such a determinate relation is not something the mind can bring about entirely through its own power, and for this reason even the fundamentally active faculty of cognition must be further subdivided into active and passive subfaculties.⁴⁷ Although this division between the spontaneous and the receptive coincides with that between the “higher” and the “lower” species of cognition, Kant insists that the reason for attaching the epithet “*ober*” to the former group is on account of the universality of the representations with which it deals (A 7:196; JL 9:36). Now, Kant sometimes refers to the collection of higher cognitive faculties as the understanding (e.g., CPR A65/B89, B137),⁴⁸ sometimes as reason (e.g., CPR A11/B24-25, A835/B863; also presumably at Axiii), but in any case it is characterized by its use of concepts,⁴⁹ while the collection of lower cognitive faculties is generally referred to as sensibility, which is characterized, for us, at least, by the distinctive forms by means of which we intuit objects.

With this in mind, let us examine each side of cognition in turn. First, to say that the object is sensibly given to us is not to say that the object is *itself* present *in* intuition; instead, Kant says, intuition is “that through which [cognition] relates immediately to [objects]” (CPR A19/B33). To say that the relation is “immediate” is to make a point about the logical primacy of this relation, corresponding, more than likely, to the unproblematic

⁴⁷ Thus the receptivity of our cognitive faculty depends upon its activity, or at least upon its capacity to act. Again, Kant’s metaphysics proceeds along these same lines: “We can never be merely passive, but rather every passion is at the same time action. The possibility of acting is a faculty <*facultas*>, and of suffering receptivity <*receptivitas*>. The latter always presupposes the former” (MMr 29:823). This is connected with the point in n. 44 above.

⁴⁸ Kant acknowledges this freely at A 7:197, where he distinguishes between broad and narrow senses of “understanding.”

⁴⁹ I include under this heading the ideas of reason, consistently defined by Kant as species of concepts (CPR A311/B367, A320/B377; A 7:199-200; see also CPJ 5:351).

case of relating to an object identified in the 1772 letter to Herz: there is nothing, as we might say, *in virtue of which* intuition relates to objects. But caution is in order here, for our intuition is not “original, i.e., one through which the existence of the object of intuition is itself given” (CPR B72).⁵⁰ Rather, the converse is the case: our intuition of an object is only possible through the prior existence of that object. This is the positive content of Kant’s claim that our intuition is *sensible*. Accordingly, sensibility is “the capacity [*Fähigkeit*] (receptivity) to acquire representations through the way in which we are affected by objects” (CPR A19/B33; cf. A51/B75).⁵¹ Sensibility in our cognition is thus a species of intuitive capacity, a capacity to relate ourselves cognitively to objects in an immediate way by means of receiving representations.

Corresponding to this immediacy is the *singularity* characteristic of intuitive representations (see, e.g., CPR A32/B47, A320/B377; JL 9:91), although the precise nature of this correspondence is, perhaps, not entirely straightforward. Lorne Falkenstein, for instance, has argued that only the *immediacy* of intuitions can be their definitive characteristic; their singularity must be a consequence, not a presupposition, of Kant’s argument.⁵² The situation seems to me to be considerably less (interpretatively) dire than Falkenstein suggests, for to say that intuitions are singular is not quite, as Falkenstein glosses it, to say that they are representations “arising from sensation of, or referring to,

⁵⁰ This is not, of course, to say that we possess the positive concept of, or even an insight into the possibility of, any nonsensible, intellectual intuition. In fact Kant goes out of his way to deny this (CPR B307).

⁵¹ A certain amount of ambiguity attaches to Kant’s use of the term “sensation.” On the one hand, insofar as it is merely a sensation, the representation refers not back to the affecting object, but merely to a modification of the state of the subject (CPR A320/B376-377). On the other hand, as Kant clarifies in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, sensation has an objective sense precisely when it is considered in the context of the faculty of cognition (CPJ 5:205-206).

⁵² Falkenstein (1995), 66-67. Notice, however, that if this is the case, then the distinction between higher and lower faculties of cognition must *also* be a result, not a presupposition, of Kant’s argument.

just a single object.”⁵³ This is because intuitions are, initially, at least, of indeterminate reference.⁵⁴ An intuition can refer to a *determinate* object only when that object can be individuated as one object among others, but this, in turn, is possible only when it is brought under a rule provided by the understanding.⁵⁵ To see, by contrast, what notion of singularity may be relevant here, consider Kant’s discussion of animals in the *Anthropology*. Even animals, which lack the higher cognitive faculties, can “manage provisionally” with singular representations, but in doing so they lack a rule under which such singular intuitions may be subordinated (A 7:196). Now, Kant’s point, I think, is not that animals, in contrast to us, successively relate to a series of individuated objects, objects which, however, lack a general rule under which the successive representations can be subsequently subordinated. His point, rather, is that in no case can animals’ successive relation to a series of individuated objects be established in the first place. *We* might say that animals relate to objects, but there is no point at which a distinction between these objects could arise for them. They thus relate to the world as to something essentially singular and indeterminate despite the variety of their intuitive representations.

⁵³ Falkenstein (1995), 67. If we do, however, understand singularity this way, then I agree with Falkenstein that the singularity of intuitions can only be a result of Kant’s argument.

⁵⁴ Falkenstein hesitates here, I suspect, because it may seem to follow from the indeterminacy of intuitive reference that the spatiotemporal locations of intuitions must be imposed on them by actions of the understanding. But it seems to me that an intuition must be (and, I think, for Kant, is) both indeterminate and (preconceptually) spatiotemporally located, for being spatiotemporally located does not entail carrying a determinate reference to an object.

⁵⁵ Allison, following W.H. Walsh, claims that an intuition is only “proleptically” the representation of a particular: “To fulfill their representational function, intuitions must actually be brought under concepts, but their capacity to function in this way is sufficient to justify their logical classification.” Nevertheless, for Allison only a *conceptualized* intuition is a genuinely singular representation (Allison [2004], 82). Although (by Kant’s hypothesis) we cannot conceive of a singular representation (since it fails to be a full-fledged cognition), I see no reason to suppose such a representation must be determinate, unless picking out one object *among others* is a necessary condition for referring to an object at all (even when this will not be a case of *cognizing* an object). All Kant needs is a distinction between singular (and indeterminate) and individual, or particular (and determinate), representations. But this seems to be just what Kant is implicitly drawing upon in his insistence that intuitions are objective but indeterminate representations.

The immediacy with which intuition relates to objects is connected not only to its singularity, but also to its priority vis-à-vis thought. Intuition, Kant tells us, can precede any act of thinking something (CPR B67; also B132), and “all thought as a means is directed” back to intuition as its goal (CPR A19/B33). Thus determining thought acts upon intrinsically indeterminate, but (for us, at least) determinable intuitions. This immediately links Kant’s notion of intuition to that of *appearance*, which he introduces as “the undetermined object of an empirical intuition.”⁵⁶ Kant uses the term “*appearance*” in several senses, as even a cursory glance at a chief thesis of transcendental idealism—that we cognize objects only as they appear, not as they are in themselves—suggests. Since cognition requires determinacy (CPR B137), appearances cannot *here* be undetermined objects (as at CPR A20/B34). Instead, Kant means to say that appearances, though initially (given the priority of intuition) undetermined objects, admit of determination without thereby losing their character as appearances.⁵⁷

Now, Kant immediately adds, “That in the appearance which corresponds to sensation” is its matter, while “that which allows the manifold of appearance to be intuited

⁵⁶ In fact, Kant seems to conflate intuition and appearance in several places, including (a passage to be discussed below) A69/B93.

⁵⁷ This view, moreover, is not a new one, and in this context it is instructive to consider §5 of the *Inaugural Dissertation*. “But it is of greatest importance here,” Kant emphasizes, “to have noticed that cognitions must always be treated as sensitive cognitions, no matter how extensive the logical use of the understanding may have been in relation to them. For they are called sensitive **on account of their genesis** and not on account of their **comparison** in respect of identity or opposition” (ID 2:393). He goes on to remark, “But in the case of sensible things and phenomena, that which precedes the logical use of the understanding is called **appearance**, while the reflective cognition, which arises when several appearances are compared by the understanding, is called **experience**” (ID 2:394). Here “*apparentia*” is used specifically to indicate that which precedes the application of concepts, but in the *Critique* he will apply the logic he here applies to the class of sensitive cognitions to the class of appearances. Though he continues to use “appearance” in the specific sense, this opens up a broader sense of the term, as well, a sense that is, in fact, the relevant one when distinguishing appearances from things in themselves.

as ordered in certain relations” is its form (CPR A20/B34).⁵⁸ This already suggests that the work of determination cannot be located, as some of Kant’s basic formulations might suggest, entirely on the side of thought: the presence in us of determining forms of intuition already entails that spatiotemporal determinations are in some manner attached to (though not necessarily intrinsic representational properties of) indeterminate intuitions prior to the work of the understanding. Nevertheless, the species of determination that correspond to our forms of intuition remain insufficient for determining an object for the purposes of cognition. For this, another cognitive faculty altogether is required. As Kant puts the point in the *Analytic of Principles*,

With us **understanding** and **sensibility** can determine an object **only in combination**. If we separate them, then we have intuitions without concepts, or concepts without intuitions, but in either case representations that we cannot relate to any determinate object. (CPR A258/B314; cf. A51/B75)

Thus for purposes of determination, and hence as a condition of objective cognition in general, given appearances must in turn be thought. Appearances given initially through sensibility provide the connection with the given that cannot be sundered if our cognition is to link up with its object, and no act of thinking appearances, however exhaustive, can possibly purge the appearances of their character *as* appearances. Thus the determinate relation to an object, a necessary condition of objective cognition, is possible in the first *Critique* only by bringing into play both of our basic cognitive faculties—sensibility and understanding.

Now, the thesis that much of human cognition is discursive is not at all new with Kant; his innovation, rather, is twofold: on the one hand, he insists that *all* human cognition

⁵⁸ Indeed, Kant later clarifies that by “matter” he generally means “the determinable in general,” while by “form” he means “its determination” (CPR A266/B322).

is discursive, so that discursivity is not merely a detour along the road to something higher, and, on the other hand, he identifies the discursive moment of cognition with the bringing together of two distinct (higher and lower) faculties of cognition. As Allison has pointed out, there is a close conceptual connection between Kant's "discursivity thesis," i.e., the view that human cognition is discursive, and the overall intelligibility of transcendental idealism: only because the sensible conditions of cognition are distinct from its intellectual conditions is it even possible to represent things cognitively as they are in themselves, for considering them under the latter aspect depends on there being *some* mode of representation that is proper to the understanding alone.⁵⁹

Despite its importance, and despite the pride of place it occupies at the beginning of both the *Transcendental Aesthetic* and the *Transcendental Analytic*, it is not altogether obvious that the discursivity thesis is a position for which Kant explicitly argues in the text of the first *Critique*,⁶⁰ a situation that makes it tempting to explain Kant's commitment to the view merely in terms of the broader sweep of his thought and thereby treat it as a mere presupposition of the critical system. Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish between Kant's (historical) motivations for the view—which are perhaps clearer when we look beyond the confines of the first *Critique*—and the arguments which he ultimately took himself to be able to produce for it within the framework of the argument of the latter work. My own view, which I will not try to establish here, is that the thesis is (at least supposed to be) established simultaneously with Kant's major claim of the *Transcendental*

⁵⁹ See Allison (2004), 16-17.

⁶⁰ Allison himself took this to be an unargued presupposition of the first *Critique* in the first edition of his book. He now holds that Kant at least gives us the resources to reconstruct an argument for it. See Allison (2004), 452n37. Falkenstein, too, has remarked upon the apparent lack of argument for, or even a complete explanation of, the thesis (Falkenstein [1995], 29).

Deduction: that the pure concepts of the understanding have validity with regard to the objects we originally intuit through our sensible faculty. In what follows, I would like to show, not that Kant's deduction of the categories succeeds or fails, but why he came to associate the task of the deduction so closely with the task of the power of judgment, a faculty that is necessary if our concepts are to be linked back to intuition and thus capable of producing objective cognition.

Judgment as the Clue to All Acts of the Understanding

Given that he considered it "the most difficult thing that could ever be undertaken on behalf of metaphysics" (P 4:260), it should come as no surprise that the basic principle of the Transcendental Deduction became transparent to Kant only through a series of attempts and over a number of years. In a lengthy footnote to the 1786 *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, Kant makes the bold claim that, as he has now come to realize, the question of how the categories make experience possible can be "accomplished through a single inference from the precisely determined definition of a **judgment** in general (an action through which given representations first become cognitions of an object)" (MFNS 4:475n). And indeed Kant takes advantage of this definition of judgment in the introduction to the 1787 edition of the deduction.⁶¹

Why would the definition of *judgment* be so important for understanding the basic strategy of the deduction? It is important to recognize that the story actually begins quite early in the first *Critique*. From its opening pages Kant expresses supreme confidence in his ability to render his investigation into pure reason systematic and exhaustive. This is

⁶¹ Note that the important §19 of the deduction alludes several times to this definition (see CPR B141, B142).

because pure reason is “a perfect unity” (CPR Axiii)⁶² with which I can easily gain “exhaustive acquaintance.” And this is simply because I encounter it nowhere but “in myself” (CPR Axiv). Apparently as an afterthought, Kant adds, “Common logic already also gives me an example of how the simple acts of reason may be fully and systematically enumerated” (CPR Axiv). Taking these remarks together, Kant’s view seems to be the following: On the one hand, simply by inspecting my own acts of reasoning I can come up with a systematic schema of the elements of this activity. On the other hand, the production of just this schema is the task traditionally assigned to logic, so it stand to reason that the logicians’ efforts (“though not yet wholly free of defects”; P 4:323; cf. JL 9:20-21) will serve as a helpful guide.⁶³

Although he does not develop his point any further in the Preface, Kant returns to it at the beginning of the *Transcendental Analytic*: after emphasizing that his is a *scientific* undertaking which therefore requires systematic *completeness* determined through an idea of the whole (CPR A64-65/B89),⁶⁴ he points out that the pure understanding,⁶⁵ because it is separate from all sensibility, is

a unity that subsists on its own, which is sufficient by itself, and which is not to be supplemented by external additions. Hence the sum total of its

⁶² Kant elaborates in the *Prolegomena*: “Pure reason is such an isolated domain, within itself so thoroughly connected, that no part of it can be encroached upon without disturbing all the rest, nor adjusted without having previously determined for each part its place and its influence on the others; for, since there is nothing outside of it that could correct our judgment within it, the validity and use of each part depends on the relation in which it stands to the others within reason itself, and, as with the structure of an organized body, the purpose of any member can be derived only from the complete concept of the whole” (P 4:263).

⁶³ Thus whatever deficiencies may be present in Kant’s table of categories, Hegel’s charge (see, e.g., Hegel [1830], 84 [§42R]) that Kant simply collected them empirically from the history of logic, instead of (as Fichte did) deducing them from a common principle, is not entirely fair. Kant did not just follow the traditional logicians out of inertia; rightly or wrongly, he thought they had done a pretty good job.

⁶⁴ This scientific nature is, for Kant, definitive of philosophy as such. In fact, “not only does philosophy allow such strictly systematic connection, it is even the only science that has systematic connection in the most proper sense, and it gives systematic unity to all other sciences” (JL 9:24).

⁶⁵ Here “pure understanding” should surely be understood in the broad sense, so that Kant’s point is identical to the one he has already made at CPR Axiii-xiv.

cognition will constitute a system that is to be grasped and determined under one idea, the completeness and articulation of which system can at the same time yield a touchstone of the correctness and genuineness of all the pieces of cognition fitting into it. (CPR A65/B89-90)

To merely catalog the concepts of the understanding as they are stumbled upon in experience might well yield a series of true observations,⁶⁶ but it would have nothing at all to do with the business of scientific philosophy (cf. CPR A832/B860; MFNS 4:467; JL 9:72). To conduct philosophy scientifically depends entirely upon recognizing and analyzing the unity of our higher faculty of cognition.⁶⁷ In fact, this is the point of calling this part of the *Critique* a transcendental “analytic,” for in logic “**analytic** discovers through analysis all the actions of reason that we perform in thinking” (JL 9:16). An external clue to the principle of the unity of these actions can be gleaned from the basic classifications present in the more or less adequate logic textbooks, but even if we pay no heed to the latter it is a principle the moments of which should in any event be easily reproducible if we systematically and exhaustively examine the basic acts of our own mind.

In the 1783 *Prolegomena* Kant gives a somewhat different rendition of his investigations into the Table of Categories. Aristotle, of course, had compiled a list of ten, but among these not one could serve as a principle by which the functions of the understanding could be derived.

⁶⁶ It is not out of the question, of course, that we might stumble upon a fruitful topic, just as philosophers had prepared the way for the second analogy by way of their investigations into the Principle of Sufficient Reason. But even had they somehow attached this question to the transcendental unity of apperception, this would not have given them insight into the philosophical significance of the second analogy. No one had even dreamt of the other two analogies, Kant tells us, “since the clue of the categories was missing, which alone can uncover and make noticeable every gap of the understanding, in concepts as well as in principles” (CPR A217-218/B265).

⁶⁷ In the 1772 letter to Herz, Kant refers to such a principle as “the way they [i.e., the categories] divide themselves into classes on their own [*von selbst*] through a few fundamental laws of the understanding” (C 10:132; trans. modified).

In order however to find such a principle, I cast about for an act of the understanding [*sah ich mich nach einer Verstandeshandlung*] that contains all of the others and that only differentiates itself through various modifications or moments in order to bring the multiplicity of representation under the unity of thinking in general, and there I found that this act of the understanding consists in judging. (P 4:323)

This passage casts Kant's remarks from 1781 in something of a different light. According to his earlier remarks, referring to logic in order to find a more or less ready catalog of the acts of the understanding is a straightforward (even if ultimately dispensible) move, but according to the 1783 story Kant had to "cast about" for a principle, *even after* (as the previous paragraph in the *Prolegomena* makes clear) it was clear to him that the principle he needed must exhaustively determine the concepts of the understanding.

Thus the *Prolegomena* suggests that there were two steps to Kant's procedure: first, advertng to logic; second, locating within logic the principle—*judgment*, Kant now tells us—by means of which the acts of the understanding may be systematically enumerated. And if we glance at the logic textbooks of Kant's time, we see immediately that the second step by no means trivially follows upon the first. The *Port-Royal Logic* had divided the "principal operations of the mind" into four types: conceiving, judging, reasoning, and ordering.⁶⁸ Acts of judgment presuppose the conception of their elements, i.e., ideas, and in turn are presupposed by syllogistic reasoning and, finally, the method of ordering suitable to science. As Reinhard Brandt has shown,⁶⁹ the *Port-Royal* classificatory system is basically repeated (although the status of the fourth heading—method—is sometimes problematic or even omitted altogether) by Bayle, Wolff, Reimarus, and others. On this basis, not only is a classification of the forms of *judgment* an unlikely candidate for the

⁶⁸ Arnauld & Nicole (1662), 23.

⁶⁹ Brandt (1995), 54-55.

principle underlying all “operations of the mind,” but it seems to be actually precluded by its localization within one species of the latter. A table of syllogistic forms (cf. Kant’s procedure at CPR A321/B378) could, with at least equal, and probably much better, right, be invoked as an expression of the principle behind such a unity.

For the moment, I just want to emphasize that this presents a real puzzle: why would Kant have gravitated to judgment (and its forms) as harboring the clue to the unity of human understanding in general? Certainly Kant would have *expected* this to be puzzling to his reader, given the novelty of his move. So we would expect Kant to explain his rationale to the reader—and to do so in short order.

My own view is that this is exactly what he does. Unfortunately, however, Kant’s argument that the forms of judgment express the unity of reason is condensed into roughly two pages of the *Critique*, and the difficulty of the argument is exacerbated by the flurry of definitions and classifications with which it is peppered. At the end of it all, Kant arrives, as we would expect, back at the conclusion at which he had gestured so casually in the A Preface: “The functions of the understanding can therefore all be found together if one can exhaustively exhibit the functions of unity in judgments” (CPR A69/B94).⁷⁰ An examination of these two pages shows just how inseparable Kant’s identification of judgment as the principle of the unity of the understanding is from the discursive standpoint of the *Critique* as a whole.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Hegel, who of course relentlessly criticizes Kant’s table of judgments (see n. 63 above), actually congratulates Kant for having determined, intentionally or not, the species of judgment by “the universal forms of the logical idea itself” (Hegel [1830], 248 [§171A]). Perhaps Hegel is right, but Kant’s intention is just the opposite.

⁷¹ As a historical matter, Brandt has conjectured that the idea of connecting the doctrines of concepts and inferences by means of judgment first appears in R 4638, dated by Adickes to shortly after 1772, a dating which would, of course, correspond to Kant’s attempt to work out the problem he had explained to Herz in February of that year.

A68/B93: Kant's "no other use" Claim

One of the first challenges confronting the interpretation of this tortuous passage is to distinguish Kant's stipulative definitions from his substantive claims. To do so, it is important to always keep in mind what he ultimately wants to show: that the table of judgments expresses the unity of our understanding.⁷² Accordingly, the substantive claims are all directed towards this end: they show that the unity of the understanding is best brought out when the latter is conceived as a faculty for judging. This passage is often referred to for the clarifications it offers of Kant's distinctions between intuitions and concepts (initially drawn at CPR A19/B33 and A50/B74). But it should be emphasized that Kant is not undertaking this exercise for its own sake, or because he is afraid he has been unclear; he is trying to bring out precisely those aspects of the intuition-concept distinction that are important if we want to understand why the understanding can be represented as a faculty for judging.

Kant begins by pointing out what should already be familiar to his reader, namely, his view that "besides intuition there is no other kind of cognition than through concepts" (CPR A68/B92-93), cognition which is "not intuitive but discursive." Now, however, Kant seeks to elaborate his idea further: "All intuitions, as sensible, rest on affections, concepts therefore on functions" (CPR A68/B93). Let us proceed with care here: whereas intuitions, because they are sensible, rest on "affections," concepts rest on "functions"—in fact, Kant says, "*also auf Funktionen*" (my emphasis). Kant's "*also*" directs our attention back to the "sensible" occurring earlier in the sentence: the idea seems to be that concepts, *because*

⁷² More precisely, he wants to show that a table of judgments expresses the unity of our understanding. That Kant's own version of such a table is the correct one is defended, albeit (as Kant freely admits) too briefly, at A71-76/B96-101.

they are nonsensible, can *only* be based on functions. At first glance this may seem like an odd inference to be asked to draw.⁷³ What is the logical connection supposed to be between functions and nonsensible representations? If anything, we would expect Kant to conclude that concepts, as nonsensible, rest on some species of spontaneous activity. One might well wonder, in addition, whether the mathematical term “function”⁷⁴ is even appropriate here. Kant immediately goes on, however, to clarify both puzzles: “By a function, however, I understand the unity of the action [*Einheit der Handlung*] of ordering different representations under a common one.” Thus Kant is alerting us that he is using the term *function* in a specific, perhaps surprising way, namely, to indicate a specific kind of *unity*, that is, the unity that characterizes the *action* of ordering a manifold of representations under a common one. Thus the characteristic we would have expected Kant to emphasize straightaway is in fact already being thought under the concept of a function.

We are still left in the dark, of course, as to why Kant takes his remarks on the terminological detour through “*Funktion*” in the first place. In mathematics, to consider a quantity as a function is to consider it as expressing a relation of arbitrary complexity holding among other quantities.⁷⁵ By attaching to this mathematical notion the

⁷³ Adickes, for one, certainly thought so, enough to amend the text by substituting “*aber*” for “*also*.” Neither Erdmann nor Schmidt accepted the amendment into their editions.

⁷⁴ The terminology of *functiones* underwent rapid development from its introduction (at the end of the seventeenth century) by Leibniz and the Bernoullis throughout the whole of Kant’s lifetime. The key figure in this development, however, is Euler, who by the mid 1750s had developed an extremely general definition of a function to which he ascribed foundational significance. After explaining the distinction between variable and constant quantities, Euler describes how the distance and trajectory of a shot fired from a cannon depends upon the quantity of gunpowder and the elevation of the barrel. “In this business the thing that requires the most attention is how the variable quantities depend on each other,” and “those quantities that depend on others in this way, namely, those that undergo a change when others change, are called *functions* of these quantities” (Euler [1755], vi). Thus a function allows a quantity to be indicated in such a way that its dependence on certain other quantities is brought to the fore. For more on the development of the concept of function, see Youschkevitch (1976).

⁷⁵ Leibniz had already remarked upon the significance of this fundamental notion as early as 1686: the possibility of taking as given a scattered series of points and fitting to them a single geometrical line “whose

aforementioned notion of the unity of an action, Kant sets up an important contrast between his two most basic species of representations. On the one hand, the unity characteristic of sensible intuitions consists in their singularity. This singularity must not, to be sure, be conflated with simplicity—“every intuition contains a manifold in itself” (CPR A99)—but the manifoldness of an intuition consists in its divisible, not divided, parts, parts which do not precede the givenness of the intuition as a whole (CPR A25/B39, A32/B47-48; cf. MFNS 4:508). The intuited object has its unity not by virtue of any action on our own part, but simply in virtue of the immediate presence of a whole that does not depend upon our piecemeal construction of it. Thus when Kant inserts an “*aber*” into the sentence in which he defines *function* (“By a function, however . . .”), what is surprising in this definition, and which Kant thinks deserves emphasis, is that a function does not merely (and as its mathematical heritage might suggest) indicate unity, or unity-in-multiplicity, in general, but rather a unity of a very specific type: the unity of an *action*. The singularity constitutive of an *intuition* is, in a manner of speaking, a unity *given* to us as a kind of *fait accompli*, and this is emphatically *not* the unity of an action. This contrast nicely illustrates the discursivity of the human understanding: although we intuit objects in an immediate and singular way, we come to cognize these objects only by distinguishing and then gradually reconstructing, through a series of determining acts, the object which we had originally intuited in a merely indeterminate manner.

notion is constant and uniform, following a certain rule” (Leibniz [1686], 39 [§6]). The crucial point is the possibility of representing an arbitrarily complex multiplicity by means of a single expression. It is important to see that this remains the operative principle of Euler’s arithmetical definition (see n. 74), as well: to manipulate an equation so that it is a function of one variable in particular is to give a set of relations a point around which they can be organized as an expression of a single quantity.

Like many of his predecessors, Kant struggles against the notion of a general representation as just an image-copy of something particular.⁷⁶ A concept is not simply given in the manner of a static picture; rather, a concept depends, at least as far as its possibility of being related to an object is concerned, on the unity of an *action*. Thus when Kant goes on to say, “Now the understanding can make no other use of these concepts than that of judging by means of them” (CPR A68/B93; I will refer to this as Kant’s “no other use” claim), he is not jumping to an altogether distinct train of thought, as it might at first appear, for the “judging” in this sentence is meant to correspond to the action the unity of which he has just emphasized. This at once demarcates Kant’s view sharply from that of Spinoza: unlike Spinoza, for whom ideas are intrinsically active and self-unfolding—in fact, they are just “understanding itself [*ipsum intelligere*]”—for Kant the activity upon which concepts depend must ultimately be located in a distinct faculty, namely, the faculty of judgment. When Kant says concepts lack any other “use” than they have in judging, we are therefore entitled to take him quite seriously, for the unity characteristic of concepts always retains a reference to acts of judging.

The Act of Judging and the *Vermögen zu urteilen*

What does it mean, however, for concepts to have “reference” to judgments in this way? Béatrice Longuenesse, who has taken the argument at A68-69/B93-94 very seriously, takes this to mean that concept formation is oriented towards the use we will ultimately make of those concepts. Since, however, concepts have “no other use” than they have in judgments, the forms of concepts must be isomorphic with the forms of judgments, and this is why the table of judgments can function as a clue to the table of categories. Accordingly,

⁷⁶ Spinoza, in particular, complains about the conception of an idea as “something mute, like a picture on a tablet” (Spinoza [1677], 479 [EIP43S]).

Longuenesse sharply distinguishes between the mere *capacity* to judge (the *Vermögen zu urteilen*), which gives a unified form to all acts of the understanding, and the actualization of that capacity (the *Urteilstkraft*).⁷⁷ On her reading of the passage, then, Kant's claim that the understanding can be considered as a *Vermögen zu urteilen* rests on a teleological principle: the *forms* of concepts depend on the use which is subsequently to be made of them in acts of judgment. Crucially, then, the "judging" referred to in the "no other use" claim is the activity of the *Urteilstkraft*, not the *Vermögen zu urteilen*. Conversely, however, it is because all acts of the understanding are directed to the employment of the *Urteilstkraft* that the understanding itself must be understood, most basically, as a *Vermögen zu urteilen*.

If Longuenesse is right, then the table of judgments, which for most of the history of Kant interpretation has been considered a monumental embarrassment, is in fact the key to understanding the Transcendental Analytic of the first *Critique*: because it deals with the understanding, and because the understanding is essentially a capacity to judge, all its arguments must be "related, down to the minutest details of [its] proofs, to the role that Kant assigns to the logical forms of our judgments."⁷⁸ The immense value of Longuenesse's book is the thoroughness and convincingness with which she carries out this task.

On the other hand, however, if my reading of A68/B93 is, thus far, correct, Longuenesse's reading of Kant's "no other use" claim should strike us as more than a little odd: if Kant's emphasis on the unity of *action* is the overriding feature of this passage, then it would be strange indeed for him to locate the principle of all acts of the understanding not in this action, but in a mere capacity to act. In fact, it is important to realize that on Longuenesse's view, the *Vermögen zu urteilen* is a capacity twice removed from action: our

⁷⁷ See n. 43 above.

⁷⁸ Longuenesse (1998), 5.

power to actually make judgments (our *Urteilkraft*) depends on our having reflected our concepts in such a way (through our *Vermögen zu urteilen*) that such a capacity can be brought to bear on them. Granted, even this bare capacity would be *guided* by an eventual action, but Kant himself never distinguishes capacity from activity in this passage, which we would expect him to do if he were driving at a point like this.⁷⁹ This is not to say that Longuenesse's reading *cannot* be right, only that it depends on reading the passage almost directly against its (apparent) grain: by separating the capacity to judge from the activity of judging, and by claiming that it is the capacity, not the activity, which provides the principle for all acts of the understanding, Longuenesse construes Kant's reference to the unity of action characteristic of concepts in a roundabout way. To be sure, it is true on her view that the unity of action characteristic of concepts *refers* to acts of judging, but this is a reference *forward* to the judgments which they subsequently make possible.

My suggestion, on the other hand, is that we read the reference of the unity of concepts to acts of judging in the other direction: *backward* to the acts of judgment through which concepts first attain their original unity. This has the virtue of rendering Kant's claim (at A69/B94) that the understanding can be represented as a faculty for judging considerably more straightforwardly: concepts depend on unities of action, so concepts cannot precede *acts* of the *Vermögen zu urteilen*. Now, it is true, of course, that Kant refers to the use which *is to be made* of concepts, and I do not at all dispute that, once formed, concepts do have (and only have) such a use. But Kant does not draw attention to this possible use to *contrast* it with the mere capacity for the understanding to use concepts this

⁷⁹ That is, unless one takes Kant's introduction of the *Vermögen zu urteilen* at A69/B94 to be that very moment. But the very question is whether there are grounds for distinguishing the *Vermögen zu urteilen* from the *Urteilkraft* in this passage. More generally, on the complicated relationship between capacity and activity in Kant's thought, see nn. 44 and 47 above.

way, but rather to refer directly to the use which must—in a sense to be elaborated later—have “already” been made of concepts, at least from a transcendental point of view.⁸⁰ In short, it seems to me that Longuenesse’s reading places considerably more stress on the word “*Vermögen*” than it is really able to bear. Rather than taking Kant’s reference to a *Vermögen* as the introduction of an important contrast with the faculty for actually judging, I think we should simply identify them.

It could be objected, and, I think, fairly, that the real strength of Longuenesse’s view (as she would surely acknowledge) rests not on the interpretation of a short, obscure passage, but rather on the power of her distinction between the *Vermögen zu urteilen* and the *Urteilstkraft* to make sense of wide swaths of Kant’s text. Even granting the points I have just made, it is surely miscalculating the burden of proof to suppose that much hangs on them. If the price to be paid for the power of Longuenesse’s analysis is a strained reading of an in any event obscure section of text, so be it.

Although I certainly do not propose to settle the matter here, it is worth emphasizing that my reading of the passage, like Longuenesse’s, explains why there should be such a close link between the logical forms of judgment and the “minutest details” of Kant’s proofs. In fact, it seems to me that my reading does so in an even more direct manner than hers.⁸¹ For on her picture, the “use” of concepts is consequent upon their

⁸⁰ In other words, Longuenesse’s reading depends on *diminishing* the activity associated with the *Vermögen zu urteilen* introduced at A69/B94, while mine depends on *emphasizing* this very activity and linking it to Kant’s discussion of concepts. While he does not really press the point, Allison registers his “continued puzzlement about how a capacity (as contrasted with its exercise) can do anything, including determine sensibility” (Allison [2012], 44). Although, as I have pointed out (n. 44 above), a *facultas* is basically a species of activity, Allison certainly has a point: Longuenesse has divorced the capacity for actually judging from a capacity for even being able to do so in such a way that it is hard to see why the latter, not the former, should be taken by Kant to be definitive of the understanding. My interpretation avoids this difficulty.

⁸¹ Allison, for one, thinks that Longuenesse “still owes us an account of how the subjection of the manifold of sensible intuition in general to the categories is supposed to emerge from the appeal to the logical functions

formation, while on mine their forms always reflect an original “use,” i.e., an act of judgment (in Longuenesse’s terms: an act of the *Urteilkraft*). On my reading, there is nothing teleological about Kant’s basic move here: the reason why the categories are isomorphic with the logical forms of judgment is that concepts can only be concepts by referring back to acts of judgment, and the unity characteristic of concepts necessarily inherits the unity characteristic of this activity.

One final word is in order. Despite everything I have just said, I do not want to reject the intelligibility of the conceptual distinction between the *Vermögen zu urteilen* and the *Urteilkraft* as Longuenesse draws it or claim that such a distinction is foreign to Kant’s thought altogether. My claim is just that Kant is neither alluding to nor implicitly relying on it at A68-69/B93-94 in the first *Critique*. In fact, I do think we can and should distinguish, with Kant, between the logical formation of concepts and the application of these concepts, a topic Kant will discuss most prominently in the third *Critique* by distinguishing the reflecting from the determining power of judgment. And concept formation in general—and this includes the pure concepts of the understanding (the forms of which, like empirical concepts, are “made,” not given; JL 9:93)—depends on the reflecting activity that precedes determining judgment. For now, I will simply note that much of the payoff of

of judgment in the first part of the [B] Deduction” (Allison [2012], 46). Presumably, of course, this is precisely what the teleological aspect of Longuenesse’s view is supposed to address: the categories are reflections (in Kant’s technical sense) of the forms of judgment that are already the necessary conditions of the synthesis of the sensible manifold. But Allison’s real concern, as I understand it, is whether such an account leaves something to be explained. For my part, I suspect that it does: why should the forms of judgment determine the forms of concepts just because these concepts have “no other use” than their use in possible judgments? As I see it, that would certainly answer the *quid facti* with respect to the pure concepts of the understanding, but it does not immediately answer the *quid juris*. Now, Allison’s own view, according to which the categories are “embedded in the activity of judgment in the sense that judging under a certain form necessarily involves a certain mode of unification of the manifold, which corresponds to (without being identical with) the unification thought in the category” (Allison [2012], 45-46), is very close to my own: the unification thought in the category corresponds to the unification of the manifold in judging because the specific unity characteristic of concepts in general is parasitic upon the unity enacted in acts of judging.

Longuenesse's interpretation, i.e., her convincing demonstration that much of the first *Critique* must, in order to be understood, be related, "down to the minutest details of [its] proofs," to the logical forms of judgment, can be retained, even if we reject, as I believe we should, her controversial thesis that the understanding should be understood first and foremost as a *capacity* to judge.

A68/B93: "All bodies are divisible"

As it turns out, our difficulties are only beginning, for Kant's subsequent elaboration of the notion of judgment (CPR A68-69/B93-94) is beset by a host of interpretive problems. It will take some work to sort these out. "Judgment," he continues,

is therefore the mediate cognition of an object, hence the representation of a representation of it. In every judgment there is a concept that holds of many, and that among this many also comprehends [*begreift*] a given representation, which is then related immediately to the object. (CPR A68/B93)

At first glance, Kant's point appears to be a straightforward reflection of his discursivity thesis: every judgment requires, at minimum, the presence of both a concept (which, qua concept, "holds of many") and a (singular) intuition, judged to fall under it (and which, qua intuition, is "related immediately to the object"). What is more, the example he offers might appear to instantiate the principle he has just enunciated in a rather straightforward manner:

So in the judgment, e.g., "**All bodies are divisible**," the concept of the divisible is related to various other concepts; among these, however, it is here particularly related to the concept of body, and this in turn is related to certain appearances that come before us. (CPR A68-69/B93)

A casual comparison of these two quotations will quickly suggest the following parallelism: in *All bodies are divisible*, the "concept that holds of many" is indubitably "the concept of the divisible"; "among this many," that is, "among these," i.e., the "various other concepts" to

which the concept of the divisible is related, “a given representation” is comprehended (in the example, “the concept of body”) “which is then related immediately to the object,” that is, to “certain appearances that come before us.” If this were the parallelism Kant intended, then *All bodies are divisible* would illustrate the discursivity thesis by illustrating how a concept (divisibility) is said to hold of many (the bodies), a necessary condition, as Kant has just stated, for any judgment whatsoever.

Immediately, however, we see that this cannot be quite what Kant intends. For the *concept* of body, qua concept, *cannot* be immediately related to an object. Only intuitions relate to objects immediately, as Kant has just reminded us (CPR A68/B93). Instead, that “which is then related immediately to the object” must be the “certain appearances which come before us”—certain *intuitions*, one wants to say (and in fact in his own copy of the first *Critique*, Kant changed “appearances” to “intuitions” in the example, although the change was never incorporated into the second edition; see ACPR 23:45). But this only brings the difficulty in Kant’s example into sharper relief. For it appears that in the judgment *All bodies are divisible* both the concept of body and the concept of the divisible are such that they “hold of many,” although they do so in different senses. The concept of body holds of many in that it is “related to certain appearances [i.e., intuitions] that come before us,” while the concept of the divisible holds of many by being related to the (general) concept of body. Now, for a judgment to be a “mediate cognition of an object,” it would appear to be the former relation that is of primary significance, for the cognition can only be of an *object* if an intuition which relates immediately to that object plays a constitutive role in it. And I do think the primary purpose of the example is to illustrate precisely this point. But then why, one wonders, has Kant made reference to the fact that

the concept of the *divisible* “holds of many,” if *that* was the point he intended to clarify? Moreover—and more mysteriously still—what are the “various other concepts” supposed to be to which the concept of divisibility is purportedly related through this judgment?

Typically, the answer that is given to the question of the “various other concepts” is the following: bodies are related to all the other objects that are thought (or, perhaps, thinkable) under the concept of divisibility.⁸² In this way, the thought seems to run, the concept of the divisible, too, is related to these “various other concepts.” Certainly, such claims helpfully relate Kant’s point here to one of the alternative ways in which he is apt to define judgment, namely, as “the representation of the unity of the consciousness of various representations” (JL 9:101; cf. P 4:300). The idea is that Kant refers to the “various other concepts” to illustrate the unity relevant to the concept of divisibility in the example, a unity which consists not in its relation to intuitions, but just to the concepts which are themselves thought under it.

Now, all of this is true about Kant’s view of judgment, generally speaking. The problem is that it is not what Kant actually says in the passage in question. Kant says that “*in the judgment . . . the concept of the divisible is related to various other concepts*” (my emphasis). The concept of the divisible does not, however, depend for its relation to the concepts of other divisible things upon its relation to the concept of body. If it has any such relations, it has them in advance of the judgment that all bodies are divisible. What it does

⁸² See, e.g., Allison (2004), 85. J. Michael Young is more explicit in construing Kant’s claim as involving a relation of *bodies* (or, the concept of body) to the various other concepts that fall under the concept of the divisible. Young’s gloss on the section as a whole runs as follows: “To give unity to representations in a judgment is to bring them under a higher concept, thereby relating them to other things that likewise fall under that higher concept” (Young [1995], 586-587, quoted at 587). Although I can agree with this in part, my own view, as specified below, is that the “various other concepts” to which the concept of the divisible is related are not—*proximately*, at least (hence my partial agreement)—the species under the genus of the divisible, but rather the subspecies (and subspecies of subspecies, etc.) under the genus of the concept of body.

not, however, have in advance (except, perhaps, accidentally) is a relation to the concepts which are thought under the concept of body. To these the concept of divisibility is indeed related in the first time “in the judgment”; accordingly, these must be identified with the “various other concepts” to which Kant refers.⁸³

If my proposed reading is correct, the second clause of the sentence has a slightly different sense than it is usually accepted as having. “Among these”—that is, now, among the species and subspecies of concepts to which the concept of divisibility is related in the judgment—“it is here particularly related to the concept of body”—that is, there is something distinctive about the way it is related to the concept of body, a way in which it is not related to these “various other concepts”—and the reason for this lies in the use that is made of the concept of body in this particular judgment: “this [i.e., the concept of body] in turn is related to certain appearances that come before us.” Thus the concept of body actually fulfills two distinct functions in this judgment: on the one hand, it relates the concept of divisibility indefinitely downwards, i.e., to the species and subspecies of concepts thought under the generic concept of body, while, on the other hand, it relates the concept of divisibility to the appearances, or the intuitions, that “come before us” and which, in accordance with our earlier discussion of intuition, first make the cognition of an object possible. In what follows I will refer to the former use as its “logical” use, the latter its “transcendental use.”⁸⁴

⁸³ In Kant’s technical terminology, my claim is that the concept of divisibility is related to its *subordinate*, not its *coordinate*, marks through the concept of body. See JL 9:59.

⁸⁴ These uses correspond to the logical distinction Kant draws between analytic and synthetic distinctness. “The kind of distinctness that arises not through analysis but through synthesis of marks is *synthetic* distinctness. And thus there is an essential difference between the two propositions: **to make a distinct concept** and **to make a concept distinct**” (JL 9:63). In our example, we would say that the concept of body, according to its logical use, analytically *makes a distinct concept* of the divisible by relating it (“intensively”—see JL 9:59) downwards to subspecific concepts, while it synthetically *makes* the concept of the divisible

Distinguishing these two uses of the concept of body makes Kant's distinctive view of judgment, as compared to Leibniz's, stand out in particularly sharp but subtle relief. Lurking in the background here is the Leibnizian view of concepts and conceptual containment.⁸⁵ For Leibniz, concepts are nested within one another in a hierarchy of relations of containment and subordination. Thus when a concept is related to another concept, it is trivially related to "various other concepts" (in just the way to which Kant alludes at A68-69/B93); to say of the concept of body, e.g., that it is subsumable under the concept of the divisible, is *ipso facto* to subsume the concepts already thought under the concept of body under the concept of the divisible, as well. Now, as long as all we are interested in is the relation that concepts bear to one another, Kant has no objection to any of this. To say that all bodies are divisible, Kant will grant, is indeed to relate the concept of the divisible to the "various other concepts" already thought under the concept of body. By contrast, if we return to the text of the example, we now find that Kant's next remark (again indicated by an "*aber*") must be intended to illustrate the distinctiveness of his own position (against, e.g., Leibniz's) and bring him back to the point about judgment that he is attempting to clarify: "Among these, however, it is here particularly related to the concept of body." That is to say, in the judgment the concept of body is singled out for a special, and highly significant, role: it has not just a logical use, but a transcendental one, as well.

Consider our example once again. Whereas, for Leibniz, the concept of body merely serves as a way by which the concept of the divisible is related indefinitely "downwards,"

distinct by relating it to the appearances that come before us. As Kant goes on to explain, "To synthesis pertains the making distinct of **objects**, to analysis the making distinct of **concepts**" (JL 9:64).

⁸⁵ The classical statement of Leibniz's view can be found in the *Discourse on Metaphysics*: "The subject term must always contain the predicate term, so that one who understands perfectly the notion of the subject would also know that the predicate belongs to it" (Leibniz [1686], 41 [§8]).

as it were, in the direction of concepts of greater and greater specificity, in Kant's view it does all that and more, and it is this "more" that is crucial to understanding Kant's position: instead of merely functioning as a node in an organized network of concepts, the concept of body is here employed to get at intuitions themselves, intuitions which, in turn, relate immediately to an object. This is indeed a subsumption, but it is a subsumption in something exceeding a purely conceptual sense: it is not a concept but an *intuition* that is ultimately subsumed under a concept.⁸⁶ General logic, of course, knows and need know nothing of all this, since it abstracts from the content of cognition altogether (CPR A54/B78). But for transcendental logic, which concerns the pure thought of the object (CPR A55/B80), precisely this is the key point: in every judgment there must be a concept that is employed to subsume an intuition under a concept, for only in this way does a relation to an object enter into the judgment; what makes it a *judgment*—and thus something with cognitive value—is that it is *about an object*.

At this point Kant is finally ready to confirm the "clue" which he has already identified: "We can . . . trace all actions of the understanding back to judgments [*auf Urteile zurückführen*], so that the **understanding** in general can be represented as a **faculty for judging**" (CPR A69/B94). For reasons I have already given, I think there is good reason to read Kant's reference to the *Vermögen zu urteilen* here as a reference to the *act* of judging, the act which expresses the unity of all acts of the understanding. And this is just because it is the *act* of judging to which the unity of *action* characteristic of concepts must be traced back in order to be understood. Kant now goes on to briefly retrace the grounds of his argument from the top:

⁸⁶ Again, there *is* always a conceptual subsumption; Kant's point is just that in every judgment there must be an intuitive one, as well.

For according to what has been said above [the understanding] is a faculty for thinking. Thinking is cognition through concepts. Concepts, however, as predicates of possible judgments, are related to some representation of a still undetermined object. The concept of body thus signifies something, e.g., metal, which can be cognized through that concept. It is therefore a concept only because other representations are contained under it which can be related to objects. It is therefore the predicate for a possible judgment, e.g., "Every metal is a body." (CPR A69/B94)

Kant describes concepts as "predicates of possible judgments"; he is here surely not talking about one possible use of concepts among others, but rather referring back to the *only* possible use of concepts described at A68/B93 (in the "no other use" claim). Thus concepts not only incidentally, but *essentially* relate to an object, even though this relation is, strictly speaking, external to those concepts themselves. Abstracted from the determining activity of the concept, the object remains "*noch unbestimmt*," an indeterminacy reflected in the "*etwas*" of the next sentence: "The concept of the body thus signifies *something* . . ." (my emphasis).⁸⁷ That is, the concept has cognitive value only insofar as it can actively determine a range of representations which considered in themselves remain objectively indeterminate.

The crucial sentence here is the penultimate one: "It is therefore a concept only because other representations are contained under it which can be related to objects." Normally, this is taken to mean that a concept is only a concept because it contains under it *intuitions* which "can be related to objects." But this is not actually Kant's meaning, as his locution "can be related . . ." indicates: it is not that intuitions "can be" related to objects, as if this were *one* possible use of them, for intuitions relate *immediately* to objects. Rather,

⁸⁷ Kant often refers to the *etwas* by means of an "x" in his notes. "If anything x, which is cognized by means of a representation a, is compared with another concept b, as either including or excluding this concept, then this relation is in the judgment" (R 3920 [1769]; 17:344-345). And "in every judgment the subject in general is something = x which, cognized under the mark a, is compared with another mark" (R 3921 [1769]; 17:345). In these remarks, the "mark" a is distinguished from the "anything" or "something" x, and the cognition of x through a is called *conceptual* cognition.

Kant's claim runs exactly parallel to his explanation of *All bodies are divisible*:⁸⁸ a concept (like the concept of divisibility) is a concept only because it can be (by virtue of another concept, like the concept of body, being employed in a special way) related to objects (i.e., via the intuitions falling under the concept of body). This refers us to the two different uses of the concept of body (in the A68/B93 example): on the one hand, its use as a node to relate the concept of divisibility indefinitely downwards; on the other, its use in bringing a relation to an object into the judgment. To say that the concept of divisibility "can be related to objects" is just to say that according to *one* use of the concept of body, the concept of divisibility is related to objects. Kant reinforces this distinction by subtly changing his A68/B93 example (*All bodies are divisible*) into a related variant: *Every metal is a body* (see n. 88). Again, Kant's main point is that in the judgment *Every metal is a body* there is, once again, a concept (this time, *metal*) that is used transcendently, namely, to subsume intuitions under a concept. But by now placing *body* in the predicate position, Kant performatively illustrates the two uses of concepts he has just distinguished, for in the A69/B94 example the very same concept, *body*, is used merely logically that had been used both transcendently and logically at A68/B93.

Immediately upon giving this example, Kant restates his main claim: "The functions of the understanding can therefore all be found together if one can exhaustively exhibit the functions of unity in judgments" (CPR A69/B94). And in fact the conclusion of the summary presentation of Kant's main argument precisely reflects his earlier claim that the

⁸⁸ Kant complicates matters by changing his example from *All bodies are divisible* (at A68/B93) to *Every metal is a body* (at A69/B94). When he says, "the concept of body thus signifies something . . .," he has in mind the form of the example he is *about to give* at A69/B94. If we stick with the A68/B93 example, as I will in the following explanation, we must accordingly transpose what he says about the "concept of body" into a discussion of "the concept of the divisible." See below for an explanation of why Kant makes this move with so much potential to confuse his reader.

understanding *in general* can be represented as a faculty for judging. Indeed, Kant proceeds without further ado to a presentation of the table of judgments.

I will close this section with one final note. On my reading (as on most other readings) of Kant's argument, its weight falls particularly heavily on one particular premise—namely, what I have above referred to as the “no other use” claim.⁸⁹ As we have seen, this premise marks Kant's view off from views like Spinoza's, where concepts, instead of being “used” by the understanding in acts of judgment, are the *ipsum intelligere* (see p. 48 above). But for this very reason it is a bit hard to see what, if any, independent justification Kant has to offer for this premise.⁹⁰ Granted, as long as we accept the Cartesian distinction between acts of understanding and acts of judgment (which Spinoza, at any rate, sees as the relevant alternative to his own view),⁹¹ Kant's view has a great deal of plausibility. But it cannot simply function as an established premise in the Transcendental Deduction. Whether it does is a question I must leave for another occasion.

B128-129: The Inner Principle of the Transcendental Deduction

As Longuenesse has emphasized, the role of judgment in the Transcendental Deduction of the 1781 edition of the *Critique* remains merely implicit, a situation which accounts for a

⁸⁹ In the A68/B93 argument, the complete claim is: “Now the understanding can make no other use of these concepts than that of judging by means of them.” In its A69/B94 restatement, Kant's gloss is simply that concepts are “predicates of possible judgments.”

⁹⁰ Kant does offer an interesting remark in a footnote to his belated entry into the pantheism controversy. He complains, understandably, about the claim that there are Spinozist undercurrents in the first *Critique*. A key point of difference, Kant points out, has to do with the different ways *concepts* are conceived in the two philosophies: “The *Critique* proves that the table of the pure concepts of the understanding has to contain all the material for pure thinking; Spinozism speaks of thoughts which themselves think [*Gedanken, die doch selbst denken*], and thus of an accident that simultaneously exists for itself as a subject: a concept that is not to be found in the human understanding and moreover cannot be brought into it” (OOT 8:143n). This rather crude misunderstanding of Spinoza's view does not quite give one confidence that Kant has appreciated the stakes of the question.

⁹¹ See, of course, Descartes's extensive discussion in the Fourth Meditation (Descartes [1641], 39ff. [VII:56ff.]). Cf. Spinoza (1677), 484 (EIIIP49).

good deal of its obscurity.⁹² If we consider, even briefly, what is to be shown in the deduction, it is hard to find fault with Longuenesse's claim. In the Transcendental Deduction, Kant is trying to show that the pure concepts of the understanding, its most basic "categories" whose form can be found, we have seen, in the basic acts of judgment, are valid with respect to objects—objects with which we come into immediate contact only by means of (initially indeterminate) intuitions. In the third section of the "Clue" chapter (§10 in the second edition), Kant sums up what must be proved in a succinct manner: "The same function that gives unity to the different representations **in a judgment** also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations **in an intuition**, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of the understanding" (CPR A79/B104-105). In the second edition, as we have seen, Kant goes on to introduce the Transcendental Deduction by reminding us of the "precisely determined definition of **judgment** in general" (MFNS 4:475n; cf. CPR B128-129), and it should not be surprising that we find Kant turning back, once again, to the example he first introduced at A68/B93 in his initial discussion of judgment: *All bodies are divisible*. His next moves, however, require some explanation.

Kant begins with a claim that is new; with regard to *All bodies are divisible*, he now points out that according to the merely "logical use" of the understanding, "it would remain undetermined which of these two concepts will be given the function of the subject and which will be given that of the predicate. For one can also say: 'Something divisible is a body'" (CPR B128-129; cf. MFNS 4:475n). Now, without Kant's example, it might appear that his point is that although the form of *All bodies are divisible* is *logically* determined with respect to the functions of judgment, the placement of the concepts of *body* and

⁹² See Longuenesse (1998), 55-56.

divisibility is not determined by logic alone. If this were his point, it would be a straightforward reflection of his oft-repeated view that logic deals with the form, not the matter, of cognition (CPR A54/B78; JL 9:12). Kant's example, however ("For one can also say . . ."), indicates that he is after something else altogether—something concerning the relationship between *All bodies are divisible* and *Something divisible is a body*. The "one can also say" locution might even suggest that Kant takes the two statements to be logically equivalent, in the sense of entailing and being entailed by the same set of judgments. Of course, they clearly are not.

To see what, alternatively, Kant might have in mind, we should first revisit his distinction between the "real" and "logical" uses of the understanding. By the merely "logical" use of the understanding Kant has in mind the acts by which logical form is conferred upon content initially given through sensibility, and in this, his position remains unchanged from the *Inaugural Dissertation*.⁹³ Such a use is called *logical* because it consists merely in giving clearer form to material that is given to it from elsewhere, whether that be accomplished by reflection of that material into concepts or determination of that material by concepts already reflected. By contrast, in its "real use" Kant now says that the understanding "brings a transcendental content into its representations" (CPR A79/B105). In this respect, of course, Kant no longer holds the view, characteristic of the 1770 *Dissertation*, that the understanding can access a world of intelligible objects and in doing so give itself its own specific content; instead, he tells us, this "transcendental content" is introduced merely "by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold of intuition in general" (CPR A79/B105). Thus in its merely logical use, the understanding abstracts from any

⁹³ See p. 26 above.

relation to intuition, so that according to this use the judgment *All bodies are divisible* abstracts from all intuitive spatiotemporal representations.⁹⁴ In this mode of understanding, the judgment *All bodies are divisible* becomes about the relation between the concepts *body* and *divisible*, not about the actual bodies that are given to us in intuition. In the terminology introduced earlier, but which can now be seen to correspond to Kant's own, we would say that the use of both concepts would be merely *logical*.

Now, Kant's claim, as we have seen, is that the function of the subject is, with respect to the logical use of the understanding, "undetermined," a claim which he illustrates by reference to the *judicium convertens* (cf. DWL 24:770),⁹⁵ i.e., *Something divisible is a body*. Of course, as Kant well knows,⁹⁶ the two judgments are not logically equivalent: the *judicium convertens* is weaker than the *conversum*.⁹⁷ But what Kant is drawing attention to is that when we use the understanding in a merely logical manner, a judgment is, for us, nothing over and beyond the inferences that can be drawn from it. This is connected, of course, with his original use of the example at A68/B93: according to the logical use of the concept of body, it functions as a mere node relating the concept of divisibility downwards to ever more specific concepts; in a parallel manner, the subject of the judgment is "undetermined" according to the logical use of the understanding because the judgment itself is nothing more than the initial node in the series of inferences that it makes possible. These inferences, of course, need not share the same logical form as the initial judgment, but that

⁹⁴ Notice that this is *not* to say that this judgment bears no relation to the *concepts* of space and time.

⁹⁵ Kant follows §346 of Meier's textbook, reprinted in the *Akademie* edition at 16:698-699.

⁹⁶ See JL 9:118-119; also DWL 24:770-771; HL 91-92.

⁹⁷ In Kant's terminology: the conversion is altered, not pure (JL 9:118).

is precisely Kant's point: the concept of *body* may appear in either the subject position, as in the *judicium conversum*, or in the predicate position, as in the *convertens*.⁹⁸

What merits attention here, Kant thinks, is that the merely logical use of the understanding remains indifferent to which of the concepts (*body* or *divisibility*) is used transcendently to subsume intuitions. Such a transcendental use, we will recall, is necessary if any judgment is, in fact, to be a *judgment* in the first place; this was the point of the example as it was originally introduced at A68/B93. Only with regard to the *real* use of the understanding is it determined which of the concepts is to be used transcendently, a point Kant makes as follows: "Through the category of substance, however, if I bring the concept of a body under it, it is determined that its empirical intuition in experience must always be considered as subject, never as mere predicate; and likewise with all the other categories" (CPR B129). Reference to, or, as Kant sometimes puts it, the application of, a *category* determines the concept of body to the position of subject in the judgment. It does so by linking the concept up with "its empirical intuition"; thus we are not only making a point about the conceptual relations between the bodily and the divisible, but referring to actual bodies, real objects in the world whose relations to one another always exceed the logical relations we can determine with respect to their concepts. "Likewise," Kant says,

⁹⁸ Longuenesse, who considers this passage several times and in some detail, illustrates Kant's reference to convertibility by referring us to a passage in *Metaphysik von Schön*. Here, however, the example is the reversibility of *Some men are learned* and *Some learned individuals are men* (MS 28:472). These *particular* affirmative judgments, however, are convertible *simpliciter*, which distinguishes them from *universal* affirmative judgments, which are only convertible *per accidens* (again, see JL 9:118-119; Longuenesse's discussion is at Longuenesse [1998], 250-251). Thus the *Metaphysics von Schön* passage is, I think, somewhat misleading in this context, for it suggests that Kant is relying on the fact that the *judicium convertens* has the same logical significance as the *conversum*, which is not, of course, the case in his example in the first *Critique*. On the other hand, Kant's point is not entirely captured, I think, in the mere acknowledgement that, as Longuenesse puts it elsewhere, "from the logical point of view any concept may be used either as subject or as predicate in a judgment" (Longuenesse [1998], 326). This is, of course, true, but Kant is driving at something more here: from the logical point of view we abstract from any object the judgment could be about and consider it only insofar as it occupies a syntactic place in a propositional calculus, the calculus to which the *judicium convertens* is meant to be a reference.

“with all the other categories.” He means by this to indicate that the convertibility of judgments *also* shows how judgments can be varied with respect to quantity and quality; in the present example, when converted to *Something divisible is a body*, the judgment has a different quantity. In each case it is only by applying a category that a judgment is in fact determined in all three respects. (I leave aside here the more complex case of the categories of modality.)

The contrast that emerges between the real and the (merely) logical use of the understanding is a stark one. The difference is between clarifying relations that obtain among concepts and actually saying something about an object, or objects, in the world. It is the *object* with which judgment, in its most proper sense, is concerned, for, as we have seen, it is judgment that, according to its “precisely determined definition,” is “an action through which given representations first become cognitions of an object” (MFNS 4:475n). Judging thus requires the real, not merely the logical, use of the understanding, and because the unity characteristic of concepts is entirely parasitic upon the unity of acts of judgment, the logical use of the understanding actually presupposes this real use. Indeed, this is the decisive step Kant takes in the first *Critique* beyond his doctrine in the *Inaugural Dissertation*. In 1770 he had held that “there is no way from appearance to experience except by reflection in accordance with the logical use of the understanding” (ID 2:394). By 1781 he is ready to affirm not just that the understanding *has* a real use with respect to appearances, but that its logical use in reflecting appearances under concepts actually presupposes this. And this, it appears, is just what Kant recognizes in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* to be the key to the Transcendental Deduction and which

leads him to reorient the deduction around the definition of judgment in the 1787 edition of the *Critique*.

A133/B172: The Power of Judgment

Kant's discussion of judgment does not, of course, end with the second-edition Transcendental Deduction. In fact, it is architectonically surprising that the discussion has even begun. For the next major division of the book is officially titled the Transcendental Doctrine of the Power of Judgment, although it is now usually referred to as the Analytic of Principles. The location of this extended discussion of the power of judgment corresponds to the traditional location of discussions of this faculty in logic textbooks; it is a faculty standing between the basic elements of cognition (concepts) and the comprehensive syllogistic system of reason.⁹⁹ This is certainly the role Kant's reader would have *expected* judgment to play in the context of the project of a "transcendental logic," and this is, of course, why Kant felt the need to justify his introduction of the forms of judgment earlier in the text. It is only because Kant has already argued that this faculty is supposed to contain the principle of *all* acts of the understanding that we are now encountering this faculty, as it were, for a second time.

Now, if Longuenesse and I are right (despite our differences) that the *Urteilstkraft* plays a crucial role in the First Section of the Clue,¹⁰⁰ we should expect to find a close connection between Kant's introduction of the *Urteilstkraft* and his earlier discussion. In fact, I think this is precisely what we find in the Analytic of Principles, and Kant's discussion

⁹⁹ See p. 43 above, as well as the brief overview of the literature in Brandt (1995), 54-55.

¹⁰⁰ Again, the difference is that for Longuenesse the role of the *Urteilstkraft* is indirect: its activity is the goal towards which the activity of the *Vermögen zu urteilen* is ultimately directed. See p. 48 above. As far as I am aware, however, Longuenesse does not attempt to link Kant's famous A133/B172 passage back up to her interpretation.

of the *Urteilkraft* sheds considerable light back onto the Transcendental Deduction that immediately precedes it. In fact, the points about judgment that Kant makes here, which are usually not discussed in connection with the deduction, seem to me to be crucial if we are to understand the underlying significance of the latter.

The power of judgment is that higher faculty of cognition that stands above the understanding and beneath reason. Here Kant's classification remains altogether traditional; the understanding is a faculty of concepts (which are, as Kant understands them, rules),¹⁰¹ judgment a faculty of the subsumption of particulars under concepts,¹⁰² reason a faculty of principles, i.e., universal cognitions used as major premises of syllogisms, so that the particular can be derived *a priori* from the universal.¹⁰³ Thus Kant's unusual view that the faculty of judgment contains the unifying principle for all three of these subfaculties does not preclude him from seeing the role of judgment in the context of the activity of these faculties in a very traditional way, namely, as a mediator between the higher cognitive faculties of understanding and reason.¹⁰⁴

Kant begins by reminding us of the distinction between general and transcendental logic (cf. CPR A50-57/B74-82; JL 9:15). General logic, he says, "can give no precepts to the

¹⁰¹ Thus Kant typically identifies the understanding as a faculty of concepts (CPR A130/B169; CPJ 5:228) or a faculty of rules (CPR A126; A 7:199); only in the context of the argument that judging is the basic form of acts of the understanding does he identify it as a faculty for judging (CPR A69/B94).

¹⁰² CPR A132/B171; CPJ 5:179; A 7:199.

¹⁰³ CPR A11/B24-25, A300/B357, A646/B674; CPJ 5:167; A 7:199. Kant also refers to reason as the "faculty of the unity of the rules of understanding under principles" (CPR A302/B359), by which we are to understand that the unity of the particular rules of the understanding is what first makes possible the derivation of the particular from the universal. That is, only when unified, so that they no longer stand beside one another abstractly, do general rules suffice to determine particulars independently of the contributions of sensibility.

¹⁰⁴ Longuenesse claims, and I strongly agree, that the reflecting activity of judgment, to which Kant only draws explicit attention in the third *Critique*, is in fact presupposed in the analysis of the first *Critique*. But just as we disagree about the (purported) conceptual priority of the *Vermögen zu urteilen*, so we disagree on the priority of the reflecting activity of judgment. On my view, the reflecting activity of judgment depends transcendently on its determining use, not just, as Longuenesse would have it, in that the latter represents the *goal* of the former, but in that no reflection is possible without an initial determination.

power of judgment” (CPR A135/B174), for in general the power of judgment is a power of subsumption. Now, whether a particular case falls under a general concept is not something that can be thoroughly determined by means of a further concept or system of concepts, for if every rule itself required a rule in order for it to be applied correctly, then, on pain of regress, no rule could ever be applied (CPR A133/B172; cf. TP 8:275). Subsumption in general, and therefore the power of judgment, cannot be an essentially rule-governed activity.

Though Kant’s point is familiar, an example can nevertheless help make it clear. Suppose that subsumption *were* an essentially rule-governed activity. In this case, to apply the concept *otter* to the body in front of me, I would need to appeal to the characteristic marks of otterness, so that I can conclude that I should apply the concept to this body if and only if these marks hold of it. To recognize these marks as holding of this body, in turn, would require recourse to still another set of characteristic marks, and so on and so on. Thus if a judgment is actually to reach its object, Kant concludes, some extraconceptual recognitional step must be involved. In other words, no matter how complete my grasp and understanding of the empirical concept *otter* may be, there always remains nonconceptual work left to do in recognizing something as an instance of one; what is more, because such a nontrivial task of judging always remains, it is always possible to judge wrongly, even if one’s grasp of the characteristics of the concept to be applied is impeccable. In the first *Critique* Kant expresses this point by emphasizing that “the power of judgment is a special talent that cannot be taught but only practiced” (CPR A133/B172), and, as we have already seen, he elsewhere claims that judgment is “the understanding that comes only with years” (A 7:199).

If all this appears at first blush to be a string of merely trivial truths, a brief reminder of the threat to judgment—or at least to the ineliminability of nonconceptual subsumption—in much of early modern philosophy may be of help. Descartes’s discussion of judgment in the Fourth Meditation, in particular, constitutes important background for Kant’s position. Descartes had argued that because the scope of the will is broader than that of the intellect, there arises the possibility of error, i.e., judging falsely. If we are to use our intellect properly, at least in the domain of *scientia*, we must first train ourselves to restrict the scope of our willful judgment to that which we clearly and distinctly understand.¹⁰⁵ Thus for Descartes our faculty of judgment is properly reined in only when it sticks to the conceptual paths already carved out by the understanding. Malebranche, as we might expect, takes this principle even further: to accept an apparent truth without the evidence of clear and distinct perception is to “enslave oneself against the will of God” and to misuse the freedom He has granted us. “The use, therefore, that we should make of our freedom is **to make as much use of it as we can**, that is, never to consent to anything until we are forced to do so, as it were, by the inward reproaches of our reason.”¹⁰⁶ By contrast, Kant’s view is that to subject judgment to such strong restrictions is to eliminate it as a distinct (and necessary) faculty altogether. The work of judgment properly begins, in fact, precisely where the work of the understanding finds itself exhausted: we *judge*, in fact, *only* in cases in which we say a bit more, by way of a subsumption that goes beyond the conceptual, than we already understood.

We can see this if we look at Kant’s account of error. “Taking something to be true is an occurrence in our understanding that may rest on objective grounds, but that also

¹⁰⁵ Descartes (1641), 41-42 (VII:59-60).

¹⁰⁶ Malebranche (1674-1675), 10; but see also xliii, 70.

requires subjective causes in the mind of him who judges” (CPR A820/B848). Now, if the grounds are in fact objectively sufficient, we say we are convinced, while if the grounds are only subjective, we say we are persuaded.¹⁰⁷ Crucially, however, there is no subjective means for distinguishing being convinced from being persuaded; the best we can do is to utilize “the experiment that one makes on the understanding of others, to see if the grounds that are valid for us have the same effect on the reason of others” (CPR A821/B849). In short, listening to Malebranche’s “inward reproaches of reason” is never sufficient for the achievement of objective cognition. This completely inverts the rationalist orthodoxy, which, since Descartes’s Fourth Meditation, had committed itself to the systematic excision of *risk* from properly scientific cognition. Now we find Kant insisting that scientific cognition, if it is really to be objective at all, is actually founded in the very risk that Malebranche had considered a veritable rebellion against God.

Of course, Descartes and Malebranche are not eliminating the task of the faculty of judgment on account of some arbitrary whim. For them it reflects the very essence of the Enlightenment: to accept as true (at least in matters of scientific cognition) nothing beyond that which our own reason compels us to. So we must ask: how could Kant attempt this inversion of rationalist orthodoxy while retaining his claim to be an *Aufklärer*? If it is not judgment which must submit to the discipline of reason, but reason which must be rooted in judgment, what is to prevent disagreement from deteriorating into opposing judgments that are not ultimately responsible to reasons? Doesn’t Kant remark that all cognition must conform to rules, adding that “absence of rules is at the same time unreason” (JL 9:139)?

¹⁰⁷ Kant’s distinction is between *Überzeugung* and *Überredung*, respectively.

These questions can only be answered if we draw an important distinction: although some act of judgment is the necessary condition for all subsequently rational cognition, no particular judgment can be appealed to in the context of objective cognition without an implicit commitment to further rational justification. To see Kant's point, consider an example from practical philosophy. Surely it would be unsatisfying if, say, a dispute about the injustice of a particular action could at some point be declared to be no longer conceptually clarifiable, a mere matter of "judgment." Perhaps we agree that it is wrong to engage in torture, but we cannot agree as to whether the particular case in front of us is subsumable under that concept. If we leave the dispute there, we are merely left with a case of one person judging in one way, another in a second, different way. Although we may, regrettably, in fact find ourselves stuck in suchlike situations from time to time, it is important to Kant that recourse to judgment as a way to *end* a dispute—to disengage from one another with respect to the matter at hand—is never a permissible move in rational discourse (again, see CPR A821/B849).

In fact, to suppose that it would follow from Kant's view of judgment that any particular judgment could be invoked as the endpoint of a rational argument would be to stand his view precisely on its head, for judgment is the opening gambit of all rational discourse, not its (infinitely distant) goal. Kant's point, rather, is that until I take a stand one way or another—e.g., judge that this action either *is* or *is not* an instance of injustice—no evidential standard has been established to which I or others can subsequently be held rationally responsible in the first place. The act of judgment, we might say, is the transcendental condition of rational agreement and disagreement, for there can be no objective matter about which we can even be said to genuinely disagree until we establish a

relation to an (intersubjectively available) object by means of judging. Thus only when we say a bit more than can be conceptually elucidated at the present time—only when we move beyond a mere concept through an act of judgment—can we satisfy the conditions for discussing an *object*, rather than a free-floating concept; only then can our discussion be, e.g., about this very act of torture, instead of about the concept of justice. In what follows I will refer to this as the “transcendental risk” associated with the foundational role of judgment. Granted, once the realm of objective discourse is opened up, rationality and reason-responsiveness are not responsibilities that can be casually tossed aside. But it is in and through the act of judgment that we first establish a mode of access to the discursive realm in which argument can be responsible both to reasons—an indefinitely expandable conceptual matrix restricted by the criterion of consistency—as well as evidence—the objects in the shared world with which we must ultimately have to do if our conclusions are to have any significance—without the reduction of either source of epistemic responsibility to the other.

Another way to put this point is to simply say that, for human beings, at least, the existence of objective scientific cognition depends on the presence of an evidential commitment which is not itself scientific in nature. However we choose to organize and reorganize the system of concepts that constitutes science, the condition for a scientific system to ever acquire objective validity is for us to commit ourselves to the applicability of some concept(s) in that system to an *object*. Only by maintaining that this object is an instance of some concept do we lend objective validity to the system of concepts bound up with the latter. We may, of course, eventually abandon the view that this object is an instance of such a concept; Kant’s point is not that this particular commitment must be held

come what may. But without holding onto *some* such commitment, a commitment which must, for the time being, at least, be held back from rational criticism, the condition for objective cognition in general will remain lacking.

As far as the interpretation is concerned, the crucial point is this: the inability of judgment to be comprehensively rule-governed is not some additional, incidental feature of this faculty which Kant can now (in the *Analytic of Principles*) simply append to his previous discussion of judgment (as analyzed above). Rather, Kant's point here turns out to be one that was already implicitly assumed in the discussion at A68/B93. Not only that: the non-rule-governedness of judgment is the very reason why it is able to play such a foundational role in the earlier text in the first place. To see this, consider again the centrality of the unity of an *action* in Kant's explanation of the nature of concepts. This action cannot rely on a unity given in advance of the act of judgment, for that unity of objective cognition was the very thing judgment was invoked to explain. Only through original acts of judging do we establish the links between concepts and intuitions that lend concepts in general their objective validity. Concepts, accordingly, can only be *rules* if they originate in the non-rule-governed, but nevertheless rule-generating, acts of judgment. This explains how Kant can hold the seemingly paradoxical position that the understanding is at once a "faculty for judging" and a "faculty of rules," despite the fact that Kant thinks judging is not rule-governed: for Kant, the understanding can only be a faculty of rules because the norms governing its use hold sway over us just insofar as we have already discharged our original responsibility to judge.

To sum up, then: Kant argues at the beginning of the *Transcendental Analytic* that all the acts of the understanding can be found together if we locate the principle underlying

the various activities of our power of judgment. This is because the unity characteristic of concepts refers back to the unity of acts of judgment. Now, if acts of judgment could be analyzed in terms of conceptual clarity and distinctness, Kant's explanation here would be circular, for the normative principles governing the power of judgment would be immanent to the concepts which are themselves to be judged. Only because judgments require us to step beyond the confines of our concepts as currently constituted are they even eligible to play the role they play at the beginning of the *Transcendental Analytic*. A rational discussion about an object in the world presupposes that a judgment has already been rendered about this object, a judgment which makes cognition of this object possible in the first place. But for that very reason it cannot in the first instance have itself been thoroughly rational, i.e., responsible to the rationalist ideals of clarity and distinctness.

Judgments of Perception and Judgments of Experience

If we understand Kant's objection to rationalist strategies for eliminating the distinctive role of judgment, we are well-positioned to understand his fundamental objection to the empiricists, as well. Whereas the rationalists sought to elevate the faculty of cognition by identifying it with its highest part, reason, the empiricists sought to deflate its pretensions altogether by identifying it with its lowest part, sensible intuition. We can find this ambition at its crudest in the work of Helvétius, who asks, "What is it to judge?" He answers, "To tell what I feel. Am I struck on the head? Is the pain violent? The simple recital of what I feel forms my judgment."¹⁰⁸ When I judge, I simply "make an exact report of the impressions I have received."¹⁰⁹ Helvétius, at least, does not hesitate to draw the conclusion to which expressions like "exact report" and "simple recital" are obviously leading him:

¹⁰⁸ Helvétius (1772), I:112.

¹⁰⁹ Helvétius (1772), I:111.

“This being settled, all the operations of the mind are reduced to mere sensations. Why then admit in man a faculty of judging distinct from the faculty of sensation?”¹¹⁰

Hume, as we know, is not so tactless in his procedure. But alongside the work of Helvétius, Maupertuis, and Condillac, Hume’s own reduction of the acts of the mind formed part of a definite trend.¹¹¹ For his part, Hume had actually argued in the *Treatise* for the reduction of the acts of the mind—commonly taken (again Hume follows the Port-Royal classification) to be *conception, judgment, and reasoning*—to conception alone.¹¹² Since, however, the acts of the understanding are ultimately referred, in Hume, to feeling, Hume’s reduction of judgment to “conception” takes on the opposite significance to that which it had for the rationalists: it is to eliminate judgment from the other side, as it were. If the rationalists ask us to rely on an intuitive *seeing* of truth, for the empiricists we are ultimately *led* to it by means of natural human sensations or sentiments. Hume, of course, has a subtle and, after its own manner, plausible story to tell about judgment and sentiment. In the willing hands of Helvétius, on the other hand, judgment becomes “the simple recital of what I feel.”

In either case, of course, we know what Kant will say. The affective reduction of judgments (to feelings), just like the rational reduction of judgments (to concepts), divorces cognition from the moment of transcendental risk that is the necessary condition of its objective provenance. Thus the empiricists, like the rationalists, end up denying that we can judge about objects at all. “To substitute subjective necessity, that is, custom,” Kant

¹¹⁰ Helvétius (1772), I:113. Cf. Cassirer’s account of a similar attempt at a reduction in Maupertuis. Cassirer (1932), 100-101, 120.

¹¹¹ Cassirer, at any rate, sees the methodology that appears here, i.e., that of reducing the operations of the mind to one original power, as “characteristic of and decisive for the entire eighteenth century.” Cassirer (1932), 27.

¹¹² Hume (1739-1740), 96-97 (1.3.7n). This is a footnote to Hume’s discussion of belief.

says, “for objective necessity, which is to be found only in *a priori* judgments, is to deny to reason the ability to judge an object, that is, to cognize it and what belongs to it” (CPrR 5:12). And given that the relation to an object is constitutive for judgment in general, we would expect Kant to go on to specify that the empiricist position rests on the denial that we can judge *simpliciter*.

To the continued consternation of his interpreters, this is not what Kant does at all. In his most prolonged (though not, in Kant’s mind, most decisive) engagement with Hume, the *Prolegomena*, Kant introduces a distinction between judgments of perception and judgments of experience and in doing so appears to commit himself to the existence of judgments that are *not* objectively valid. Given what we have just seen, and given that a judgment is described in 1781 as a “mediate cognition of an object” (CPR A68/B93), in 1786 as “an action through which given representations first become cognitions of an object” (MFNS 4:475n), and in 1787 as “the way to bring cognition to the **objective** unity of apperception” (CPR B141), this is surprising, to the say the least.¹¹³

In the face of such difficulties, interpreters have adopted a remarkably wide array of approaches. We can roughly organize them into three categories. First, there are those who would simply acknowledge that Kant contradicts himself in an obvious manner. Guyer argues, for instance, that Kant’s confusion here is just a symptom of the two incompatible premises on which Kant sought, never successfully, to base the Transcendental

¹¹³ It might be pointed out, in this context, that the centrality of judgment to the Transcendental Deduction is in fact announced only in 1786 (see above, p. 40) and subsequently executed in 1787. Perhaps, even despite the textual evidence, this was just not Kant’s view in 1781 or 1783. Against this, however, we have Kant’s insistence—presumably based on something more than mere pride in his 1781 accomplishment—that the second edition of the Deduction consists merely in a rearrangement of the presentation, not the “grounds of proof,” of the argument (CPR Bxxxvii-xxxviii). This strongly suggests that he came to see judgment as the key to the A Deduction, as well, even if he came to find his earlier articulation of this point wanting.

Deduction.¹¹⁴ Second, there are those who think that ascribing an outright contradiction to Kant is avoidable so long as we recognize the deep methodological divide separating the *Prolegomena* from either edition of the first *Critique*. Allison, for instance, takes it that because Kant is assuming that some objectively valid judgments exist (in accordance with the analytic method),¹¹⁵ it is sufficient for him in the *Prolegomena* to show that even if there *were* merely subjective judgments based on perception alone, they could not be rendered objectively valid without an application of the categories. And for this purpose it is simply unnecessary for Kant to *also* explain the role played by the categories in perception itself.¹¹⁶ Finally, there are those who think there is no real contradiction at all between the texts. To show this, Longuenesse has offered an extremely detailed and subtle reading of the relevant passages.¹¹⁷ Although it does not really do her argument justice, we might say loosely that, on her reading, judgments of perception correspond to the *Vermögen zu urteilen*, judgments of experience to the *Urteilkraft*. Both involve the logical forms of judgment, but only in judgments of experience do we apply the categories, where the latter are understood not merely as forms of the *Vermögen zu urteilen* but as reflected universal concepts.¹¹⁸ Far from contradicting himself, then, in the *Prolegomena* Kant makes explicit a distinction upon which he had been tacitly relying even in the first *Critique*.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Guyer (1987), 101. Sassen (2008) also falls into this camp, although her historical explanation is not the same as Guyer's.

¹¹⁵ Kant announces that he will be pursuing an analytic method in the *Prolegomena*, rather than a synthetic one, at P 4:275. Cf. P 4:276n; JL 9:149.

¹¹⁶ Allison (2004), 182.

¹¹⁷ Longuenesse (1998), 167-197, esp. 188-195.

¹¹⁸ See esp. Longuenesse (1998), 196.

¹¹⁹ This is not to say, however, that Longuenesse does *not* recognize differences in goals and methodology across the two texts (see, in particular, Longuenesse [1998], 187-188), just that on the whole her account attempts to show a deep affinity between them (in a way, e.g., in which Allison does not).

My own approach, I think, fits best under the second category. It must be immediately acknowledged, however, that the interpretive problem is not confined to the *Prolegomena*. Compare, for example, the following *Reflexionen*. First, consider one dated (by Adickes) 1790-1804 that closely links judgment and objectivity in just the way we would typically expect:

Judgment: The representation of the way in which different concepts belong to one consciousness objectively* (for everyone).

*[Kant's note]: (i.e., in order to constitute a cognition of the object.) (R 3055 16:634)

Now, however, consider this earlier note, dated 1776-1780s:

The representation of the way in which different concepts (as such) *belong to one consciousness** (in general (not merely mine)) is the judgment. They belong to one consciousness partly in accordance with laws of the imagination, thus subjectively, or of the understanding, i.e., objectively valid for every being that has understanding. . . .

*[Kant's note]: universally necessary (empirical or *a priori*)

[Kant's note, added later]: **Concepts belong to one consciousness only insofar as they are conceived under one another, not next to one another (like **sensations**). (R 3051 16:633)

In the second note, at least, it is clear that Kant is thinking of judgment as a genus with both subjective and objective species. The *Prolegomena* distinction appears in several of Kant's logic lectures (JL 9:113; cf. DWL 24:767),¹²⁰ and in the third *Critique* he deals with judgments which are merely subjectively valid.¹²¹ In fact, I think it is fair to say the first *Critique* is the exception, not the rule, in this respect. Thus if the problem is due to a special

¹²⁰ In addition, if one agrees (as I do) with Longuenesse about the close link between the reflecting activity of judgment and judgments of perception, we could cite an earlier section of the *Jäsche Logic*, in which Kant distinguishes provisional from determining judgments (JL 9:74) and goes on to note that “**due to a lack of reflection**, which must precede all judging” (JL 9:76), provisional judgments may be misused as determining judgments.

¹²¹ In the latter case, at least, he does take pains to address the confusion into which the reader might be led. Aesthetic judgments are not really judgments in the strict sense at all, since “**judgments** belong absolutely only to the understanding (taken in a wider sense),” and “an **objective** judgment is always made by the understanding” (FI 20:222). See also CPJ 5:203-204, 287-288, passages I will discuss in another context below.

methodology, it is the method of the first *Critique*, not the *Prolegomena*, which is primarily relevant.

If we turn, finally, to the *Prolegomena* itself, we find that the key feature of Kant's distinction is that judgments of perception, unlike judgments of experience, do *not* require the "application" of a category and thus do not have the objective validity that only the categories can confer.

Empirical judgments, insofar as they have objective validity, are judgments of experience; those, however, that are only subjectively valid I call mere judgments of perception. The latter do not require pure concepts of the understanding, but only the logical connection of perceptions in a thinking subject. But the former always demand . . . special **concepts originally generated in the understanding**, which are precisely what make the judgment of experience **objectively valid.** (P 4:298)

Judgments of perception, which, according to what we have said, are the perplexing ones, require "only the logical connection of perceptions in a thinking subject." So such a logical connection must be possible without an attendant application of a category. Before we turn to the question of what Kant might have in mind with this "logical connection," however, we must note that Kant immediately goes on to apparently raise the stakes even further. If the first problem is how judgments of perception, which "do not require pure concepts of the understanding," are to be counted as *judgments* at all, the second problem is that Kant claims that all empirical judgments begin as mere judgments of perception. Only *subsequently*, and only in certain cases, are they raised to the status of judgments of experience by the application of a category (P 4:298). This second problem appears to grant the empiricist considerably more than the first *Critique* was willing to concede. Taken together, the questions raise the following interpretive problem: if the "logical connections of perceptions in a thinking subject" precede category application, then what has become of

Kant's result that the real use of the understanding is the necessary condition of its logical use?

A closer examination of the *Prolegomena* only puts a sharper point on this question. There are two "types" of judging, Kant tells us: in the first type (corresponding to judgments of perception) "I merely compare the perceptions and connect them in a consciousness of my state," while in the second (corresponding to judgments of experience) "I connect them in a consciousness in general" (P 4:300; cf. P 4:304-305).¹²² Perhaps surprisingly, however, Kant has already expressed the idea of a *comparison* by saying that it establishes a connection which is merely "logical" (P 4:298, quoted above). This may be surprising because logic is generally described by Kant as dealing essentially with *rules* (e.g., CPR A52/B76; JL 9:11-13, 33), and concepts, which always serve as rules in the context of cognition (CPR A105-106), are based on functions, which in turn deal with "the action of ordering different representations under a common one" (CPR A68/B93). In brief, any connection that is "logical"—"merely" so or otherwise—would seem to be *ipso facto* one of subordination, that is, subsumption, not mere "comparison." Yet here Kant describes the comparison of perceptions as "logical," even though they would appear to belong to one consciousness in virtue of laws of the imagination rather than of the understanding (see R 3051, cited above).

Yet while such references may indicate *one* sense of "logical," we have already seen that Kant is also committed to a broader sense of the term, one which encompasses both comparison, or reflection, and subordination, or determination, as complementary

¹²² On Longuenesse's view, these types of judgment correspond to the reflecting and determining activities of judgment first explicitly distinguished in the third *Critique*. On this point, at least, I am basically in agreement with her. See Longuenesse (1998), 165.

activities of the understanding (ID 2:393; see p. 27 above) in the formation and application of concepts. And this is on full display in Kant's logic: "To make concepts out of representations one must thus be able **to compare, to reflect,** and **to abstract,** for these three logical operations of the understanding are the essential and universal conditions for the generation of every concept whatsoever" (JL 9:94). Thus when Kant says that the connection in a judgment is merely "logical," he means that it rests on the characteristic activities of concept *formation*, not those of concept *application*. But of course this only makes it all the more perplexing, for the time being, at least, why Kant would apparently concede the possibility of a logical use of the understanding that precedes its real use.

Now, a closer look at judgments of perception reveals that they fall into two classes: (1) judgments of perception that are inescapably subjective and hence can never become judgments of experience (e.g., *Wormwood is repugnant* and *Sugar is sweet*; P 4:299n) and (2) judgments of perception that would require only the application of a category to attain objective validity (e.g., *If the sun shines on the stone, it becomes warm*; P 4:301n). Although Kant does not say much in the *Prolegomena* about the difference between them, it will be helpful, I think, to consider it for a moment, since it illuminates some of the background that Kant is presupposing here.

At the bottom of experience, Kant tells us, lies "the intuition of which I am conscious, i.e., perception (*perceptio*)" (P 4:300). Judgments of perception "express only a relation of two sensations to the same subject, namely myself, and this only in my present state of perception, and are therefore not expected to be valid for the object" (P 4:299). In other words, there is a coordination of two sensations by way of reference to a third thing, the subject, in which they are connected. To invoke Kant's first kind of example, *Sugar is sweet*

indicates that two sensations—the taste of sweetness and, say, the visual representation of sugar—are connected according to my subjective perception. In the case of *If the sun shines on the stone, it becomes warm*, sensations of sight and touch are coordinated in much the same way. As the difference in logical forms (across the two examples) shows, any subjective connection does, at least, *have* a logical form,¹²³ but, of course, this is just what we should expect, since comparison is a basic logical act of the understanding (JL 9:94).¹²⁴ So far, we find confirmed—with regard to both classes of judgments of perception—what we had concluded before: such judgments rely on the (merely) logical use of the understanding.

Now, as Kant clarifies elsewhere, sensations can be regarded as either internal or external representations: an internal representation directs our consciousness of the sensation to a motion in the sensory organ, while an external representation directs our consciousness to an object existing outside of us (A 7:156).¹²⁵ Although these are two ways of directing our consciousness with respect to *one* sensation, not all sensations lend themselves equally to both modes of consciousness. In particular, sensations arising from our organs of touch, sight, and hearing contribute more to external representation, while those arising from taste and smell contribute more to internal representation (A 7:154).

¹²³ Here Longuenesse's analysis of the passage is the most helpful. To my mind, at least, she convincingly demonstrates that in this sentence "*wenn*" must be understood as "if," not "when" (Longuenesse [1998], 178-179). Sassen, who sharply separates empiricist laws of association from anything having logical form, defends the traditional translation (Sassen [2008], 273n11). This is due, I think, to neglect of the relevant sense of "logical" in this passage.

¹²⁴ Note that the example given in the *Jäsche Logic* of a judgment of perception is *I, who perceive a tower, perceive in it the red color*, as contrasted with *It is red* (JL 9:113).

¹²⁵ In the *Jäsche Logic* Kant says, "All our cognition has a **twofold** relation, **first** a relation to the **object**, **second** a relation to the subject. In the former respect it is related to **representation**, in the latter to **consciousness**, the universal condition of all cognition in general. – (Consciousness is really a representation that another representation is in me.)" (JL 9:33). I take it, however, that Kant is not maintaining that the relation to the subject is cognitive *per se*, just that it always accompanies the external representation of an object. So although cognition *relates* to the subject, that in virtue of which a representation *only* relates to the subject is a feeling, not a cognition.

The distinction is important, however, because representations contribute to *cognition* precisely insofar as they are external, not internal. If they are internal, the representations are of “enjoyment” and are, presumably, referred not to the faculty of cognition but to that of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure (A 7:154, 157).¹²⁶ Thus we can see why Kant would hold that certain judgments of perception can simply never become judgments of experience: if one or both of the coordinated representations are “internal,” and if, furthermore, the sensations underlying the representations do not lend themselves (on account of their organs of origin) to external representation, then they are not, and cannot become, cognitions of an object at all. In Kant’s example, *Sugar is sweet* is inescapably subjective presumably because the sensation of sweetness originates in an organ which does not lend itself to externally representable sensations.

Note that this accords well with the classification schema of the first *Critique*, where Kant distinguishes the two stems of *perceptio* as *sensatio*, on the one hand, and *cognitio*, on the other (CPR A320/B376-377). As is widely recognized, it is best not to take Kant’s terminology too strictly here; in particular, his use of “sensation” is notoriously shifty (see CPR A20/B34 and CPJ 5:189 for passages which conflict with the A320/B376-377 schema). I take it, however, that, regardless of the vocabulary attached to it, the schema itself remains something to which Kant is committed. Accordingly, to say that a representation, like that of sweetness, remains *internal*, as the *Anthropology* puts it, is just to say that it is referred to the stem of *perceptio* (whatever we want to call it) that is opposite that of cognition. Moreover, this immediately suggests how other judgments of perception may, in

¹²⁶ See CPJ 5:203-204: “Any relation of representations, however, even that of sensations, can be objective (in which case it signifies what is real in an empirical representation); but not the relation to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, by means of which nothing at all in the object is designated, but in which the subject feels itself as it is affected by the representation.”

the course of time, come to be accorded objective validity. Like *Sugar is sweet, If the sun shines on the stone, it becomes warm* includes at least one representation that is *internal* (presumably, the feeling of warmth). Unlike the internal representation of sweetness, however, the internal representation of warmth originates in a tactile sensation that *can* be considered objectively, as well. In doing so we now find ourselves dealing with the *cognitive stem of perceptio* (using the A320/B376-377 terminology). In such a manner a representation that is internal (e.g., a feeling of roughness on the hand) can be transformed into an external one (e.g., of the emery board that is being touched), and in this way what was originally a judgment of perception, to return to the terminology of the *Prolegomena*, is transformed into a judgment of experience. And now—here the terminology of the classification schema is helpful—it is *cognitive* in nature.

If we turn our attention, now, to the third *Critique*, we will find the basic elements of this clarification confirmed:

The perception of an object can be immediately combined with the concept of an object in general . . . for a judgment of cognition, and a judgment of experience can thereby be produced. . . . However, a perception can also be immediately combined with a feeling of pleasure (or displeasure) . . . and an aesthetic judgment, which is not a cognitive judgment, can thus arise. (CPJ 5:287-288)

Kant goes on to make a statement that is relevant for us on account of the distinction he draws in it:

Such a judgment, if it is not a mere judgment of sensation but a formal judgment of reflection [*wenn es nicht bloßes Empfindungs-, sondern ein formales Reflexions-Urteil ist*], which requires the satisfaction of everyone as necessary, must be grounded in something as an *a priori* principle. (CPJ 5:288)

Now, if judgments of perception can, as this aside from the third *Critique* suggests, be called “judgments of sensation,” that refers us all the more decisively to Kant’s distinction in the

first *Critique* between the two stems of *perception*—*sensatio* and *cognitio*—which in turn refers us to the distinction between internal and external representations of sensations. Thus we have a rough model, at least, for understanding the distinction between the two types of judgment of perception, a model which also suggests how the transition from judgments of perception to judgments of experience is accomplished.

This is all the more reason, however, to see Kant's insistence on the possibility of subjective judgments as more than a temporary lapse into which he falls in the *Prolegomena*. Now, as I've indicated, Longuenesse's view is that the account in the *Prolegomena* actually complements and clarifies the account in the first *Critique* rather well. In particular, the *Prolegomena* clarifies the sense in which the reflection of the sensible manifold is *guided* by the logical forms of judgment. The first *Critique* already shows that this must be the case: because we have "no other use" for concepts than judging by means of them, their formation must be guided by the ways we judge.¹²⁷ And if this is so, then the forms of judgment govern the synthesis of the manifold of intuition prior to any "application" of the categories. As concepts, the categories themselves are products of reflection. They reflect, however, not (as is the case for empirical concepts) the given matter of sensible intuition, but rather its forms.¹²⁸ This means that while the initial synthesis of the sensible manifold will be in accordance with the forms of categories and judgments, it does not require the *application* of a (reflected) category.

If Longuenesse is right, this opens up a space in which the first *Critique* and the *Prolegomena* can coexist peacefully on the same terrain. Judgments of perception are those

¹²⁷ See p. 48 above.

¹²⁸ This is why it is so important, for Longuenesse, that space and time be reinterpreted in light of the idea of *synthesis speciosa* at the end of the Transcendental Deduction. See, in particular, the introduction to Pt. II and Ch. 8 of Longuenesse (1998).

judgments in which categories are not *applied*. But this in no way implies that such judgments have no reference to the categories at all; on the contrary, the very synthesis that makes even judgments of perception possible is *guided* by the universal forms of judgments—and hence the universal forms of concepts. Concept application, in general, and therefore the application of the categories, in particular, is a subsequent step in the process of cognition. Concepts must first be formed (through reflection) before they are applied. When they *are* applied, however, judgments of experience result. The distinction between the two types of judgments depends not on the presence of a *preconceptual* awareness, but of a *protoconceptual* process of reflection that is guided from the very start by the logical forms of judgment. In Longuenesse’s terms, then, judgments of perception are judgments in accordance with the mere *Vermögen zu urteilen*, while judgments of experience are judgments in accordance with the *Urteilkraft*.

The merits of Longuenesse’s interpretation are numerous, even if it requires us to take on some interpretive baggage elsewhere.¹²⁹ As I have already indicated,¹³⁰ moreover, there is much in her general account with which I am in agreement. In particular, her insistence that the categories, like empirical concepts, are “made” with respect to their form (see JL 9:93) is a helpful corrective to common assumptions about the relationship between Kant and innatism. Nevertheless, I do not think Longuenesse’s reading takes sufficiently into account the uniqueness of the task of a transcendental deduction of the categories as it is developed in the first *Critique*. When Kant rewrote the introduction to the *Critique*, he was careful to specify its peculiar task from the very start:

¹²⁹ E.g., CPR A69/B94 and B160-161n.

¹³⁰ See p. 52 above.

There is no doubt whatever that all our cognition begins with experience; for how else should the cognitive faculty be awakened into exercise if not through objects that stimulate our senses and in part themselves produce representations, in part bring the activity of our understanding into motion to compare these, to connect or separate them, and thus to work up the raw material of sensible impressions into a cognition of objects that is called experience? (CPR B1)

Notice that Kant already refers to the basic acts of the understanding as *comparative*; his point is that, so long as we are talking about the fact, or genesis, of the pure concepts of the understanding, the empiricist thesis that all cognition arises with experience cannot be gainsaid. Thus in the second edition of the *Critique* Kant's very first move is to lay the ground for what he later describes as the task of a "transcendental," as opposed to empirical, deduction of the categories. With regard to the latter, Kant thanks the "famous Locke" for having opened the way to "a tracing of the first endeavors of our power of cognition to ascend from individual perceptions to general concepts," a project which is "without doubt of great utility" (CPR A86/B118-119). While this remark is sometimes taken as mere handwaving—so that Kant can basically accept the results of Locke's *Essay* but bracket them as far as his own purposes are concerned—Kant really is committed to a broadly Lockean account of concept formation, based in acts of comparison, reflection, and abstraction. "The origin of concepts as to **mere form** rests on reflection and on abstraction from the difference among things that are signified by a certain representation" (JL 9:93). Now, "general logic does not have to investigate the **source** of concepts, not how concepts **arise as representations**, but merely **how given representations become concepts in thought**" (JL 9:94; trans. modified). Accordingly, Kant's complaint against Locke in the first *Critique* is not that a "physiological derivation" of pure concepts cannot be given, but rather

that it does not amount to a proper deduction: it concerns the *quid facti*, not the *quid juris* (CPR A86-87/B119).

It is the *quid juris*, the task of a transcendental deduction, that is the proper goal of the first *Critique*, and so in cases where it appears inconsistent with his other works, it makes sense to begin by seeing if it is not the specificity of his task there which has led him down different paths. In fact, I think this is just what we find in the present case. Part of the reason, I suspect, why the Transcendental Deduction proved such a difficult task for Kant was that it required him to invert his long-held view of the relationship between judgment and experience. It had been (e.g., in the *Inaugural Dissertation*) and would continue to be (e.g., in the *Prolegomena*) his view that the reflective activity of the understanding must precede all objective judgments of experience. What he came to realize, however, was that this view did not prevent him from giving a transcendental account of the justification of pure concepts that moved in precisely the opposite direction. Although objective experience is genetically, or as a matter of fact, the subsequent step in our judging, an objective judgment is nevertheless the *transcendental* condition for even the logical use of our understanding.¹³¹

¹³¹ This distinction is also precisely what is necessary to solve an exactly analogous problem in the Amphiboly. There Kant distinguishes logical from transcendental reflection (see Ch. II, p. 118). Kant acknowledges that logical reflection, which is in effect a mere comparison, is necessary “prior to all objective judgments” (CPR A262/B317). “**Transcendental reflection**, however, (which goes to the objects themselves) contains the ground of the possibility of the objective comparison of the representations to each other” (CPR A263/B319). Again, the problem is that it appears that *logical* comparison is supposed to be possible prior to *objective* comparison. And yet “all judgments, indeed all comparisons” require a transcendental reflection (CPR A261/B317). And Kant has just insisted that “the first question prior to all further treatment of our representation is this: In which cognitive faculty do they belong together?” (CPR A260/B316). Now, it seems to me that when Kant says that “prior to all objective judgments we compare the concepts,” he does not mean to deny a different and specific kind of priority to transcendental reflection. And it is in precisely the same sense that a logical comparison of concepts precedes objective judgments. In each case it is essential to distinguish questions which have their proper homes in general logic from those which belong to transcendental logic.

This may well still sound paradoxical: how could an objective judgment, which according to the *Prolegomena* (and Kant's general logic) is supposed to be a reflected and refined judgment of perception, be hazarded *in advance of* judgments of perception generally? After all, it is only through acts of reflection upon our perceptions that we are able to form concepts which will in turn be applicable to objects of intuition. As a general procedure, reflection leads to objective validity precisely because the manifold from which a concept is abstracted is necessarily connected to the manifold to which it is to be subsequently applied.¹³² In short, the condition for the objective applicability of a concept appears to stand in a precisely determined relation to the activity of reflection that the understanding has undertaken on its behalf.

If the power of judgment were reducible to rules, this difficulty would be insurmountable, for the scope of the applicability of a concept could extend no further than the reflection through which it was formed. But this, we have seen, is precisely what Kant denies at the very beginning of his discussion of the power of judgment. In fact, the predicament in which we now find ourselves—*How is an objective judgment possible in advance of reflected perception?*—is one we have already confronted in our discussion of the introduction to the *Analytic of Principles*, and it is solved in precisely the same manner. Earlier I noted that, while no particular judgment can be held come what may, there is a transcendental risk involved in any judgment whatsoever. The risk can—and must, given the norms of reason and understanding—be shifted around, so that there is no judgment which it is permissible to hold dogmatically and which bears the weight, as it were, of all

¹³² This point is closely connected to the relationship between the reflecting and determining power of judgment, a topic I will treat below (see p. 117).

objective science on its shoulders. Nevertheless, Kant's point is that such risk can never be entirely excised from objective cognition altogether.

My suggestion is that we should understand the transcendental role of objective judgments—what the *Prolegomena* calls “judgments of experience”—in the same way. There is no particular judgment of experience to which we could point as the judgment in which objective cognition rests. In fact, the norms of the understanding *require* us to consider *every* judgment of experience as a reflected and refined judgment of perception. On the other hand, however, the merely reflective logical connections that give unity to judgments of perception would not be possible if it were not for the implicit reference back to determining acts of the power of judgment that they carry within themselves. The original acts of judgment to which all our rational discourse refers must, of course, remain indeterminate; that is the point of my remark above that judgment is not the end, but the starting point, of rational cognition.¹³³ This is precisely because any such act of judgment would have to involve the *application* of a concept which could not be justified by a prior *reflection* of the sensible manifold. From the standpoint of the *Prolegomena*, which borrows its basic concepts from general logic, objective judgments of experience can only be refined and reflected judgments of perception, despite the fact that a transcendental account of experience (and even perception) requires a reference to an originally objective judgment as the ultimate source of the unity of all acts of the understanding.

If my account here is on the right track, then the *Prolegomena* is far from being Kant's definitive answer to empiricism in general, or to Hume in particular. Of course he never claimed that it was. Still, one may wonder why, given the way he uses Hume's

¹³³ See p. 72 above.

Enquiry to frame the debate and even derides those whom he feels have not sufficiently appreciated the depth of Hume's insight (P 4:258), Kant would hold back, as it were, his own deepest attempt to solve the problem Hume had posed.

Although I am not convinced that his answer dissolves all worries that could be raised on this score, I do think that Allison's strategy here is basically correct¹³⁴ (although I would emphasize the distinctiveness of the *Critique's* methodology, not that of the *Prolegomena*). At most, I think, the *Prolegomena* can convince the empiricist that the project of the first *Critique* is a necessary one. It does so, roughly, in the following manner. If we take for granted that natural science is actual, then there is objectively valid cognition of nature. But even on a general-logical account of such cognition, the application of pure concepts turns out to be necessary. This immediately indicates, however, the necessity of a transcendental-logical account, for it raises precisely the question the first *Critique* poses for itself: that of a deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding. And they either admit of a transcendental deduction, or they do not.

At first glance, such a dilemma may not appear to have much bite. But here we must keep in mind the context in which the *Prolegomena* was written, and, in particular, the composition of Kant's intended audience. The early response to the first *Critique*, insofar as there was one, came from the camp of moderate Lockeans, including, most notoriously, the Garve-Feder review of 1782 to which Kant responded in the appendix to the *Prolegomena*.¹³⁵ Far from pushing empiricist principles to their skeptical conclusions, as Hume had done, the Lockeans of Kant's day were pragmatic *Popularphilosophen*. Despite appearances, then, the proximate goal of the *Prolegomena* is not to plumb the depths of

¹³⁴ See p. 78 above.

¹³⁵ See Beiser (1987), 165-192, esp. 172-177.

Hume's insight in the *Enquiry*, but to apply pressure to the moderate position of Locke. What better way to do this than to impress on his readers the necessity of a transcendental deduction? The pragmatic Lockean need not concern himself with *how* such a deduction is to be achieved; it will be enough to show him that if such a deduction is *not* possible, his empiricism will have to take an unsavory turn: he will now be *forced* to appreciate the depth of Hume's worry and be faced with the specter of skepticism.

Thus when Kant says in the *Prolegomena* that it is "now the place to dispose thoroughly of the Humean doubt" (P 4:310), we must keep in mind that this is intended to come as a relief to the Lockean moderates who have no stomach, in any event, for Hume's own stubbornness. And let us not forget that foremost among those who had failed to appreciate the depth of Hume's insight was none other than Hume himself. Even Hume, Kant (mistakenly) thinks, would have encountered the necessity of a transcendental logic if only he had realized the implications for mathematics of the problem of causality across which he had stumbled (P 4:273). All the more, then, will it be sufficient if, in the *Prolegomena*, he can simply compel the moderate Lockean to acknowledge the necessity of the critical project.

Conclusion

If we return, at long last, to the first *Critique*, we can see immediately the reason why judgments of perception, despite Kant's commitments both prior to and after the *Critique*, can have no role to play with respect to its chief aims. For judgments of perception, based, as they are, on merely subjective connections of representations, are really the mirror images of the rationalists' clear and distinct perceptions. In the same way that the rationalists had attempted to purge the transcendental risk involved in judgment from the

top down, so the empiricists had tried to purge this risk from the bottom up. Judgments of perception, just like judgments that follow the deliverances of clear and distinct perception, do not allow for even the possibility of judging wrongly. Helvétius, once again: to judge is to report exactly what I feel.¹³⁶ There is, accordingly, a substantial philosophical insight undergirding the rhetorical parallelism of Kant's famous remark that Leibniz intellectualized appearances *just as* Locke sensitized concepts (CPR A271/B327). Both the empiricist and rationalist attempts to explain the possibility of scientific cognition lack a reference to the transcendental condition in virtue of which objective science is possible at all. We can certainly try to imagine the entirety of our cognitive activity in affective terms, but such an aggregate of perceptions would be connected "merely logically" in something like the same sense as Leibniz's conceptual system: in each case there is an internal coherence to the system of cognition, but no objective reference. Such a system may well be coherent on its own terms, but it remains free-floating so long as it is not moored in an act of judging by which an objective relation is established.

Kant's key insight, which he took to reflect the ripened judgment of his age, was that reason can gain a legitimate authority only where, and precisely to the extent that, one has been willing to judge. It provided him, at any rate, with a neat diagnosis of the dilemma handed down to him by the early modern rationalists and empiricists. The rationalist ambition was to render the understanding itself intuitive. If it could be made so, then judging would itself become a basically intuitive conceptual exercise: instead of *judging* that the matter is thus-and-so, it would ultimately be a matter of just *seeing* that it is thus-and-so. Since Descartes's *Meditations* (and probably since his *Rules*), it had been the goal of

¹³⁶ See above, p. 75.

modern rationalism to assimilate evidence-responsiveness in reasoning to the intuitive structure of geometrical proofs, thereby excising the element of *risk* from properly rational discourse. To borrow an example from Kant's favorite domain, the task of the judge would become more analogous to that of a defendant awaiting a verdict than to someone whose responsibility it is to render the decision itself.

For all the empiricists' worries about the method of clear and distinct perception, it is not clear that their own ambitions permitted them to offer a genuine alternative to the rationalist reduction of judgment. Where the rationalist faithfully followed the deliverances of clear and distinct perception, the empiricist faithfully followed the deliverances of subjective sensation. For both camps, the defense of reason in the age of Enlightenment depended upon the attainability of a standpoint from which the risk of error could be, in principle, at least, eliminated. If this project was attached, as it was for the empiricists, to slogans of modesty and fallibility, this was a matter of absolutely no significance.

Chapter II

In the years between the two editions of the first *Critique*, two decisive events changed the course of philosophy in Germany. One exploded onto the public scene like a bombshell, while the significance of the other would only gradually become apparent over the next several decades. It was the brilliance of Herder to recognize, or perhaps just to concoct, a convincing link between them.

Frederick Beiser identifies 1785 as the year the hegemony of the Enlightenment effectively ended in Germany. Goethe referred to the publication of Jacobi's *Briefe über die Lehre von Spinoza* as an "explosion." Hegel called it a "thunderbolt out of the blue."¹³⁷ With one blow, Hegel would explain to his students many years later, Jacobi had exposed the pretensions of the professional philosophical elite: those "self-satisfied, self-possessed, superior people" ¹³⁸ who would reveal themselves in the ensuing controversy as fundamentally unserious thinkers.¹³⁹ Mendelssohn's appeal in *Morning Hours* to healthy common sense came to typify the unprincipled moderation upon which the Enlightenment philosophy—if it was any longer to be considered philosophy at all—ultimately rested. One could even say, without too much extravagance, that Jacobi (who, after all, fancied himself a Humean) had awoken the German academy from its dogmatic slumber.

¹³⁷ Beiser (1987), 45-46.

¹³⁸ Hegel names Mendelssohn and Nicolai.

¹³⁹ See Hegel (1840), 411-412.

The year prior, Herder had published the first part of his monumental *Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity*. It was a book that would push the boundaries of philosophy towards and perhaps even into the territory traditionally occupied by natural science and history. Importantly, it would do so not just in theory, but in practice, and already by the middle of the decade Herder's work was attracting attention from a surprisingly broad circle of intellectuals. The integration of reason and nature, Herder argued, can be achieved scientifically if we are willing to posit basic, organic powers in nature to be understood by analogy to our own powers as rational agents.¹⁴⁰ In this way Herder was generating a template for reintroducing teleological explanation as a basic and characteristic procedure of natural science, a position from which, despite the efforts of Leibniz, teleology had been more or less banished for well over a century. Unlike Leibniz, however, Herder succeeded in making his view plausible and intelligible to natural scientists by showing in a series of natural and historical examples just how this might be done. By 1786 Herder had enlisted one high-profile ally from anthropology, Georg Forster,¹⁴¹ and was about to publish a work in which he would claim another, albeit unlikely, ally from the history of philosophy: Spinoza.

In a heroic, if not especially faithful, feat of interpretation, Herder tried to show in 1787—with the publication of his dialogue *God: Some Conversations*—that Spinoza's system constituted a “knot” from which it was nevertheless possible to “spin gold” if it were completed by an appeal to active forces as the ground of the unity of thought and

¹⁴⁰ On the fundamental role of analogy in Herder's view, see Herder (1787), 154 and Beiser (1987), 145-149.

¹⁴¹ Forster's 1786 article directed against Kant's theory of race was the occasion for Kant's *On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy*. For an account of their exchange and the implicit role Herder's work played in it, see Beiser (1987), 154-158. For an account of Forster's anthropological work, see Beiser (1992), 156-162.

extension.¹⁴² On Herder's reading, Spinoza's rejection of teleological explanation, apparently so central to his project, in fact merely belies a residual Cartesian prejudice that has no place in a completed Spinozistic system.¹⁴³ This bias removed, Spinoza's system reveals itself in its innermost tendency: it points not, as one would expect, to mechanistic and fatalistic atheism, but instead to Herder's own dynamic vitalism, a new kind of philosophy of nature.

Unsurprisingly, the bizarreness of Herder's claim was no impediment to the reception and influence of his dialogue. In the long term, it forged a bond between Spinozism and teleological naturalism that would prove decisive for Schelling; in the short term, it posed a direct challenge to Reinhold's *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*, the serial publication of which had begun in the *German Mercury* just the August before. Kant, all too aware that the fate of the *Critique* hung in the balance, and hastily at work revising it for the scheduled printing of its second edition, could hardly fail to take notice of this. From Kant's point of view, at least, the conclusions of Herder and Reinhold about the significance of the pantheism controversy were diametrically opposed; for Reinhold, it demonstrated the indispensability of the first *Critique*, while for Herder it only confirmed its contemporary irrelevance.

Thus whether or not its maliciousness was driven, as Caroline Herder claimed,¹⁴⁴ by Kant's holding Herder personally responsible for the poor reception of the first *Critique* at Weimar, Kant's patronizing 1785 review of the first part of Herder's *Ideas* at least proved to be clear-sighted about the high stakes of the contest he was about to enter. In Kant's view,

¹⁴² Herder (1787), 103-105, 123; also 141.

¹⁴³ Herder goes as far as to claim that with a conception of active force, Spinoza's system "would have been much more clear and unified" (Herder [1787], 108).

¹⁴⁴ See Beiser (1987), 349-350n68.

Herder's unrestrained use of teleology was not only scientifically disastrous; it threatened to undermine Kant's own hard work in isolating the principles of morality from the principles of the natural sciences.¹⁴⁵ In any event, Kant concludes, Herder's attempt to reintroduce teleology into natural science is unsuccessful; having failed to absorb the lessons of the first *Critique*, Herder's project ultimately amounts to nothing more than the starry-eyed "endeavor to want to explain **what one does not comprehend from what one comprehends even less**" (RH 8:53). In other words, despite its being dressed up in a more delicate and accessible literary garb, Herder's reintroduction of teleology was at bottom just another appeal to the occult qualities that had rightfully been excluded from natural philosophy since the seventeenth century. When Herder distances his work from anything "metaphysical," Kant is quick to pounce. Herder's attitude is not serious, but merely a symptom of the fads of the times, for the vital forces required by his philosophy are the very type of the excesses of dogmatic metaphysics diagnosed in the *Critique* (RH 8:54).

Did Kant have an alternative account of the proper role of teleology to offer his readers? It must have seemed to him that he did. Though the book had so far been little read, he had discussed the issue at some length in the first *Critique*.

The **speculative** interest of reason makes it necessary to regard every ordinance in the world as if it had sprouted from the intention of a highest reason. . . . As long as we keep to this presupposition as a **regulative** principle, then even error cannot do us any harm. (CPR A686-687/B714-715)

¹⁴⁵ One could hardly imagine a more anti-Kantian image of the value of human life than that which we find in Herder's dialogue: "To pursue nature, first to conjecture her lofty laws, then to observe, test and confirm them, then to find them verified a thousandfold and to apply them anew, finally, to perceive everywhere the same wisest law, the same divine necessity, to come to love it and make it one's own—all this gives human life its value" (Herder [1787], 182-183).

Despite his naturalistic ambitions, Herder's mistake was simply a species of the mistake of modern rationalism more generally: the conflation of regulative principles of reason with constitutive principles of the understanding. This illusion is natural enough, of course, so much so that Kant had devoted the entire Transcendental Dialectic of the first *Critique* to dissipating it. Herder, perhaps, is hardly to be blamed, but all the same the *Ideas* succumbs to a confusion which can now be definitively resolved. If the readers of Kant's review harbored any residual sympathy for Herder's extravagances, they could simply be referred back (or, more than likely, anew) to the Dialectic of the first *Critique*.

If Kant ever thought this, and I suspect he did, then he was wrong. Herder's fundamental mistake, granting Kant that he makes one, is not the inflation of reason in the theoretical sphere, but rather his attempt to subsume theory in general under a still more universal form of understanding. On this point Cassirer gets things exactly right: "What Herder sought was not the unity of the natural object, but the unity of all humanity."¹⁴⁶ That is to say, for Herder, the unity to which teleology finally makes reference is located not in a theoretical object of some sort, whether rational or empirical, but in the historical perspective, ultimately the perspective of *human* history, from which both reason and experience become intelligible in their connection. With his liberal use of analogy, Herder sought to provide historical explanations in which theory and practice, mechanism and morality, no longer stand on opposite sides of a metaphysical ledger, but mutually reinforce one another in a unified historico-scientific endeavor. Herder's criterion for success does not, therefore, issue from the prerogatives of an independent, pre-given unity of reason that would legislate the form of the historical object in advance of empirical investigation;

¹⁴⁶ Cassirer (1929), 34.

instead, Herder stakes his claim on what is proper to a historical perspective: how we must look at the world if we are to understand our practical responsibilities in our own historical situation.

An understanding of mankind's historical destiny—which is really what Herder is after here—is not given by an idea of reason, nor is it simply discovered in the mountains of data the empirical sciences are amassing. Instead, it becomes visible, if at first only faintly, in the interstices between the empirical study of nature and the principles of rationality that we seek to find exemplified there. To discern it is the proper task of the narrator of history, who turns even the apparently irrational chronicles of the past to their proper edifying use. The noblest vocation of history is just this:

It unfolds to us as it were the counsels of fate, and teaches us, insignificant as we are, to act according to God's eternal laws. By teaching us the faults and consequences of every species of irrationality, it assigns us our short and tranquil scene on that great theater, where reason and goodness, contending indeed with wild powers, still, from their nature, create order, and hold on in the path of victory.¹⁴⁷

For Herder, historical reason does not reveal itself to us from the top down, nor is it directly discoverable in the chronicles of the past. As Kant came to realize, the empirically minded thinkers (like Forster) who were sympathetic to Herder were moved not by the illusion of an exhaustively rational explanation of the world, but by the prospect of reintegrating, from both sides at once, the reason and nature that Kant had so ruthlessly separated. To combat this would require something more than the Dialectic of the first *Critique* had been able to provide. For the ground of this novel use of teleology was not one that Kant had imagined, much less discussed, there at all.

¹⁴⁷ Herder (1784-1791), 467.

The structure of the third *Critique* reflects Kant's deepened appreciation of the question of teleological explanation. In particular, he is careful to pick the ground of his fight with Herder with great precision. The question, as Kant now sees it, is not ultimately about the permissibility of using analogical reasoning (based on the concept of our own will) in the investigation of nature, which Kant will grant (UTP 8:181-182), nor is it any longer the question of whether Herder's analogies happen to be too extravagant (cf. RH 8:53). Instead, the question is whether there is a perspective (in Herder's case, that of human history) in which teleological judgments can be embedded so that they would constitute a scientific bridge from the principles of natural science to the principles of morality. Kant's answer, of course, will be *no*, but in the course of explaining his dissent he will take care to show just how close Herder comes to getting things right. Kant will even grant that Herder is locating teleology at the right place: at the intersection of the principles of rational and natural beings. But the utility of these principles is not what Herder thinks it is. Teleological judgments cannot form a proper part of natural science, they cannot delimit the conditions of, or explain, the possibility of causes that work through freedom, and they are not a more basic class of concepts of which natural and moral concepts might be expressions. Kant now realizes, however, that there is quite another story that explains why it *appears as though* teleology in organic nature were the key to bringing practical and theoretical philosophy together again. Herder's teleology is a misuse not of a (properly) regulative principle of reason, but of a (properly) subjective principle of the power of judgment. What is more, the proper use of the latter *does* effect a transition from concepts of nature to the concept of freedom under the moral law. Herder's (and Forster's) desire to

transcend Kantian dualism is not, then, just a simple error, but rather a genuinely philosophical impulse—pursued in what is almost the right direction.

On the Very Idea of a Third Critique

As the titles of Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* and *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* suggest, Kant was centrally concerned with establishing the possibility of metaphysics.¹⁴⁸ Critique is the “propaedeutic” which inquires into the conditions of the possibility of the use of our cognitive faculty, making possible thereby the “philosophical cognition from pure reason in systematic interconnection,” i.e., metaphysics (CPR A841/B869).¹⁴⁹ Thus a critique is always a critique of a cognitive faculty that purports to operate according to *a priori* principles, asking after the validity of these principles with respect to the domain of objects that the faculty seeks to cognize by means of them, and finally, through this inquiry, laying the ground for the doctrinal study of such objects under these principles (see CPJ 5:168, 179). Now, the first two installments in the critical system demonstrated the validity of *a priori* principles for the understanding and for reason. The understanding was assigned its legislative task with respect to concepts of nature, while reason was assigned to legislate with regard to the concept of freedom, and in this Kant takes himself to have rigorously grounded (for the first time) the traditional division of philosophy into physics and ethics (G 4:387), or, as he will more often refer to them, theoretical and practical philosophy. This division of philosophy necessitates a division between metaphysical doctrines,¹⁵⁰ such that the metaphysics of nature¹⁵¹ and the

¹⁴⁸ Of course, these works are not, properly speaking, critiques, nor does it appear that the *Groundwork*, in particular, was supposed to stand in for some such work (see Wood [1996], xxv-xxvi).

¹⁴⁹ A forerunner of the notion of critique as the indispensable preliminary for metaphysics can be found at ID 2:395.

¹⁵⁰ *Philosophy*, *metaphysics*, and *doctrine* are oftentimes used synonymously by Kant (although a doctrine is sometimes understood to include an empirical division, as well). Importantly, *philosophy* has a broader (and

metaphysics of morals will constitute completely separate and heterogeneous sciences.¹⁵² Two different sorts of concepts are operative within these sciences, concepts of nature and the concept of freedom (CPJ 5:171; FI 20:197),¹⁵³ and it is no small part of the accomplishment of the first *Critique* that it has (re)established the basis for a strict distinction here. Having marked this fundamental division in metaphysics, and having subsequently elaborated the basic principles of its only two possible branches, Kant could be forgiven for thinking that another *Critique* was neither necessary nor possible.

In fact, this seems to be precisely what he thought. Kant did not originally intend to write a third *Critique*,¹⁵⁴ despite the architectonic opening for such an enterprise that must have been apparent to him very early on.¹⁵⁵ The first two installments of the critical system

more fundamental) sense that we will be compelled to consider below. For the synonymy, however, cf. G 4:387; CPrR 5:12; CPJ 5:169; MM 6:375; FI 20:195, 248; CPR A838/B866, A841/B869, A845/B873.

¹⁵¹ This is already a narrowing of the broadest sense of “nature.” “Nature in the most general sense is the existence of things under laws” (CPrR 5:43), and in this way we can speak of both sensible and supersensible nature. When Kant opposes laws of nature to laws of freedom, he is, then, already invoking a specific conception of the natural (e.g., G 4:455), but it is this more restricted notion of the natural which he typically employs.

¹⁵² Kant repeatedly insists on this (e.g., G 4:387-388). This insistence is just one case of Kant’s more general injunction against mixing different sciences with one another. See CPR A842-843/B870-871; UTP 8:162.

¹⁵³ Following Kant, I will generally speak of the *concept*, not concepts, of freedom (at, e.g., CPJ 5:171, 196; but see CPJ 5:176). Kant does so because the domain of moral philosophy is systematically and constitutively unified in a way that the domain of philosophy of nature is not (see below, p. 109). This difference is reflected, for Kant, in a difference of critical method: whereas the first *Critique* must begin with the forms of intuition before progressing to a consideration of the principles of reason, the second *Critique* must set out from principles and work its way down (CPrR 5:45; cf. 5:89-90). Thus if theoretical philosophy is built up from the ground floor of our cognitive faculty (namely, sensibility), practical philosophy descends downwards from reason itself.

¹⁵⁴ Guyer traces the genesis of the third *Critique* in some detail in the introduction to his translation of that work. See Guyer (2000), xiii-xxiii. Kant did, it appears, form an intention to compose a critique of taste even in the 1770s (and perhaps even before that), indicating as much to Herz in 1772 (Guyer [2000], xv-xviii). But his evident surprise at discovering the possibility of such a project (now brought together with a critique of teleology) in a 1787 letter to Reinhold strongly suggests that he had in the meantime abandoned his early hopes (again, see Guyer [2000], xiii-xiv). At any rate, while Kant’s 1785 denial that there can be a “science” or “metaphysics” of taste does not contradict his later position, his lack of qualification, even in passing, certainly suggests that he harbored little hope of establishing *a priori* principles governing the faculty of feeling. See MoMr₂ 29:597-598.

¹⁵⁵ Kant emphasizes the architectonic point in his letter to Reinhold (see n. 154), and he does at least suggest that he is relying more and more on the systematic character of his thinking as he grows older: “My inner conviction grows, as I discover in working on different topics that not only does my system remain self-consistent but I find also, when sometimes I cannot see the right way to investigate a certain subject, that I

deal with the legislation under which two of the three fundamental mental faculties stand, legislation which proceeds from two of the three higher cognitive faculties. Thus in the first *Critique* the understanding is called upon to legislate for the faculty of cognition as a whole, while in the second *Critique* reason is called upon to legislate for the faculty of desire (CPJ 5:167-168, 177-178; FI 20:245). Architectonically, at least, there is a *prima facie* case for the possibility that the remaining higher cognitive faculty (the power of judgment) legislates for the remaining fundamental faculty (that of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure), as Kant emphasizes in his Preface to the third *Critique* (CPJ 5:168).

On the other hand, however, and as Kant also points out, it is a bit strange to think of any kind of legislation governing the faculty of feeling: under what sort of *principle* could our pleasure-taking possibly stand (see MoMr₂ 29:597)? A feeling of pleasure or displeasure refers to “the subjective aspect in a representation **which cannot become an element of cognition at all**” (CPJ 5:189). Feeling cannot be derived from concepts, nor is it possible to cognize the influence of an object upon this faculty (CPJ 5:190; FI 20:229). At any rate, it would appear to be entirely mysterious how an *a priori* concept could “legislate” for a faculty that does not deal in concepts *simpliciter*. To be sure, connections between feeling and cognition are not far to be found: there are mediate ways in which reason makes certain claims on feeling, e.g., through respect for the moral law, which “must be regarded as also a positive though indirect effect of the moral law on feeling” (CPrR 5:79).

need only look back at the general picture of the elements of knowledge, and of the mental powers pertaining to them, in order to make discoveries I had not expected” (C 10:514).

Even reason, however, cannot determine what we should find directly pleasurable, nor can it constrain us to take pleasure in one set of objects rather than another (MM 6:402).¹⁵⁶

A third *Critique* seems equally unlikely if we focus not on the fundamental faculty which would be subject to legislation, but instead on the cognitive faculty which would be doing the legislating, namely, the power of judgment. As we have seen, this faculty is characterized precisely by the fact that it does *not* proceed according to rules. Rather—as the first *Critique* has it, at least—*given* a rule, our power of judgment seeks out the particular which can be subsumed under it, a subsumption which cannot itself be a rule-governed activity. To suppose that the power of judgment could *legislate* appears to be, if not contradictory, then at least extremely confused: judgment, we should say, cannot be legislative but only (of course!) judicial. So the problem is twofold: not only does the faculty of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure appear to resist the efforts of a legislator, but the presumptive legislator itself, the power of judgment, seems rather obviously ill-suited to such a task.

What finally convinced Kant that such seemingly intractable difficulties could be overcome? Perhaps it was just what he mentioned in his letter to Reinhold:¹⁵⁷ his growing confidence in the ability of the systematic features of his work to lead him towards fruitful discoveries. More likely, however, his engagement with Herder and Forster opened Kant's eyes to a (purported) use of teleology that he had not anticipated—at least not under the aspect whereby it now displayed itself—in the first *Critique*. In that book, Kant had battled against a view which, he thought, threatened to render ethics a mere branch of physics, as

¹⁵⁶ It is true that there are aesthetic predispositions that are subjective conditions for even being receptive to the moral law, but these are not subject to legislation, and to even become conscious of them already presupposes consciousness of the law itself (MM 6:399).

¹⁵⁷ See n. 154.

depicted in Descartes's Preface to the French edition of the *Principles*,¹⁵⁸ or, if you prefer, physics a mere branch of ethics, as, perhaps, had led Spinoza to call his philosophy an *ethics*. Herder's technique, on the other hand, was to attempt a rapprochement of ethics and physics from both sides at once. His appeal, inchoate as it was, was not to a concept of nature or freedom, but to something else altogether, something *historically* teleological. If Herder's appeal to history remained murky, it did not prevent the problem the *Ideas* had raised from finally setting itself before Kant with great clarity: what *is* the principle the misuse of which is leading to extravagances like Herder's *Ideas*? And in what, if anything, does the *proper* use of this principle consist, against which its misuse can be diagnosed?

My suggestion is that it is predominantly in working out an answer to this latter question that Kant realized that he could—and must—write a third *Critique*. His answer to it is surprising, to say the least. Teleological judgments depend upon the objective use of the principle of the purposiveness of nature. As the first *Critique* had already established, such a use does not have strict scientific legitimacy, even if it has its heuristic utility even for science. But this heuristic utility is not, not here, at least, what has misled Herder and Forster. They have been misled by the prospect that teleology can mediate between concepts of nature and the concept of freedom. In this, they are very nearly right, for the same principle the *objective* use of which grounds teleological judgments grounds, in its *subjective* use, aesthetic judgments. And it is the latter which provide for a kind of genuine mediation—what Kant calls an “*Übergang*,” or “transition”—between concepts of nature and the concept of freedom. This mediation is not a *conceptual* one, however, and it ultimately rests on the faculty of feeling, not the faculty of cognition. Herder's mistake,

¹⁵⁸ Descartes (1647b), 186 (IXB:14).

accordingly, is to assign to the objective use of the principle of purposiveness the utility that properly belongs to its subjective use.¹⁵⁹

The Transition from Natural to Moral Philosophy

The results of the first two *Critiques*, Kant tells us at the beginning of the third, leave us in a rather curious situation:

Although there is an incalculable gulf fixed between the domain of the concept of nature, as the sensible, and the domain of the concept of freedom, as the supersensible, so that from the former to the latter (thus by means of the theoretical use of reason) no transition [*Übergang*] is possible . . . : yet the latter **should** have an influence on the former . . . ; and nature must consequently also be able to be conceived [*gedacht*] in such a way that the lawfulness of its form is at least in agreement with the possibility of the ends that are to be realized in it in accordance with the laws of freedom. (CPJ 5:175-176)

We can begin by considering the sense of Kant's "must": we must be able to think nature in such a way that our transformation of it (into a progressively more moral world order) is conceivable in accordance with natural laws. Kant had devoted considerable effort in the second *Critique* to spelling out the force of this "must" with precision. On the one hand, we do not need knowledge of the natural world, or any positive deliverance from theory whatsoever,¹⁶⁰ to recognize that we stand under the moral law. Reason proves its efficacy and grounds our freedom to act according to rational motives through the idea of the moral law alone. Thus "reason is by means of ideas itself an efficient cause in the field of

¹⁵⁹ My reading of the basic project of the third *Critique*, then, is considerably less "balanced," with respect to the respective significance of its two parts, than is the norm. Here, e.g., is how Guyer sums up the relationship between aesthetics and teleology: "Thus what ties the two halves of the third *Critique* together is precisely the idea that the experiences of natural beauty on the one hand and the purposiveness of organisms on the other hand both offer us what we experience as *evidence* rather than a mere *postulate* of pure practical reason that the system of morality can be realized in nature" (Guyer [2006], 426). This is true, as far as it goes, but it is not really the principle behind the division of the third *Critique*. Teleological judgments are considered only because they make use of the same principle as do aesthetic judgments. This is why Kant writes that only the first part of the third *Critique* is "essential" (CPJ 5:193).

¹⁶⁰ I say "positive" because we must at least recognize that no theoretical proof of the impossibility of a causality through freedom can be given (CPrR 5:47).

experience” (CPrR 5:48).¹⁶¹ But *how* reason can be efficacious in the field of experience remains, for us, completely inscrutable.

The problem is deeper than that of merely lacking insight into reason’s hidden mechanism; the problem is that “the ends that are to be realized in [nature] in accordance with the laws of freedom” are systematically organized under an idea of a whole, whereas the laws by which we cognize nature are mechanical and diverse in their principles, not (as in the case of teleological laws) directed to and organized under a unified end. Because the representation of the highest good synthetically combines the ideas of happiness¹⁶² and virtue,¹⁶³ its systematic expression must also be of a unified, systematic character.¹⁶⁴ The highest good is an (indeterminate) object for (or, provides objective reality to; OOT 8:139) the ideal of pure reason, expressing the providential direction of an outcome from the whole of nature to its parts (CPrR 5:124; TP 8:279, 310).¹⁶⁵ What must be *conceivable*

¹⁶¹ To the mere possibility of freedom the cognition of the moral law adds “the concept of a reason determining the will immediately (by the condition of a universal lawful form of its maxims), and thus is able for the first time to give objective though only practical reality to reason” (CPrR 5:48). He sums up the point even more succinctly in 1793: “In a theory that is based on the *concept of duty*, concern about the empty ideality of this concept quite disappears. For it would not be a duty to aim at a certain effect of our will if this effect were not also possible in experience” (TP 8:276-277; cf. CPJ 5:275; TP 8:287; TPP 8:370).

¹⁶² Happiness, “the end assigned us by nature itself” (TP 8:282), is an “idea” in which “all inclinations unite in one sum” (G 4:399). It is not an end specific to *human* nature, but rather to the nature of a finite rational being burdened with inclinations (CPrR 5:25). In addition, such beings can only decide for themselves what this happiness is to consist in. Happiness is thus “the end assigned us by nature itself” in a subjective, not objective, sense (see G 4:395; CPJ 5:430).

¹⁶³ On the ideality of virtue, see CPR A315/B371-372, A569/B597.

¹⁶⁴ This point is actually one of considerable complexity, for the requirement of a *synthetic* connection of two representations (in this case, the restriction of the idea of happiness by the condition of virtue), whatever the intrinsic nature of these representations might be, might seem to rule out the ideality of the resulting representation. But Kant draws precisely the opposite conclusion: just because the connection is synthetic, but there is no conceivable ground of this synthesis other than the activity of God, activity which is itself conceivable only as intuition which is at the same time intellectual, the highest good is representable, for us, as an idea, one with objective though indeterminate validity. In other words, what is synthetic for human cognition must be referred (indeterminately) to a ground that is analytic from the point of view of God. On this point, Kant’s distinction between the highest original good and the highest derived good is relevant (see n. 166).

¹⁶⁵ Of course, we must be careful in this case not to misunderstand what it means to “provide an object” for morality. As Kant emphasizes again and again, such an object will not determine, but only be determined by, the merely formal conditions of the use of our freedom. Thus making the highest good one’s end “does not

(though not determinately cognizable) is such direction happening *in nature*, and for this the lawfulness of nature's form must be "at least in agreement with" the direction of providence, the causality of which moves from the whole to the parts.

Now, it is important to be careful here. On the one hand, Kant's insistence that we "must" be able to conceive of nature as also standing under the concept of freedom is merely formal in character. It is not necessary, for example, that we be able to produce an explanation of how any particular natural process plays its part in bringing about the moral world, and this is why Kant's claim does not require him to produce, or even to explain the possibility of, any specific theodicy. On the other hand, however, to speak of the need as merely formal can be misleading, as well. For the "form" through which it must be possible to conceive the natural world is the form of an *idea*, moreover, an idea the grounding principle of which must be found in the *ideal*, an idea considered as "an individual thing which is determinable, or even determined, through the idea alone" (CPR A568/B596).¹⁶⁶

As Kant puts it in the first *Critique*,

Thus happiness in exact proportion with the morality of rational beings, through which they are worthy of it, alone constitutes the highest good of a world into which we must without exception transpose ourselves [*darin wir uns . . . versetzen müssen*] in accordance with the precepts of pure but practical reason, and which, of course, is only an intelligible world, since the sensible world does not promise us that sort of systematic unity of ends, the reality of which can be grounded on nothing other than the presupposition of a highest original good, since self-sufficient reason, armed with all of the sufficiency of a supreme cause, in accordance with the most perfect purposiveness, grounds, conserves and completes the order of things that is universal though well hidden from us in the sensible world. (CPR A814/B842)

increase the number of morality's virtues but rather provides these with a special point of reference [*besondern Beziehungspunkt*] for the unification of all ends" (Rel 6:5).

¹⁶⁶ "Thus only in the ideal of the highest **original** good can pure reason find the ground of the practically necessary connection of both elements of the highest derived good, namely of an intelligible, i.e., **moral** world" (CPR A810-811/B838-839).

But if, indeed, according to the practical standpoint, “the world must be represented as having arisen out of an idea” (CPR A815-816/B843-844), then the limitations of considering Kant’s requirement for representing nature under the “form” of the moral world becomes apparent. For the form of the moral world is objective precisely by virtue of being absolutely determining. That is, the moral law does not depend for its validity on its determination of a content given from sensibility. We could say that the form of the moral world immediately “determines” its content, although we would have to clarify that for this very reason no cognition of a determinate content standing under a moral form is possible.

So what would it mean, then, to think of the natural world, which is an object of cognition for us, as having the form of the moral world, which is “objective” only ever as an object of our desire, and which dissolves into indeterminacy the moment we try to cognize it? It would appear that the very condition of representing the natural world, namely, tracing all thoughts of it back to a given intuition (CPR A19/B33), prevents us from understanding it as having a moral form.

Part of what makes the problem appear so intractable, however, is a certain inappropriateness in our way of posing the question: *How do we **think** of the world . . . ? How do we **understand** the world . . . ?* Although Kant himself falls into such locutions at times (see CPJ 5:175-176, quoted above), it should be clear that they are misleading, for they presuppose that the answer to Kant’s question will assume the form of a *cognition*. Strictly speaking, however, this is not what the question requires; what is required, rather, is a way of *transitioning* from the way we conceptualize the world when we desire to act in it to the way we conceptualize it when we look at it theoretically. If we look back, now, to 5:175-176, we see that Kant begins by saying that “from the former to the latter,” that is, from the

domain of the concept(s) of nature to the domain of the concept of freedom, “no transition is possible.” Now, an *Übergang* indicates something quite specific for Kant. Every science, he holds, must be architectonically developed from its own inner principles (its grounding idea), for what makes a science a *science* is precisely that its basic principle delineates in advance the idea of a *whole* (CPR A832/B860; MFNS 4:467). Only when a scientific edifice is completed according to its own inner principles is it permissible to construct an *Übergang* to an adjacent scientific domain (CPJ 5:381): a *transition*, in this sense, is permissible only where construction according to architectonic principles has been exhausted or is no longer appropriate. Accordingly, if a transition is possible between concepts of nature and freedom, such a transition can itself utilize neither concepts of nature nor of freedom, nor can it subordinate both under a higher conceptual genus.

Now, such a transition will be impossible, Kant tells us, “by means of the theoretical use of reason,” i.e., in the direction moving from concepts of nature to the concept of freedom. But if we look in the other direction, the situation is not so immediately dire. For

there must still be a ground of the **unity** of the supersensible that grounds nature with that which the concept of freedom contains practically, the concept of which, even if it does not suffice for cognition of it either theoretically or practically, and thus has no proper domain of its own, nevertheless makes possible the transition [*Übergang*] from the manner of thinking in accordance with the principles of the one to that in accordance with the principles of the other. (CPJ 5:176)

Now, as a ground of a mere “transition,” the relevant “unity” of theoretical and practical philosophy cannot itself be a proper part of scientific philosophy,¹⁶⁷ which is always

¹⁶⁷ While I take it that this is, in fact, Kant’s considered view, it is worth noting that it does seem to require a revision of a passage from the Architectonic of the first *Critique*: “Now the legislation of human reason (philosophy) has two objects, nature and freedom, and thus contains the natural law as well as the moral law, initially in two separate systems but ultimately in a single philosophical system” (CPR A840/B868). Now, Kant immediately indicates that “philosophy” can have a broader sense here, one that encompasses both propaedeutic, or critique, and system, or metaphysics (CPR A841/B869). But the reference to “a single

rational cognition through concepts (CPR A713/B741; MFNS 4:469). Thus we can already see that the third *Critique* cannot, as the first two had, lay the ground for any systematic metaphysics. But it does not follow from this, as we will now see, that that it cannot justify any *a priori* principles whatsoever.

The Power of Judgment as the Legislator of the Transition

As we have seen, it is at first surprising to think that the power of judgment could have any *a priori* principle at all. What would its domain be? What could it legislate over? To help mitigate this problem, Kant draws one more distinction. *A priori* principles do not have to be objective. If an *a priori* principle is *subjective*, in particular, if it guides only the activity of the subject in seeking laws, such a principle would not legislate over objects—and hence it would have no domain—but nevertheless it would retain some territory “and a certain constitution [*Beschaffenheit*] of it, for which precisely this principle only might be valid” (CPJ 5:177). Unfortunately, two obstacles block any easy understanding of Kant’s point here: (1) the reference back to his (already obscure) discussion of domain and territory at 5:174 and (2) his uncharacteristic use of “*Beschaffenheit*.” I will deal with each interpretive issue in turn.

Kant begins by telling us that we can divide the set of all objects to which *a priori* concepts can be applied according to the “varying adequacy” of our faculties for the purpose of *a priori* cognition. Now, if a concept is related to objects, then, even if we cannot cognize those objects, that concept has a “field,” and within that field resides the “territory” within which cognition is possible for us. Now, since we can cognize objects only as they

philosophical system” at A840/B868 surely indicates that it is the latter he has in mind throughout the passage. At any rate, the revision at 5:175-176 seems to me to capture Kant’s position, even as he would have held it in the first *Critique*, with considerably more precision. (The A840/B868 passage can also be compared with a more felicitous formulation of the point at JL 9:48-49.)

appear to us, not as they are in themselves, it should not be surprising that Kant identifies the territory of concepts in general as “the set of objects of all possible experience, insofar as they are taken as nothing more than mere appearances” (CPJ 5:174; see also 5:175). Our cognitive faculty legislates over this territory in two different ways, however, which gives rise to two domains, corresponding to the understanding, on the one hand, and to reason, on the other. These domains stand under the concepts of nature and the concept of freedom, respectively (CPJ 5:174), and through these concepts the objects (i.e., the appearances) become representable in two different ways: “The concept of nature certainly makes its objects representable in intuition, but not as things in themselves, rather as mere appearances, while the concept of freedom in its object makes a thing representable in itself but not in intuition” (CPJ 5:175).¹⁶⁸ But this is confusing: Kant has already defined the relevant object *as* an appearance, and one wonders what an object of experience taken merely as an appearance (CPJ 5:174) but nevertheless representable in itself (CPJ 5:175) is supposed to be. In other words, how it is possible that the domain of the concept of freedom is the supersensible (CPJ 5:175), despite the fact that it legislates only over appearances (CPJ 5:174)?

Kant’s point, however, is simply that the comportment towards objects that is relevant in practical philosophy is not cognitive but desiderative in nature. Cognitive comportment, after all, is always directed back to intuition as its goal (CPR A19/B33), intuition which relates immediately to an already present object, while practical comportment is directed not to an already present object, but to an object that is to be brought about. Thus the concept of freedom legislates over appearances, but not insofar as

¹⁶⁸ As Kant clarifies, however, “Neither of the two can provide a theoretical cognition of its object (and even of the thinking subject) as a thing in itself” (CPJ 5:175).

these are to be related cognitively to objects. As appearances *of* the supersensible (as Kant emphasizes these must be taken at CPJ 5:175), they are subject to reason's legislation precisely insofar as they are represented through the faculty of desire.¹⁶⁹ Whether we speak of one or two sets of "objects" corresponding to these domains depends on whether we are restricting our perspective to the cognition of that which already exists or whether we are also willing to count as objects that which does not yet exist, but should.¹⁷⁰ This is not just a question of how we are using the word "object," either; it actually depends on whether we adopting a theoretical or a practical standpoint at a given moment.

We can now return to the passage at 5:177 to try to determine the sense of "*Beschaffenheit*" that is operative there. "Even though [the power of judgment] can claim no field of objects as its domain, [it] can nevertheless have some territory and a certain constitution of it [*eine gewisse Beschaffenheit desselben*], for which precisely this principle only might be valid" (CPJ 5:177).¹⁷¹ Now, "*Beschaffenheit*" is actually a word of considerable importance for Kant, although it functions differently in different contexts. In the first *Critique* Kant speaks, for example, of the *Grundbeschaffenheit der sinnlichen Erkenntniß überhaupt*, "the fundamental constitution of sensible cognition in general" (CPR A42/B59). Here it is the territory that is said to have a certain constitution, or character, a character which corresponds, however, to the way the power of judgment represents this territory.

¹⁶⁹ Compare this point with my discussion of Allison in Ch. I, p. 31.

¹⁷⁰ Thus in other places Kant is perfectly willing to acknowledge that not just the *concepts*, but the *objects*, of nature and freedom are fundamentally distinct (CPR A840/B868; MoV 27:479). Finally, although Kant does not, to my knowledge, ever make this point, it seems to me that the distinction can be related to the distinction between scholastic and worldly philosophy that he draws near the end of the first *Critique* (see below, p. 144).

¹⁷¹ The German clause (where "*welches*" presumably refers back to "*ein ihr eigenes Prinzip*" runs as follows: "*. . . welches, wenn ihm gleich kein Feld der Gegenstände als sein Gebiet zustände, doch irgend einen Boden haben kann und eine gewisse Beschaffenheit desselben, wofür gerade nur dieses Prinzip geltend sein möchte.*" For that last part, Pluhar has ". . . and this territory might be of such a character that none but this very principle might hold in it." Nuzzo has: ". . . and this territory might be so constituted as to allow only for this principle to be valid in it."

Recall that at 5:174-175 Kant had distinguished between two ways in which (the same) objects might be represented in a given territory, suggesting that these two ways give rise to different domains, where an object is considered on the one hand (under concepts of nature) as “representable in intuition” and on the other hand (under the concept of freedom) as “a thing representable in itself but not in intuition.” The way the power of judgment represents this territory, I submit, is analogous to these modes of representation, but it allows us to “represent” the objects in a territory in a weaker sense.

The point, however, can be made precise. Both understanding and reason are modes of cognition that make possible certain representations. But representations after the manner of the understanding (concepts) are different in kind from representations after the manner of reason (ideas), and to this difference corresponds a difference in the immanent norms of the representations they make possible. If we say that these representations are constitutive of (two distinct modes of) objectivity (which will depend on whether we are taking “object” in a sense broader than the merely cognitive one), then we can even say that objects are constituted differently in accordance with this difference. In contrast, the *Beschaffenheit* of a territory that the power of judgment allows for is not, in the same way, an original mode of representation governing the constitution of a class of representations of objects. It is, rather, a mode of representation that already carries within itself a reference to another mode of representation, as can be seen in Kant’s reference to judgment as a “representation of a representation” (CPR A68/B93).¹⁷² As Kant, of course, immediately clarifies in the first *Critique*, this does not mean that judging is a derivative act

¹⁷² Kant emphasizes this point in the draft of his introduction to the third *Critique*, as well: “Yet the power of judgment is such a special faculty of cognition, not at all self-sufficient, that it provides neither concepts, like the understanding, nor ideas, like reason, of any object at all, since it is a faculty merely for subsuming under concepts given from elsewhere” (FI 20:202).

of the understanding, for in fact all other acts of the understanding are to be referred back to judgments. Kant's novel point was precisely that the unity of intellectual representation is derived from, and can therefore be traced back to, acts (of judging) which had always, on account of their complexity, been assumed to be derivative. In other words, the unity of the understanding in general refers back to an act of unifying that which initially presents itself as disunified, which is, as I have emphasized, why the power of judgment must not itself be rule-governed if it is to be the principle of all acts of the understanding.

Now, the status of the power of judgment as an intermediary (*Mittelglied*) between understanding and reason (CPJ 5:168) is intimately connected with this. As an intermediary, its representations will always have a reference to representations originating in either the understanding or in reason. It is thus a way of getting a hold of a representation whose original constitution as a representation has already been determined by another cognitive faculty. So although the power of judgment does not first make the representation itself possible, it nevertheless governs a certain way that such a representation, originally constituted, e.g., by reason as an idea, might be further constituted, but now in a weaker (because no longer constitutive of its being represented at all) sense.

But how exactly does the power of judgment allow us to get a hold of a representation? In the first *Critique*, Kant had characterized it as a faculty of subsumption (CPR A132/B171). In this way, it allows us to grasp an intuition (the mode of representation proper to sensibility) as falling under a concept (the mode of representation proper to the understanding). Now, however, Kant casts the power of judgment in a broader light. In addition to the task of subsumption, which is now characterized as the

activity proper to the *determining* power of judgment, Kant adds a second task, to be carried out by the *reflecting* power of judgment. The power of judgment is reflecting when the particular is given and the general rule under which it is to be subsumed is sought after (CPJ 5:179; FI 20:211; JL 9:131-132). In the first *Critique* Kant had apparently assigned this task to reason in its hypothetical use (see CPR A646-647/B674-675). But it is not the first time that he had closely associated judgment and reflection. In the *Amphiboly* Kant had distinguished logical from transcendental reflection: logical reflection, which abstracts from the cognitive faculty to which the representation belongs, can be reckoned “mere comparison” (CPR A262/B318), while transcendental reflection “contains the ground of the possibility of the objective comparison of the representations to each other” (CPR A263/B319) and concerns “the comparison of representations in general with the cognitive power in which they are situated” (CPR A261/B317). Both sorts of reflection are necessary for judgments, although in different senses. On the one hand, transcendental reflection is necessary so that we do not mistake, as Leibniz had, the comparison of concepts for the comparison of things themselves.¹⁷³ On the other hand, logical reflection is necessary for us to judge more generally, for “prior to all objective judgments we compare the concepts” (CPR A262/B317).¹⁷⁴

Although Kant is of course concerned in the *Amphiboly* primarily with transcendental reflection, his description of reflection in general accords quite closely with the reflecting power of judgment he introduces in the third *Critique*:

¹⁷³ Although he does not explicitly qualify “reflection” as “transcendental reflection,” this is surely the point of Kant’s remark that “all judgments, indeed all comparisons, require a **reflection**, i.e., a distinction of the cognitive power to which the given concepts belong” (CPR A261/B317).

¹⁷⁴ But see n. 131 above: this does not entail that judging is not the *transcendental* condition for logical reflection and comparison.

Reflection (*reflexio*) does not have to do with objects themselves, in order to acquire concepts directly from them, but is rather the state of mind in which we first prepare ourselves to find out the subjective conditions under which we can arrive at concepts. It is the consciousness of the relation of given representations to our various sources of cognition [*Erkenntnisquellen*], through which alone their relation among themselves can be correctly determined. (CPR A260/B316)

When he says that reflection concerns the relation of representations “to our various sources of cognition,” Kant is being slippery with his terminology, although not without reason. For the “sources” of cognition can refer either to concepts we have already acquired or else to the faculties to which the origin of those concepts can be traced. The rationalists will certainly agree with Kant when he suggests that we must ask, “Is it the understanding or is it the senses before which they are connected or compared?” (CPR A260/B316). For the rationalists, however, the criterion for answering this question is just the clarity or confusedness of the representations themselves, while for Kant what is first required is the transcendental reflection that identifies the (sensible or intellectual) origin of the representations. If we keep our attention on reflection in general, however, we can already see the key features of the reflecting power of judgment: it does not have to do with objects themselves, but with the subjective conditions of forming concepts of objects. In contrast to *determining* judgments, in which we apply the concepts we have already made, in *reflecting* judgments we are engaged with the process of concept formation, examining the ways in which our representations are related to one another.

Nevertheless, the activity of reflecting should not be thought of as a mere inversion of determining, an activity which is otherwise separate from the latter. Indeed, these two activities must often work together to achieve the goal of cognition, as the (general-logical) dependence of judgments of experience on judgments of perception amply illustrates. We

may possess an empirical concept under which a particular intuition or a relatively particular concept can, in fact, be subsumed, but the latter (intuition or concept) may not be immediately recognizable as falling under the former. In such a case, we “reflect” the intuition or concept to be subsumed, seeking an intermediary concept or series of concepts that will allow us to judge—now in a determining manner—that in fact the subsumption is necessary. Now, the reflecting activity of judgment is not supposed to somehow provide our discursive understanding with a complete continuity of conceptual determinations that would render the ultimate subsumption “intuitive” (after the manner of the rationalists) in character. But it does guide the understanding to the point at which it can recognize an instantiation of its concept. Typically, then, the reflecting activity of judgment stands in service to its determining activity, coming to the aid of the understanding at those times when the empirical concepts of the latter appear at first insufficient to account for the present experience.

Now, in the Analytic of Principles in the first *Critique* Kant had examined the *a priori* conditions for any appearance to be subsumable under any universal empirical rule whatsoever. In particular, he had proved in the Analogies the “thoroughgoing connection of everything contained in this totality of all appearances” (FI 20:208; cf. CPR B218). This guarantees that nature is not just a mere aggregate of appearances that are subsequently compared according to their empirical marks, but it doesn’t follow from this, Kant tells us, perhaps surprisingly, that nature is “a system that **can be grasped** by the human faculty of cognition [*ein für menschliche Erkenntnißvermögen faßliches System*]” (FI 20:209; cf. CPJ 5:179-180, 183; and even CPR A654/B682). This is because, for all the first *Critique* has shown, the diversity and multiplicity of empirical laws could be so great that we could

never collect them under a common principle. If this were so, Kant says, “it might be possible for us to connect perceptions to some extent in accordance with particular laws discovered on various occasions into one experience” (FI 20:209). But we would not be able to grasp nature as a system.

Is it really so obvious, however, that we *do* grasp nature as a system? If one did not know any better, one might mistake Kant’s invocation of a counterfactual scenario—one in which we succeed, but only to a limited extent, in collecting our perceptions together into one experience—for an astute description of the way modern science actually works. It is, at the very least, not obvious that we must account for the possibility of any further unity of our cognition.

Here it is important to distinguish between the two noncompeting standpoints of the first and third *Critiques*.¹⁷⁵ In the first *Critique*, Kant had shown, against Leibniz, that the empirical laws of the understanding are not the result of the division of *one* unified matter given in advance to the understanding, but rather of the reflection of independently given matters that are only subsequently formed in accordance with the understanding’s *a priori* laws (see esp. CPR A267/B322-323). Thus for the cognition of things given from elsewhere, the ideal of a whole of reality given to thought prior to its determining activity can only be a heuristic, regulative principle to seek the unity of the diversity of its empirical laws as far as possible. The ideal *unification* of these laws need not be assumed, accordingly, as anything more than a *focus imaginarius* that guides our unifying activity (see CPR A644/B672).

¹⁷⁵ For a completely opposite approach, see Longuenesse (1995), 533-536. She argues that the terms of the problem and its solution are fundamentally the same across the two texts, the third *Critique* merely adding a relation of the first *Critique*’s solution to the problem of the transition from the concept of freedom to concepts of nature. I, on the other hand, think that the problem of transition demands a whole new solution, one which does not, however, require Kant to revise any substantive view he holds in the first *Critique*.

As we have seen, however, what is required for the third *Critique's* task is that we be able to think of nature in such a way that "the lawfulness of its form is at least in agreement with the possibility of the ends that are to be realized in it in accordance with the laws of freedom" (CPJ 5:176; see above, p. 108). Recall that the transitional task Kant specifies in the third *Critique* moves not in the direction from laws that have the form of the understanding (constitutive of our comportment to objects of nature) to laws that have the form of reason (constitutive of our comportment to the object of freedom), but in the opposite direction. This means that the principles of reason to which Kant ascribed regulative validity in the first *Critique*, which presuppose the laws of the understanding as given (CPR A302/B359), are not sufficient to the task of transition. Instead, it is necessary that the laws of the understanding be representable as immanently (not merely potentially) bearing the form of reason. That is, we must represent nature as being purposive with respect to our power of judgment: because natural laws already have a thoroughgoing affinity amongst themselves, our power of judgment, which, in its reflecting activity, searches through the given particular laws for universal principles, is able to achieve success.

This may sound a bit strange at first. Hasn't Kant already shown in the first *Critique* that nature is suited to our power of judgment? After all, the Transcendental Deduction showed that nothing can even count *as an object* for us unless it is already the object of a judgment. Not only is it *unnecessary* to ask whether the power of judgment is "suited" to nature, but it positively misconstrues the nature of judgment, for acts of judging are only acts of judging when they involve a nonconceptual act of recognition. The purposiveness of nature to which Kant refers in the third *Critique* involves a hierarchical continuum of

conceptual determinations in nature, but such a continuum appears to be exactly what Kant claimed in the first *Critique* that the power of judgment does not require.

To see clearly here, it is important to carefully distinguish the tasks of the first and third *Critiques* from one another. The cognition of nature requires us to criticize the pretensions of reason to legislate over that domain, and this is the task with which the first *Critique* is primarily concerned. Given, however, that reason *is* legislative with respect to our faculty of desire, there arises a second question regarding nature, this time not about our cognition of it, but about our comportment to it in light of the concept of freedom. And this is what the third *Critique* is concerned to investigate.

In light of these different tasks, the question of the suitability of nature for our power of judgment demands different answers. From the standpoint of the first *Critique*, the activity of the power of judgment, measured against an ideal of logical completeness, leaps over conceptual gaps. It owes us, however, no account of its right to do so, for only in virtue of nonconceptual subsumption is the recognition of nature in general possible. Any general attempt to impugn our power of judgment on this score illicitly assumes a God's-eye point of view.¹⁷⁶ When we look *back*, however, on our cognition of nature from the perspective afforded us by the practical standpoint, a perspective for which reason is legislative, matters stand somewhat differently. Now we must compare a discursively cognized world with one which unfolds itself intuitively from the top down, even though we lack a determinate cognition of the latter. In the light of such a comparison, the conceptual gaps that we jump over with our determining acts of judgment become problematic in a new way, for the gaps presupposed by our power of judgment are

¹⁷⁶ Again, see my qualification in Chapter I: I am not saying that no *particular* judgment can be called into question. I am simply saying that no global skepticism about our ability to judge could ever get off the ground.

precisely what are ruled out in the case of an ideal that contains its determinations within itself, unfolding them from the top down.

Thus when we consider our acts of judgment from the perspective of the supersensible world, they seem, to put it crudely, too quick. It is as if we had woven an intricate tapestry in our cognition of nature, but now find it threadbare upon the infinitely closer inspection that the practical standpoint demands of us. It is the sort of inadequacy that an intuitive understanding would find with the activity, however conscientious and thorough, of a discursive one. As Kant says later on in the third *Critique*,

Our understanding thus has this peculiarity for the power of judgment, that in cognition by means of it the particular is not determined by the universal, and the former therefore cannot be derived from the latter alone; but nevertheless this particular in the manifold of nature should agree with the universal (through concepts and laws), which agreement under such circumstances must be quite contingent and without a determinate principle for the power of judgment. (CPJ 5:406-407)

The possibility of such an agreement will be conceivable only if we

at the same time conceive of another understanding, in relation to which, and indeed prior to any end attributed to it, we can represent the agreement of natural laws with our power of judgment, which for our understanding is conceivable only through ends as the means of connection, as **necessary**. (CPJ 5:407)

The latter sort of understanding will deal in universals which are not analytic (like ours are: contentful only insofar as discrete bits of sensible matter have been reflected into them), but rather synthetic (containing within themselves the power to determine the matter to which they apply). The difference between these two conceptions of universality now demands that we justify precisely that which from the perspective of human cognition alone neither needed nor permitted any such justification. Failure to justify the prerogative of the power of judgment would have no consequences for the critique of cognition or the

metaphysics of nature which it made possible.¹⁷⁷ Thinking of nature as purposive with respect to our power of judgment goes no way towards providing us with a determinate *cognition* of it as such, but it brings the piecemeal, determinate world of theory into relation with a moral world with a thoroughly rational form.

The distinctive question of the third *Critique* clarified, its answer is surprisingly simple. How do we know that nature is suited to our power of judgment, and hence that the nature we have discursively cognized can be the same nature that bears the form of the moral world immanently within itself? We can immediately establish the impossibility of both empirical and *a priori* proofs. An empirical investigation is only possible where the legitimacy of the power of judgment is presupposed, but from the standpoint of the third *Critique* this involves an obvious *petitio principii*. Neither, however, is an *a priori* proof possible. For the mutual affinity of nature's *empirical* laws is not a requirement for our cognitive relation to objects in general, and it therefore cannot be accorded the objective validity that attaches, e.g., to the categories of the understanding. All that is left, then, is to subjectively *assume* that this principle obtains, that is, to assume that nature is suited to the needs of our power of judgment. As Kant puts it, the power of judgment prescribes a principle not to nature, but only to itself as a faculty for reflecting upon nature (CPJ 5:185).

Unlike Longuenesse, then, I see the question in the Introduction to the third *Critique* as a genuinely new one; unlike Guyer (see n. 177), I see it as one whose answer does not require a revision of any central doctrine of the first *Critique*. The first *Critique* is a critique

¹⁷⁷ Guyer, who denies this, sees Kant moving toward a "retraction of the first *Critique's* doctrine of objective affinity," replacing it with a presupposition which is "only a matter for judgment" (Guyer [1990], 35). Guyer ends up with a Heidegger-style claim: although Kant catches a glimpse of the necessity for regrounding the Transcendental Deduction in the merely subjective *a priori* principle of the power of judgment, he ultimately pulls back and attempts to hold onto the more metaphysically robust view of the first *Critique*. See Guyer (1990), 38-43.

of our faculty of cognition, and for the purposes of cognition the affinity of the empirical manifold (as distinguished from the transcendental affinity of the manifold in general) cannot be established, but may be assumed as a heuristic principle in scientific investigation. Crucially, this assumption does not provide an *a priori* principle that would govern the faculty of feeling. The third *Critique* is a critique of the faculty of feeling. It tells us that we are permitted—in fact, required—to assume the affinity of the empirical manifold if a transition from the concept of freedom to concepts of nature is to be possible. This principle has, in fact, a cognitive use (as a teleological principle), but it is valid as an *a priori* principle only for the faculty of feeling. Thus it does not permit us to *cognize* the empirical affinity of the manifold, but only to *feel* it.

Feeling and the Transition from Nature to Morals

Kant's task is obviously a rather delicate one. There must be a way of comporting ourselves to nature, to which we relate ourselves in the first place only cognitively and under the legislation of the understanding, as if it were materially determined by the form of our *practical* cognition. Now, the relevant faculty by which we are able to effect the transition from nature to morals is not the faculty of cognition, but the faculty of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. Although this is the key move that Kant makes in the Introduction to the third *Critique*, it is, admittedly, an obscure one, one the significance of which emerges more clearly only when we consider it in a broader context.

If we go back to Kant's original review of Herder's *Ideas*, we can already see the clues that would allow Kant to identify *feeling* as the faculty by which nature and morals are to be connected. To be sure, Kant's remarks at the time appeared to be, and probably were, a mere expression of Kant's condescension towards the literary pretensions of his

former student. Herder's literary genius, but his philosophical weakness, consists in his ability to "captivate" the very object of his inquiry and hold it, as it were, at a distance from himself and his reader—approaching the object "through feeling and sensation" rather than through "cold judgment" (RH 8:45). At the conclusion of his review, Kant advises Herder to accept the guidance of philosophy as a way of restraining his genius: he should complete his project not through an imagination powered by feeling, but by recourse to "determinate concepts" (RH 8:55).

Pedantic advice like this is well and good if Herder's project of connecting nature and morality precludes ultimate reference to feeling and requires the employment of determinate concepts. Does it, though? In a sense, yes: insofar as such a project pretends to be scientific, it does. But in the years following his review of the *Ideas*, Kant would conclude that the true significance of Herder's project lies in another direction entirely, even if this had not been clear to Herder himself. Looking back on his review, Kant could not fail to see Herder's reliance on feeling at crucial points as symptomatic of a genuine role for this third faculty in the connection of nature and morals. In the introductory material for the third *Critique*, Kant attempts for the first and only time to make this clear.

The relevant feeling in this case is one of delight at finding, in particular instances, that nature *is* in fact purposive with respect to our faculty of cognition, that is, that the diversity of empirical laws which we discover is proportioned, after all, to the limited powers of our human understanding. Such a claim, it is true, requires some explanation, for it may seem to flatly contradict Kant's earlier insistence that no empirical investigation can reveal to us the purposiveness of nature. Worse yet, it may seem as though we are discovering "empirically" nothing more than what we had already assumed as a principle:

We are supposed to encounter nature's purposiveness, Kant tells us, "just as if it were a happy accident which happened to favor our aim [*ein glücklicher unsre Absicht begünstigender Zufall*]" (CPJ 5:184). Thus we are not dealing simply with pleasure, but along with that a feeling of surprise and relief at having been unburdened of a need (see CPJ 5:184). And yet if we have already *assumed* this very purposiveness *a priori*, it is hard to see why "finding" it in particular instances should occasion such satisfaction.

Before we try to deal with the difficulties here, let's see what utility this delight may have. It is a feeling of surprised pleasure, Kant tells us, in which a special form of reflecting judgment is grounded: aesthetic judgment. Now, he immediately clarifies that because there is and can be no *objective* sense of an aesthetic judgment, an aesthetic judgment is not, strictly speaking, really a judgment at all. For

judgments belong absolutely only to the understanding (taken in a wider sense), and **to judge** aesthetically or sensibly, insofar as this is supposed to be **cognition** of an object, is itself a contradiction even if sensibility meddles in the business of the understanding and . . . gives the understanding a false direction; rather, an **objective** judgment is always made by the understanding, and to that extent cannot be called aesthetic. (FI 20:222)

If we nevertheless call aesthetic judgments "judgments," this is because the feeling on which they are based is inseparable from the (reflecting) activity of judgment. In an aesthetic judgment "a given representation is certainly related to an object but . . . what is understood in the judgment is not the determination of the object, but of the subject and its feeling" (FI 20:223). In the Schematism of the first *Critique*, Kant had considered the relation between understanding and imagination *objectively*, or cognitively, by considering the restraints on the intuition of objects that the understanding enforces by means of the imagination. But the relation between understanding and imagination can also be considered merely *subjectively*: instead of asking how our relation to cognizable objects is

governed, we can ask about the feeling that is produced in us by the accordance (or lack thereof) between the two faculties (FI 20:223).

It should be kept in mind that the reflecting power of judgment ultimately stands in service to its determining power: we reflect concepts under increasingly universal representations so that we can in turn determine sensible representations by means of those reflected concepts. The power of judgment is, after all, a faculty of *cognition*, and only in its determining activity is it productive of cognitions in the full sense of the latter, and we will recall that a cognition consists in “the determinate relation of given representations to an object” (CPR B137). Reflection is necessary in instances in which we do not immediately recognize our sensations as falling under familiar concepts. In such situations we are forced, as it were, to step back and observe the interplay between our cognitive faculties. This can, to be sure, result in mere frustration if we experience a complete lack of fit between the intuition and our concepts. But if the reflection is successful, an integration of our present experience with cognition in general becomes possible which was not immediately noticeable beforehand. On the one hand, this allows us to cognize an object via the determining power of judgment, but the subjective effect, which is the sign that such a determination has been made possible, is one of surprised delight: we have been relieved of the need to find a concept for our intuition. An aesthetic judgment registers this feeling in the context of the activity of reflection: we take pleasure in realizing that we might yet overcome the experienced gap between our intuitions and our concepts.

Beauty, the natural symbol of the morally good, is where we find this delight manifested in its most essential form. To say that a beautiful object is a *symbol* means

something specific for Kant. Leibniz, distinguishing between intuitive and symbolic cognition,¹⁷⁸ had complained that

on topics and circumstances where our senses are not much engaged, our thoughts are for the most part what we might call “blind”—in Latin I call them *cogitationes caecae*. I mean that they are empty of perception and sensibility, and consist in the wholly unaided use of symbols, as happens with those who calculate algebraically with only intermittent attention to the geometrical figures which are being dealt with.¹⁷⁹

But where Leibniz sees two possible kinds of cognition, Kant sees three, and what Leibniz labels “symbolic” Kant refers to as “discursive,” or “intellectual.”¹⁸⁰ For Kant, *symbolic* cognition, strictly speaking, is actually a species of intuitive cognition and can be properly contrasted with *schematic* cognition (CPJ 5:351). According to Kant,

All intuitions that are set under [*unterlegt*] concepts *a priori* are thus either **schemata** or **symbols**, the first of which contain direct, the second indirect presentations of the concept. The first do this demonstratively, the second by means of an analogy (for which empirical intuitions are also employed), in which the power of judgment performs a double task, first applying the concept to the object of a sensible intuition, and then, second, applying the mere rule of reflection on that intuition to an entirely different object, of which the first is only the symbol. (CPJ 5:352; trans. modified)

It is interesting that symbols, which are more indirect than schemata, nevertheless require an initial reference to a *sensible* intuition.¹⁸¹ It is not, however, the reference to sensation itself in virtue of which symbolic cognition is intuitive, but only by transferring “the reflection on an object of intuition to an entirely different concept, to which perhaps no intuition can ever directly correspond” (CPJ 5:352-353; trans. modified). In this way it

¹⁷⁸ For his most extensive development of this distinction, see Leibniz (1684), 24-25. Wolff rediscovered this early text and incorporated Leibniz’s distinction into his own thought in Wolff (1720), 27 (§316). See Wilson (1995), 447-448.

¹⁷⁹ Leibniz (1703-1705), 185-186.

¹⁸⁰ Kant, Leibniz, and Wolff, however, all take the reasoning that relies on words, or characters, as paradigmatic of this sort of cognition. See CPJ 5:352; A 7:191.

¹⁸¹ By contrast, schemata (of pure concepts) concern only the pure, universal *form* of our sensible intuition, i.e., time (CPR A142/B181).

functions “analogically” (CPJ 5:352; A 7:191). Thus an intuition functioning symbolically immediately deflects the attention of the understanding away from the intuition itself and onto the rule for which it serves as an instance. Kant expresses this by saying that it is “the form of the reflection, not the content, which corresponds to the concept” (CPJ 5:351).

It is this *form* of the reflection that corresponds to the possibility of an *a priori* principle of the power of judgment, for insofar as the activity of this faculty is merely reflecting, it is beholden not to the sensation itself, but rather to the mere attempt to bring this sensation into relation with concepts. Thus

in this faculty the power of judgment does not see itself, as is otherwise the case in empirical judging, as subjected to a heteronomy of the laws of experience; in regard to the objects of such a pure satisfaction it gives the law to itself, just as reason does with regard to the faculty of desire; and it sees itself, both on account of this inner possibility in the subject as well as on account of the outer possibility of a nature that corresponds to it, as related to something in the subject itself and outside of it, which is neither nature nor freedom, but which is connected with the ground of the latter, namely the supersensible, in which the theoretical faculty is combined with the practical, in a mutual and unknown way, to form a unity. (CPJ 5:353)

Now, the “inner possibility in the subject” and “the outer possibility of a nature that corresponds to it” refer us back to the “happy accident” Kant had spoken of earlier (CPJ 5:184): the coincidence of the parsimony of laws encountered in nature with the subjective needs of our power of judgment. Kant’s point is that the very expression of the freedom of imagination, reflecting upon the sensibly given, proves itself to coincide with the need of the power of judgment to cognize nature determinately. The power of judgment “sees itself . . . as related to something in the subject itself and outside of it”; that is, it relates at the same time to the particular laws of nature and to the subjective need to find the ideal of the highest good reflected there, making possible the transition from the concept of freedom to concepts of nature.

Now, Kant warns us that “to claim (with Swedenborg) that the real appearances of the world present to the senses are merely a **symbol** of an intelligible world hidden in reserve is **enthusiasm**” (A 7:191). To do so would be, I think, a misunderstanding of the symbolic anyway: to try to impose, in a determining manner, a schema onto the world as a whole already precludes the very essential role for the reflecting activity of judgment that is necessary for symbolic cognition, for to judge of an object that it is beautiful requires a certain degree of encountered, not expected or contrived, misfit between the object and the concept under which it ultimately becomes subsumable (though not necessarily subsumed). Only in this way is the concept of the object reflected beyond its previous borders and do judgments of taste become possible at all. Accordingly, we must take Kant’s idea of a “double task” for the power of judgment quite literally (CPJ 5:352, quoted above). First, it seeks to apply some concept to the object of a sensible intuition. The application initially fails, which occasions an activity of reflection. In the course of this reflecting, the concept and the intuition are brought into proximity to one another by way of analogy, and the delight accompanying this accomplishment signals to us the uncanny proximity of nature to our concepts. It is this very proximity, the unexpected coincidence of what we discursively cognize and what a natural world unfolded from the top down as an ideal would be like, that allows the morally good, itself an indeterminate idea, to shine forth from the particular aesthetic experiences. Although these experiences always point in the direction of a more comprehensive intelligibility of the world, they are only aesthetic experiences insofar as we abstract from the determining activity of judgment to which such experiences point. To proceed straightaway to determining judgments is the familiar error of those who wish to intellectualize aesthetic experience, losing what is specific to it in the

process. Crucially, the delight that grounds aesthetic judgments and accompanies our discovery of the purposiveness of nature with respect to us attends *not* the ensuing determination (if we even make one), but only the activity of reflection so long as we are able to linger in it.

Perhaps it is not yet clear, however, whether the delight grounding aesthetic judgments is really something to which we are entitled. Nietzsche once observed, “If someone hides something behind a bush, looks for it in the same place and then finds it there, his seeking and finding is nothing much to boast about.”¹⁸² Haven’t we simply set ourselves up for this delight by virtue of presupposing *a priori* the purposiveness of nature with respect to our faculty of cognition? Regardless of the presumed necessity of such a principle, doesn’t it, to put the point bluntly, rather cheapen the pleasure that our subsequent experience manifests? More to the point, perhaps: doesn’t it suggest that we have really just tricked ourselves into finding a symbol of morality in the natural world? Have we done anything more than hide it, ourselves, behind the bush of appearances, and in the experience of beauty, are we really, in fact, doing anything more than congratulating ourselves for finding it there?

We can acknowledge, of course, that we should not be delighted to “find,” say, causality in nature, for the presence of this causality in the relations of natural objects to one another is entirely determined by our faculty of cognition. We could not encounter a natural object at all were it not already determined with respect to this category.¹⁸³ But to

¹⁸² Nietzsche (1873), 147.

¹⁸³ Well, this actually sells Kant’s story short in several respects, neglecting, as it does, his distinction between the mathematical-constitutive and the dynamic-regulative principles of the understanding (CPR A178-181/B221-224). But even the dynamic-regulative principles are constitutive of objectivity in the sense required here, making possible (and being restricted to) the field of possible experience as a whole (see CPR A509-510/B537-538).

regard nature as purposive for our power of judgment already requires our looking at the cognition of nature in light of our duty to transform it. The power of judgment, which represents objects only when the basic principles of their representation are already given by another faculty,¹⁸⁴ is not constitutive of objects, either of cognition or of desire. Thus its *a priori* principle is merely subjective, and it follows that the assumption of purposiveness is not thought along with the thought of its objects. This allows for an element of surprise when the subjective principle governing this faculty finds the conditions of its fulfillment in the objective world. In such cases we feel, as it were, reason in nature, finding ourselves on the cusp of a new possibility for the determining power of judgment which we had not seen before.

There are two ways to consider this possibility, however: subjectively and objectively. The *aesthetic judgment* takes the former path, abstracting entirely from the determination which the reflection has made possible. This is why Kant will go on to speak of the “free play” of the understanding and the imagination (CPJ 5:217): the play is “free” precisely because the act of determining is deferred indefinitely. If the latter is consummated, the imagination is again strictly subordinated to the understanding, and the play between the two ceases.¹⁸⁵ *Teleological judgments*, on the other hand, take the objective path: they consider the purposiveness on the side of the *object* and are hence logical, i.e., determined on the basis of concepts (CPJ 5:193). This does not mean that they are themselves *determining* judgments: as presumptive cognitions, they could only be such if they restricted themselves to the conditions of mechanical explanation. But by focusing

¹⁸⁴ That is, it has a “certain *Beschaffenheit* of them”; see p. 115 above.

¹⁸⁵ In his 1792 logic lectures, Kant puts the point this way: “There really is no beautiful cognition. In cognition it is only a matter of the relation to the object—if it is met with, then it is **true**, but only the **exhibition** can be **beautiful**” (DWL 24:705).

on the reflected concept of the object, not the feeling in the subject, teleological judgments belong originally to the sphere of cognition and are thus not appropriate for the transitional task with which the third *Critique* is principally concerned.

The Significance of Feeling

For all its ambitions, the introductory material to the third *Critique* maintains a scholastic distance from the conclusion to which it leads: that only through *feeling* is the transition from natural to moral philosophy possible. Kant had already laid the groundwork for this thought, however, in the 1786 essay that cemented his position as a champion of the Enlightenment, *What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?*

In the wake of the initial storm of 1785 Jacobi had fervently hoped, and even expected, that he would soon be able to enlist Kant as an ally.¹⁸⁶ Kant was, after all, still the author of the *Dreams*, and Mendelssohn's own skeptical interpretation of Kant's project, combined with the respectful distance he kept from it, no doubt emboldened Jacobi in his expectations. It was to his severe disappointment, then, that Jacobi found Kant taking up Mendelssohn's cause in the orientation essay. That Kant was doing so only nominally was of little consolation; if anything, Jacobi was only further provoked by the interpretive gymnastics he witnessed Kant performing in order to "defend" Mendelssohn. Disappointed, he finally gave up on Kant and his critical project.¹⁸⁷

Jacobi's exasperation, at least, is understandable, for Kant's appropriation of Mendelssohn's approach in *Morning Hours* borders on disingenuousness. Mendelssohn had

¹⁸⁶ He even quotes extensively from the first *Critique* to defend himself against Mendelssohn's accusations, a use of his philosophy that was likely irksome to Kant. See Jacobi (1786), 158. For the background to this, see Beiser (1987), 113-115, 122.

¹⁸⁷ This found expression, of course, in Jacobi's famous criticisms of the very foundations of the critical philosophy. See Beiser (1987), 122-126.

argued that although it is the task of philosophy to correct common sense, the philosopher must be careful not to stray *too* far afield: if the philosopher finds herself committed to propositions that fly in the face of received wisdom, she is to retrace her steps back to the point from which she originally parted ways with common sense, a point at which she can and must *reorient* her thinking anew.¹⁸⁸ Even in this brief sketch, it is easy to see at least the basis for Hegel's later charge of unseriousness,¹⁸⁹ and Jacobi—whatever illusions he might have harbored about the rest of the critical philosophy—could surely have expected the “all-crushing Kant,” who had written what was being called the “doomsday book” of philosophy,¹⁹⁰ to take Mendelssohn to task.

But Kant does not. Instead, he recasts Mendelssohn's appeal to “common sense” as an altogether appropriate, if not quite adequately understood, appeal to *feeling*: it is this faculty, not a cognitive one at all, by which we can reorient ourselves when lost. On the surface, this bears a striking resemblance to Jacobi's own alternative to Mendelssohn, an appeal to “intuition,” which is not, at least for Jacobi, strictly cognitive in nature, but has an ethical significance, as well.¹⁹¹ But Kant makes a move which is surprising, though in retrospect perhaps less so: he links the “feeling” by which we are to orient ourselves in thinking to a strictly cognitive faculty, not to understanding or to intuition, however, but to the power of *judgment*.

Kant begins his essay by considering the plight of a disoriented astronomer stranded on a clear night under the constellations he knows so well. No quantity of objective scientific cognition will help him find his way home if he does not also relate

¹⁸⁸ Beiser (1987), 98-102.

¹⁸⁹ See n. 138 above.

¹⁹⁰ Windelband (1892), 536.

¹⁹¹ Beiser (1987), 81-83.

himself *subjectively*, by means of feeling the difference between right and left, to what he knows (OOT 8:135). Reason, too, Kant wants us to see, spins an essentially directionless web of pure thought, one in which we can easily become lost. Perhaps getting lost in it was Leibniz's ambition, but it was, at any rate, the specter Jacobi was raising against Mendelssohn (and the Enlightenment as a whole). In reality, it was just a new version of Rousseau's conclusion in the first *Discourse*, i.e., that science, left to its own devices, cannot be a true philosophy at all, for true philosophy has an unbreakable connection with a deeper truth that lies only in the heart of the individual. To sever this connection is to cut scholastic philosophy off from the only possible source of its own validity.

Thus we are confronted with an apparent dilemma, one to which, if the rationalists' ambitions were fulfillable, no solution would be possible.¹⁹² But the first *Critique* has shown that they are not, and in the inevitability of this very failure resides the clue we need. Reason, chastened by criticism, finds itself unable to decide, from cognitive considerations alone, upon inescapable questions of the utmost practical importance. Mendelssohn wanted to use this inability as a pretense for yet another species of *cognitive* justification for certain answers, but that was a mistake. Reason's actual route is more circuitous: "It has insight into its lack and through the **drive for cognition** [*Erkenntnißtrieb*] it effects the feeling of a need" (OOT 8:139n). Reason is a "faculty" of cognition, but one whose special principles lead not to cognition at all, but only to illusion. Since no cognitive resolution of this illusion is possible, this lack can manifest itself only as

¹⁹² This is the heart of Kant's disagreement with Jacobi. For Jacobi takes it that the rationalists' ambitions are eminently fulfillable (and have, in Spinoza, been fulfilled). This is why the noncognitive "solution" endorsed by Jacobi is another, and more radical, sort of solution altogether.

a feeling, that is, as an inescapable burden placed on the subject himself, a burden that no cognition, however subtle, can alleviate.

Still, so long as we confine ourselves to the theoretical sphere, this need is something we can live with. It may tempt us, as it tempted Mendelssohn, to leap to unjustifiable conclusions, but through discipline such temptation can at least be warded off indefinitely. Only in the context of reason's practical employment does this need, if left unsated, become downright intolerable. Here—and only here—Kant emphasizes, “we **have to judge**” (OOT 8:139). In this context, this means: we have to decide, not on objective, cognitive grounds, but on subjective, aesthetic (which is not to say arbitrary) ones, whether we are to believe in the existence of God and the immortality of our souls.¹⁹³ Here the limitations of the traditional rationalist approaches to judgment are again brought to the fore (see Kant's allusion to Descartes's Fourth Meditation at OOT 8:136). To refrain from judgment in the absence of intuitively complete evidence can indeed shelter us from *error* indefinitely, but, as we have already seen, objective cognition would not be possible if we were not originally responsible for violating this stricture. Now Kant adds a crucial second dimension to this point: it is not just that cognition is, if you will, dependent on judgment on the “front end.” It is dependent on it on the “back end,” too, that is, when it comes time to relate our scientific cognition to the ultimate ends of human reason. Again, there is no compulsion to so judge, but adhering to Descartes's ethics of judgment will consign us to the position of the disoriented astronomer. Only by way of responding to our feeling with judgment—and thus going beyond grounds that are conceptually clarifiable—can “a human

¹⁹³ Thus Kant's answer to the title question of the essay: “To **orient** oneself in thinking in general means: when objective principles of reason are insufficient for holding something true, to determine the matter according to a subjective principle” (OOT 8:136n).

being who has common but (morally) healthy reason . . . mark out his path, in both a theoretical and a practical respect, in a way which is fully in accord with the whole end of his vocation [*Bestimmung*]” (OOT 8:142).

On the one hand, Kant’s reference to the subjective grounds of belief would have been altogether familiar to readers of the first *Critique* (see CPR A827/B855). On the other hand, however, his foregrounding of the power of judgment in this respect could only be described as suggestive without the grounding provided by the third *Critique*. In 1793 Kant explicitly links up, for the first time, as far as I am aware, the transition between theory and practice with a corresponding transition between concept and intuition. “It is obvious,” he writes,

that between theory and practice there is required, besides, a middle term [*Mittelglied*] connecting them and providing a transition [*Überganges*] from one to the other, no matter how complete a theory may be; for, to a concept of the understanding, which contains a rule, must be added an act of judgment by which a practitioner distinguishes whether or not something is a case of the rule. (TP 8:275)¹⁹⁴

By now, however, he has the analyses of the first and third *Critiques* to call upon to specify the precise scope of this claim and the central role of the faculty of feeling. Because our understanding is discursive, not intuitive, the power of judgment is a necessarily non-rule-governed faculty that in its determining use leaps over the gaps that inevitably present themselves to us in the course of our attempts to cognize the world. Such gaps, as we have seen, pose no threat to the objective validity of theoretical cognition, but the need for a transition from morals to nature first draws attention to such gaps in a new way. For the concept of freedom demands that nature be conceived after the manner of an ideal, in

¹⁹⁴ Kant continues by repeating the argument (from the first *Critique*) that judgment cannot itself be a rule-governed activity (CPR A133/B172).

relation to which our merely discursive understanding appears insufficient. It is only the reflecting power of judgment, considered precisely insofar as it is reflecting, that works to close those gaps, giving rise through its activity to a feeling of delight in its unexpected success in doing so. Aesthetic judgments are the results of those moments, sometimes fleeting, to be sure—and always subjective—in which we see the world as it ought to be symbolized in the beauty of the natural world. This makes a “transition” between symbol and symbolized possible in a correspondingly subjective sense: we feel it.

Herder’s Abuse of Teleology Reconsidered

We have come this far with precious little positive discussion of teleological judgments. This may well seem amiss, for my initial suggestion was to read the third *Critique* as the kind of careful response to the challenge posed by Herder that Kant’s earlier review had not been. Since the crux of that challenge is Herder’s novel employment of teleological explanation, it would seem to follow, if I am right, that the second part of the third *Critique* is its most important. But this, it could then be pointed out, is just the opposite of what Kant really says (CPJ 5:194). And it is certainly the opposite of what my analysis here might suggest. What is going on?

I claimed earlier that Kant’s task was to find the principle the misuse of which had resulted in Herder’s inflation of the significance of teleology, and I suggested that such a principle can be found in the purposiveness of nature. Now, however, we are in a position to lend that claim some much needed clarification. We know already that the specific difference between aesthetic and teleological judgments is that the former make *subjective* use of the principle of purposiveness, while the latter make *objective* use of that same principle. Now, Kant’s point in the third *Critique* is not simply that the former use is

legitimate, the latter illegitimate. If it were, the two parts of the third *Critique* would be related something like the Analytic and the Dialectic of the first *Critique*. But Kant never wants to deny the legitimacy of teleological judgments. To be sure, we could never hope to prove *a priori* that there must be objective purposiveness, i.e., natural ends, within nature. But it is empirically true—as a fact, you might say—that we do, in fact, judge this way (UTP 8:182). And once we *do* judge this way, teleological explanations cannot be reduced to mechanical ones (UTP 8:179). This distinguishes, for example, the description of nature from natural history (UTP 8:161-162, 169). It would be a mistake to look for a transcendental deduction of the objective purposiveness of nature, but it would be folly to simply eliminate, for that reason, teleological explanations altogether.

We can sum up Kant's view as follows: even though an *a priori* deduction of the principle of purposiveness is only available in a subjective sense, and this entails only that nature can be thought of as purposive with respect to our faculty of cognition, nevertheless the presence of such a concept licenses its objective use so long as we empirically judge that there is at least one natural end (FI 20:218).¹⁹⁵ For once we make the latter judgment, we are committed to pursuing teleology indefinitely along its own proper explanatory path, and the availability of the principle of purposiveness in a subjective respect at least guarantees the intelligibility of this sort of explanation. This by no means grants teleological explanation the same validity that attaches to mathematical natural science; in fact, the basic explanatory principles of the two domains remain entirely heterogeneous

¹⁹⁵ As Kant says, "It is entirely consistent that the **explanation** [*Erklärung*] of an appearance, which is an affair of reason in accordance with objective principles of reason, be **mechanical**, while the rule for **judging** of the same object, in accordance with subjective principles of reflection on it, should be **technical**" (FI 20:218). In other words, teleological judgment is not meant to be a competitor, or even a rigorously grounded alternative, to mechanical explanation.

(UTP 8:161-162). And it does not, just as importantly, allow for metaphysical foundations of teleology. The “sciences” which are grounded in teleology are not sciences in the same respect as those with metaphysical foundations.¹⁹⁶

Despite these restrictions, it might still appear as though those disciplines grounded in teleology—most significantly, natural history, given the significance Herder ascribes to the latter—are the obvious locus of the transition from natural to moral philosophy. After all, it is here that we judge the natural world to have an ideal form, to proceed from the whole to its parts. Nevertheless, it is crucial to understanding the systematic significance of the third *Critique* to recognize that it is only aesthetic judgments, not teleological ones, which provide the occasion for the true transition from moral to natural philosophy. It is crucial for Kant that this transition be possible, but it is equally crucial that it be grounded in subjective feeling—and it is precisely feeling that falls out of the picture when we judge teleologically. Recall that teleological judgments, unlike aesthetic judgments, are logical—determined on the basis of concepts (CPJ 5:193). In this the teleological power of judgment, even though it is a variety of reflecting judgment in general, has an ultimately *cognitive* significance (even if its significance is not grounded in the same way as the principles of the understanding considered in the first *Critique*). Among cognitive judgments, teleological judgments are unique in that they make objective use of a concept (that of the purposiveness of nature) that is a special principle of aesthetic judgments. Only for this reason do teleological judgments, which are not *proper* to the third *Critique* (in fact, they have, as we know, already been treated in the first), nevertheless fall under consideration here, as well (CPJ 5:194; cf. 5:360). It is not that teleological judgments do not have their

¹⁹⁶ I say this despite the fact that Kant at times casually uses “*Wissenschaft*” to refer to natural history, as well (e.g., UTP 8:162).

own sphere of legitimacy. But the immense significance ascribed to them by so many must be relocated to the sphere of aesthetic judgments. Teleology may show us, after a certain manner, what the transition between the highest good and the natural world would “look” like, and to that extent it can be a kind of cognitive shadow of nature’s beauty. But Kant’s deeper point in the third *Critique* is that this transition doesn’t look like anything at all: it is, rather, something we feel (in accordance, however, with an *a priori* principle) in aesthetic experience.

At one stroke, then, we see the source of Herder’s error, and in doing so we immediately appreciate just how easy it was for him to fall into it. Herder, just like Mendelssohn, was unable to recognize his reliance on feeling. Whereas Mendelssohn misascribed the orientation it provided to the faculty of cognition, Herder misascribed the transition it made possible to those historical ruminations by which he hoped to link together the explanatory paradigms of nature and morals. In fact, such teleologically-driven natural history can be no more than the cognitive image of the transition between nature and morals that is possible through feeling alone. Natural history, Kant had instructed Forster, is a discipline that “for now (and maybe forever) is realizable more in silhouette than in deed” (UTP 8:162). He could have added: whatever degree of articulation it attains, it will remain, for the purposes of transition, at least, a mere projection of our subjective feeling onto the form of the natural world. In this manner, however, Kant was finally able to turn his condescending rhetoric of 1785, in which he repeatedly praised the depth of Herder’s “feeling,” into a philosophical insight: it *was* Herder’s feeling in which the distinctive brilliance of the *Ideas* was grounded. The only problem was that both its author

and its readers located that brilliance in its extravagant natural history and so mistook the work as the foundation of an ersatz science.

Philosophy, World, and the Human Being

In the first *Critique* Kant had carefully distinguished between the *scholastic* and the *worldly* conceptions of philosophy—that is, between philosophy’s *Schulbegriff* and its *Weltbegriff*.¹⁹⁷ Distinguishing oneself from overly scholastic philosophy was, of course, a favorite pastime of the early moderns: witness Descartes’s enactment of “the simple reasoning which a man of good sense naturally makes,”¹⁹⁸ as well as Locke’s insistence upon the “historical, plain method.”¹⁹⁹ Kant’s distinction, however, probably owes more to the insistence of the early *Aufklärer* upon a philosophy that could be accessible and practically meaningful to everyone, e.g., Thomasius’s distinction between *Gelehrtheit* and *Gelahrtheit*.²⁰⁰ In Kant this distinction has lost most of its polemical edge, but he is careful to clarify that even in his view the *Schulbegriff* of philosophy is derived from, and hence always stands in service to, its *Weltbegriff*. Its *Schulbegriff* concerns “a system of cognition that is sought only as a science without having as its end anything more than the systematic unity of this knowledge,” whereas the *Weltbegriff* concerns “the science of the relation of all cognition to the essential ends of human reason” (CPR A838-839/B866-867; cf. JL 9:23), i.e., the relation of cognition to the wisdom that “secure[s] the value of life for the human

¹⁹⁷ Given their cognate status, I’ll leave these terms untranslated. I will say that Young’s translation of *Weltbegriff* as “worldly concept” has a certain advantage over Guyer and Wood’s “cosmopolitan concept,” despite the fact that Kant’s Latin equivalent is “*conceptus cosmicus*.” Kant does, I think, want to emphasize that even the worldly concept of philosophy is rooted in an *ideal*, so that turning the ends of philosophy towards the ends of ordinary human beings is not misunderstood as an empirical exercise in application. Kant’s motives are shown well in his incidental remark about the “philosopher,” that “he himself is still found nowhere, although the idea of his legislation is found in every human reason” (CPR A839/B867; cf. A 7:280n).

¹⁹⁸ Descartes (1637), 117 (VI:12-13).

¹⁹⁹ Locke (1689), 44 (I.i.2).

²⁰⁰ See Sassen (2014) on the importance of a worldly conception of philosophy for early eighteenth-century thought. Kant’s distinction can also be usefully compared to his remarks (at JL 9:48) about the necessity for “common understanding” to examine and perfect what is merely “scholastically correct.”

being” (A 7:239). This concept of philosophy resides most especially, however, in the ideal of the *philosopher* (CPR A839/B867; A 7:280n), or, as Kant sometimes puts it, in the “practical philosopher”: “A practical philosopher is one who makes the **final end of reason** the principle of his **actions** and joins with this such knowledge [*Wissen*] as is necessary for it” (MM 6:375n; cf. JL 9:24).²⁰¹

Now, in the first *Critique*, Kant’s discussion of the relationship of these two concepts of philosophy leads him to the following remark: “The legislation of human reason (philosophy) has two objects, nature and freedom, and thus contains the natural law as well as the moral law, initially in two separate systems but ultimately in a single philosophical system” (CPR A840/B868).²⁰² The “legislation” here refers, presumably, back to the ideal of the practical philosopher: “the idea of his legislation is found in every human being” (CPR A839/B867). This connects Kant’s discussion of the *Weltbegriff* of philosophy to the project of transition which he will finally develop, albeit in a direction he could not yet have anticipated, in the third *Critique*. By showing how a transition is possible between two apparently separate sciences, the third *Critique* shows how metaphysics, and a divided one at that, can relate to the essential ends of human reason. Here we find Kant’s final answer to his critics who doubt whether “scholastic” philosophy is not just a distortion of true philosophy. Among these we can certainly number Hamann, Herder, and Jacobi, but Kant would have traced their concerns all the way back to the work of Voltaire and Rousseau. All had objected to the identification of philosophy with theoretical science and insisted upon an irreducible role for subjectivity in the true philosophy.

²⁰¹ Thus wisdom is ultimately the “idea of a practical use of reason that conforms perfectly with the law” (A 7:200).

²⁰² See n. 167 above for my reservations concerning the idea of a “single philosophical system” here.

Kant's practical philosopher would be both scientific and wise at the same time, expressing the ideal of Rousseau as much as that of Leibniz. In his logic lectures, Kant explains that the practical philosopher is able to turn science to the essential ends of her own reason by connecting the answers to four questions.

The field of philosophy in this cosmopolitan sense can be brought down to the following questions:

1. **What can I know?**
2. **What ought I to do?**
3. **What may I hope?**
4. **What is the human being?**

Metaphysics answers the first question, **morals** the second, **religion** the third, and **anthropology** the fourth. Fundamentally, however, we could reckon all of this as anthropology, because the first three questions relate to the last one. (JL 9:25)²⁰³

For readers of the first *Critique*, this list of questions will be surprising, and the emphasis on the role of the fourth even more so. In the first *Critique*, after all, Kant had stopped with the third question and strongly suggested that because it is “simultaneously practical and theoretical” it serves to unite the first two (CPR A804-805/B832-833). Now, however, a fourth question appears.²⁰⁴ What is the relationship between anthropology and religion, and what does all this have to do with the transitional project of the third *Critique*, the project that was, after all, intended to bring the practical and theoretical standpoints together in a certain way?

First, a word about “anthropology,” for Kant, is in order. Kant does not have in mind here empirical anthropology, either as a positive science or as “philosophical knowledge of

²⁰³ Cf. VL 24:799. Here, however, Kant proceeds straightaway to the questions of (1) the sources of human cognition, (2) its utility, and (3) its limits. That Kant, at any rate, sees a close conceptual connection between the two sets of questions is apparent at JL 9:25.

²⁰⁴ It would not have surprised Stäudlin, at least, for in his letter of May 4, 1793 to him Kant had announced, after enumerating the three questions as he had stated them in the first *Critique*, that “a fourth question ought to follow, finally: What is the human being?” (C 11:429).

the human being”; instead, he is indicating the *pragmatic* anthropology that considers what the human being can make of herself. Such a pragmatic anthropology actually fits the *Weltbegriff* of philosophy rather well, as Kant’s remarks at the very beginning of the *Anthropology* indicate. The human being, Kant insists, is the most important object in the world to which all acquired cognition can be applied, for only the human being is its own final end. “Therefore to know the human being according to his species as an earthly being endowed with reason especially deserves to be called **knowledge of the world** [*Weltkenntniß*], even though he constitutes only one part of the creatures on earth” (A 7:119). Just as he does in the first *Critique*, Kant contrasts *Welt* with *Schule*:

Such an anthropology, considered as **knowledge of the world**, which must come after our **schooling** [*die Schule*], is actually not yet called **pragmatic** when it contains an extensive knowledge of **things** in the world, for example, animals, plants, and minerals from various lands and climates, but only when it contains knowledge of the human being as a **citizen of the world** [*Weltbürgers*]. (A 7:120)

Since the human being is her own final end, however, her knowledge of herself can only be completed by relating it practically to that very end. The question *What is the human being?* is answerable, therefore, only by taking the task upon oneself to relate, in one’s own person, all *Schule* to the *Welt*. Thus the human being’s self-knowledge is *Weltkenntniß* in an exemplary sense.

Kant’s identification of religion, on the one hand, and anthropology, on the other, as the focal points of reason’s essential ends, may seem rather obviously contradictory. Mustn’t one declare oneself, after all, to be either for or against humanism? But in fact in Kant’s thought the two apparently competing answers dovetail nicely, for religion only unites the ends of the human being when it brings him finally back to himself as a being who does not simply exist among other beings in the world but is himself his own final end.

If he himself must unite the essential means to this end, then the divided science (split into the metaphysics of nature and the metaphysics of morals) that answers the first two questions must permit a means of transitioning between its parts, the transition Kant traces in the introductory material for the third *Critique*. In other words, the third *Critique* shows the conditions of possibility of the relation of science back to the subject that even in the first *Critique* he had held to be necessary if science were to finally open out onto wisdom. In one sense, this can be reckoned religion, for only through rational faith can we hope for the world we had vainly sought through the theoretical and practical uses of reason. In another sense, however, this can be reckoned anthropology, for the hope that is permitted to the human being retains an essential reference back to his very subjectivity. If the scientific task drives the human being out of himself and into the world, the task of wisdom calls him back to make of himself what he will.

Conclusion

Near the end of the first *Critique* we find Kant at his most Rousseauian. “In regard to the essential aims of human nature,” he says, “even the highest philosophy cannot advance further than the guidance that nature has also conferred on the most common understanding” (CPR A831/B859).²⁰⁵ If this is so, then Kant’s practical philosopher bears, at first glance, an unexpectedly strong resemblance to Rousseau’s Savoyard vicar. “Thank heaven,” the latter had proclaimed, “we are delivered from all that terrifying apparatus of philosophy. We can be men without being scholars.”²⁰⁶ We can live, as Voltaire could have

²⁰⁵ Note that, as Kant clarifies, the “essential” aims of reason include not just its highest aim, but all means necessary for it, as well (CPR A840/B868).

²⁰⁶ Rousseau (1762a), 290.

put it, without philosophizing and return from the mists of metaphysics to the practical task at hand.

But this, we know, is not quite what Kant has in mind. When he exalts the “most common understanding,” he is announcing a conclusion which “reveals what one could not have foreseen in the beginning” (CPR A831/B859). And it is not simply that we have undertaken a necessary detour to return back to where we were. For Kant never tires of stating and restating that the goal of wisdom is inseparable from the path of science along which we must tread to find it (CPR A850/B878; G 4:405; CPrR 5:141). Science may well threaten to occlude this wisdom at every turn, but this is reason not to cast it off, but to discipline it through criticism. Thus critique is the inescapable task that confronts us if science is to finally become suitable for wisdom.

The critical task, for its part, relies on the power of judgment to establish both the possibility of science in the first place and its relation, in the end, to human wisdom. On the one hand, the critique of cognition shows that the moment of judgment corresponds to the moment of establishing a cognitive relation to the objective world. The cognitive subject cannot reach it simply by heeding a mark of objective truth immanent to representation itself; instead she must *judge* that an object given through intuition bears the form of her own thinking. In doing so, she assumes a risk that can never be excised but which is necessary if rational norms are to be brought to bear on cognition in the first place. On the other hand, to be wise in our actions requires returning from the objective to the subjective. This, too, carries with it a certain risk. Here, Kant held against Mendelssohn, we *have to judge*. To take on this *second* risk is only possible, however, once we have already assumed the burden of the first, for only on condition of having opened ourselves up to the

world in such a way that its relation back to our own ends is no longer guaranteed can we—and must we—take up the task of relating it back to ourselves in a second movement, as it were. Both science and the wisdom to which it must lead would be impossible were it not for the power of judgment, which plants the ambitions of reason in the objective world even as it frees our cognition of the latter for its highest service.

The Savoyard vicar finally turned his back on the science of the modern age to relocate nature's wisdom within himself.

I have never been able to believe that God commanded me, under penalty of going to hell, to be so learned. I therefore closed all the books. There is one open to all eyes: it is the book of nature. It is from this great and sublime book that I learn to serve and worship its divine Author. No one can be excused for not reading it, because it speaks to all men a language that is intelligible to all minds. Let us assume that I was born on a desert island, that I have not seen any man other than myself, that I have never learned what took place in olden times in some corner of the world; nonetheless, if I exercise my reason, if I cultivate it, if I make good use of my God-given faculties which require no intermediary, I would learn of myself to know Him, to love Him, to love His works, to want the good that He wants, and to fulfill all my duties on earth in order to please Him. What more will all the learning of men teach me?²⁰⁷

Kant's sage, by contrast, knows that the unavoidable demand of our age is to work *through* science to recover Rousseau's practical wisdom. "Wisdom without science," Kant says, "is a silhouette of a perfection to which we shall never attain" (JL 9:26). Rousseau's conclusion, as vehemently as he would have denied it, was really not so far from that of Descartes and Malebranche, after all. For Rousseau, just like the ambitious rationalists of the century before him, sought to escape the burden of judgment by inventing within himself a paradise where no harm could befall him. This picture is illustrated dramatically in the Savoyard vicar on his desert island and most purely, perhaps, in the land of the love of Julie

²⁰⁷ Rousseau (1762a), 306-307.

and Saint-Preux. "In seclusion," Rousseau would have us believe, "one has other ways of seeing and feeling than in involvement with the world." In seclusion, one is finally no longer "obliged at every moment to make assertions one doesn't believe."²⁰⁸

Never mind that this land of pure love is imaginary; Rousseau freely admits as much in the *Confessions*: "The impossibility of reaching real beings threw me into the country of chimeras, and seeing nothing existing that was worthy of my delirium, I nourished it in an ideal world which my creative imagination soon peopled with beings in accordance with my heart."²⁰⁹ It is clear that it is in the purity of their passion where we are finally supposed to encounter the "sublime science of simple souls" projected at the end of the first *Discourse*.²¹⁰ "Filled with the single sentiment that occupies them, they are in delirium, and think they are philosophizing. Would you have them know how to observe, judge, reflect?"²¹¹ Yes, Kant insists, they will have to judge, for *science* is only possible when we forego Rousseau's innocence and say a bit more than we are really entitled to, and the road to *wisdom* travels only along the path of science. Feeling and beauty, sought by Rousseau as the ground of the unity of all humanity (to borrow Cassirer's phrase)²¹² do, to be sure, make fleeting glimpses of this unity possible, but precisely this feeling lapses quickly into enthusiasm if one supposes it can be used to ground true philosophy.

²⁰⁸ Rousseau (1761), 9-10.

²⁰⁹ Rousseau (1782), 359.

²¹⁰ See p. 21 above.

²¹¹ Rousseau (1761), 11.

²¹² See n. 146 above.

Part Two

What Kant actually is, I can never know.

Jaspers, 1928

By the end of 1929, the chair of the philosophy faculty in Berlin had been vacant for six and a half years.²¹³ The faculty had long hesitated in hopes of finding a worthy chair who could connect to and, in a sense, represent the younger generation of philosophers causing such a stir on the peripheries of the academic mainstream.²¹⁴ But in 1930 a committee of the faculty finally concluded that none of the candidates who would actually fit such a bill were sufficiently qualified to merit an appointment to a position so prestigious. So they went ahead and nominated Cassirer instead, a move that only underscored the extent to which the committee, exasperated, had abandoned the hope of adding something of the German interwar spirit to its ranks.²¹⁵ Cassirer, only 55 and in the midst of the most productive and creative period of his career, was nevertheless already seen by many as a relic of a bygone, more innocent era, a time that lacked the sense of urgency so palpable in Weimar Berlin.²¹⁶ Without a doubt, Cassirer was the most qualified candidate the members of the committee considered. But it was as if they had nominated Henry James to lead a faculty whose students were all reading Hemingway.

²¹³ Troeltsch, the previous chair, had died in February 1923; the position would only be filled with the eventual appointment of Hartmann (see n. 219) in January 1931.

²¹⁴ The energy the faculty wanted to capture was intellectual, but the latter was just part of the cultural and political chaos that had engulfed Berlin for nearly a decade. Tillich, who was a *Privatdozent* at the university in the early 1920s, described the state of the city this way: "Political problems determined our whole existence; even after revolution and inflation they were matters of life and death; human relations with respect to authority, education, family, sex, friendship, and pleasure were in a state of creative chaos" (Tillich [1952], 13). Reflecting in 1921 on Max Weber's untimely death, Rickert could only write that it was "as if the infirmity of our time could no longer endure anything whole" (Rickert [1921], 9).

²¹⁵ Peter Gordon sums up the situation this way: "Especially among students professing an attraction to religious philosophy and radical politics, it was not uncommon to hear the complaint that Cassirer was out of touch with present needs. He simply could not satisfy those who longed for a 'philosophical penetration of life.' Even established colleagues would admit in private that despite his tremendous erudition, Cassirer somehow failed to inspire" (Gordon [2010], 86).

²¹⁶ As Peter Hohendahl puts it, "Orthodox Neo-Kantianism was waning not only because of a generational shift . . . , but also, and more importantly, because of its understanding of the project of philosophy essentially as a continuation of the prewar era" (Hohendahl [2010], 36). Politically, as well, the progressive promise of prewar Neokantianism seemed a misfit for the turbulent Weimar Republic: the political implications Neokantianism had come to assume in a Wilhelmine context (see Moynahan [2003], 57-61) would have lost some of their reformist edge in the new republican context.

Besides Cassirer, the three other finalists had been Hartmann, Tillich, and Misch.²¹⁷ Heidegger, for his part, had just turned 40 the autumn before but had already garnered an outsized share of attention for *Being and Time* and his participation (with Cassirer) in the famous Davos *Hochschule* course in the spring of 1929. Although he was not among the finalists considered by the committee, they nevertheless deemed it appropriate to include in their final report a paragraph explaining the reasons for his exclusion. On the one hand, the committee (especially Spranger)²¹⁸ had serious doubts as to whether his reputation as a teacher was based upon genuine philosophical aptitude or merely his idiosyncratic and memorable personality: “Even his partisans,” the committee wrote, “recognize that hardly any of the students who flock to him can in fact understand him. . . . [If he came to Berlin,] even the students who would be impressed by his teaching would not get a strong philosophical grounding.” To this relatively straightforward explanation, however, the committee added a somewhat cryptic note: “This is a time of crisis for Heidegger; it would be best to wait for its outcome. To have him come now to Berlin would be wrong.”²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Farías (1987), 73. Cassirer was the oldest of the group. Misch, an important editor and interpreter of Dilthey’s work who was also heavily influenced by phenomenology, was 51; Hartmann, influenced primarily by Plato and Aristotle, but by Scheler and Husserl, as well, had just turned 48; Tillich was only 43. Heidegger was younger than all of them.

²¹⁸ Spranger, a humanist whom the Allies would eventually appoint rector of the occupied University of Berlin in 1945, studied under Dilthey and developed a Neo-Hegelian philosophy of culture and education. Despite his background in *Lebensphilosophie*, his sweepingly broad humanist interests (he had produced, for example, a 1924 volume on adolescent psychology that had gone through through eight editions in just two years) placed him much closer to Cassirer than to Heidegger (see Loemker [1967], 1-2; on his opposition to Heidegger, see Safranski [1994], 210). Heidegger regarded him as the complete antithesis of everything Dilthey ever stood for (see L 21:91). In March 1933, Heidegger would ally himself with the blood-and-soiler Ernst Krieck in opposing the universalist humanism of the German Academics’ Association, the organization chaired by Spranger (Safranski [1994], 235-236).

²¹⁹ Quoted in Farías (1987), 73. Ironically, it was Heidegger who would actually receive the invitation for the chair. The newly appointed Prussian minister of culture, Adolf Grimme, chose to override the wishes of the faculty. In March 1930, he publicly extended the invitation to Heidegger, an invitation Heidegger would decline a month and a half later (although not after serious negotiations). In the end it was Hartmann who would finally accept the appointment. See Safranski (1994), 210-211 for a fuller account.

Heidegger had returned to Freiburg in 1928, apparently in triumph, after the 1927 publication of *Being and Time*. As the committee's report suggests, however, he had by no means secured universal acceptance within the German academy. To be sure, Heidegger had achieved an impressive reputation as a teacher as early as his first stint at Freiburg. Gadamer would later recall that in Heidegger "there was an existential passion, an emanation of intellectual concentration, that made everything that preceded it seem feeble."²²⁰ To those not present at his lectures, his notoriety must have seemed fantastic indeed. As Arendt famously put it, "There was hardly more than a name, but the name traveled all over Germany like the rumor of the hidden king."²²¹ To those outside the Freiburg and Marburg circles, however, the only public evidence of the actual existence of such a man consisted in *Being and Time* and the inaugural address he delivered at Freiburg ("What Is Metaphysics?") in July 1929. The forbiddingness of the former's prose, combined with the general bizarreness of the latter—"das Nichts selbst nichtet," Heidegger soberly informs us (WM 9:114)—only intensified the suspicions of those who, like Spranger, had heard quite enough about their new king.

As if that weren't enough, Heidegger's recent exchange with Cassirer at Davos had quickly assumed a rather fantastical air. Again and again Cassirer emphasized the points of similarity—as he saw them, at least—between Heidegger's existentialism and his own philosophy of symbolic forms. Again and again Heidegger would decline the invitation to arrive at any basic agreement, instead emphasizing just how fundamentally different his position was from Cassirer's. To be sure, this was not simple intellectual pride or obstinance on Heidegger's part. Since as early as 1921, he had been trying to impress upon

²²⁰ Gadamer (1963), 139.

²²¹ Arendt (1971), 50.

his students that “if there is one thing that does not exist in philosophy, that is compromise as a way of getting to the point [*Sache*]” (PIA 61:13). Philosophy fulfills its ultimate function not when it assimilates competing worldviews under a more comprehensive conceptual structure, but when it lays bare a decision which must be rendered about the things themselves. Regardless, however, of the depth of Heidegger’s philosophical point, he could barely conceal the pleasure he took in physically performing the difference between the stubborn provinciality of his own thought and Cassirer’s eager cosmopolitanism. While Cassirer—in part, no doubt, because he was ill for most of the conference—kept a low profile, Heidegger went out of his way to cut a figure amongst the cultured urbanites encamped at the resort. He wrote to Elisabeth Blochmann that “in the evenings, after the whole ringing momentum of our far-ranging journey, our bodies full of sun and the freedom of the mountains, we then came, still dressed in our ski-suits, among the elegance of the evening *toilette*.”²²² While Heidegger’s evident glee aroused the enthusiasm of the students in attendance, it only confirmed the consensus of the older generation that Heidegger was, if not exactly unhinged, at the very least disturbingly eccentric.

This performance, taken together with the obscure book which had preceded it and the bombastic lecture that would follow on its heels, undoubtedly contributed to the sense of crisis surrounding Heidegger to which the Berlin committee had referred in its report. Of course, Heidegger had mostly himself to blame. It is hard to disagree with the committee’s final verdict on Heidegger: it simply remained to be seen whether Heidegger’s work could actually transcend his idiosyncratic personality and speak, in a constructive way, to the philosophical community at large.

²²² Quoted in Gordon (2010), 110.

Clearly, the members of the committee expected that soon enough some kind of resolution to Heidegger's "crisis" would manage to work itself out. Indeed, the events of the next five years, culminating with Heidegger's installation as the rector at Freiburg, would prove them right. Heidegger's crisis, however, was not just a personal one. In spite of all appearances, at the end of 1929 Heidegger found himself closer to the mainstream of the German academic tradition than he had ever been before. To be sure, his reading of that tradition—as manifest in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, which was published in summer 1929—placed him directly at odds with the still-dominant Neokantian history of philosophy. But Heidegger's attempt to claim a genuinely Kantian heritage for himself was a sincere one. It was rooted, moreover, not in some desire to assume the role of Kant's representative on the contemporary scene, but in an inner necessity of Heidegger's own thinking. For he firmly believed that the project of *Being and Time* was destined to fail if its Kantian provenance could not be demonstrated. At least, this is what he thought at the time of both *Being and Time* and *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

This conviction did not survive the tumult of the 1930s. Heidegger gradually came around to the conclusion that it was not Kant, but Nietzsche, who was his proximate historical forebearer. Even as his enthusiasm for the National Socialist regime waxed and waned over the course of the decade, Heidegger's philosophical path would continue to become increasingly isolated from a recognizable academic tradition in philosophy. Although he would never altogether cease engaging figures in classical German philosophy, his later thought came to be inspired by Nietzsche's attempt to step back from that tradition, not by a sustained effort to engage it systematically. It is hard not to look back at *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, coming as it did on the heels of Davos, and just a few

years before the politically decisive events leading up to his Rectoral Address at Freiburg, as a crucial turning point for Heidegger—and perhaps even for the phenomenological movement as a whole.

In 1929 no one knew anything of the role Heidegger was to play in the upheaval of the coming decade. But for Heidegger's most astute contemporaries, and for Cassirer, in particular, the stakes were already clear. When Cassirer brought to a close his cautious yet devastating review of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, he did so by expelling Heidegger's thought from Kant's conceptual terrain and consigning it to the margins of the academy. Heidegger's views, Cassirer wrote, are ultimately "explicable in terms of the world of Kierkegaard, but in Kant's intellectual world they have no place."²²³ Whether Cassirer was right or wrong in this judgment, it must be admitted that he correctly identified the heart of the matter. It is easy now, perhaps, to look back at the Kantbook as just an ill-fated attempt to envelop Kant's first *Critique* into the soon-to-be-abandoned—anyway historical project announced in *Being and Time*. Although it is this, too, Heidegger's primary objective in the book is not to place Kant's thought in the context of *Being and Time*, but rather to answer the question of his own place in the history of German post-Kantian thought, a question that had stakes both professional and philosophical for him. It is a battle that Heidegger himself may seem to have conceded,²²⁴ and in any event it seems undeniable that it is a battle he has, as a matter of plain historical fact, largely lost—so much so that in 1992 Lévinas, speaking of Davos, could offer his interviewer a casual

²²³ Cassirer (1931), 156.

²²⁴ I have in mind his concession in the 1950 Preface to the Second Edition of the Kantbook that his interpretation of Kant was a violent one in which his own shortcomings as a thinker manifest themselves. See p. 259 below.

reminder: “As you know, thought inspired by Kant and the Enlightenment heritage, represented mainly by Cassirer, disappeared from Germany after [Davos].”²²⁵

Did this have to be the case? Could Heidegger have really become an heir to the Kantian tradition that was still so dominant in the German academy? Or was he always destined to remain an outsider to that tradition, taking it up in ways that would remain forever incomprehensible to those who remained within its grasp? If, as I will suggest, the philosophical answer is some version of both/and, the professional answer nevertheless proved in short order to be strictly either/or. As a consequence of Heidegger’s political radicalization, the urgency attached to his Kant interpretation quickly waned, giving way to a subtler, though perhaps no less decisive confrontation with the Nazis over Nietzsche at the end of the 1930s. I will be satisfied in the following if I can return to Heidegger’s Kant interpretation some of the provocative power it so quickly lost after 1929.

²²⁵ Lévinas (1992), 134. Writing in 1969, W.T. Jones wrote, “We may hazard the prediction that the historian of the future will view the analytical tradition and the phenomenological tradition as merely two variants of the same basically anti-Kantian stance,” concluding that “unless one is content to achieve a mystical contact with reality, one must conclude that the phenomenological route out of the Kantian paradigm has reached a dead end in Heidegger” (Jones [1969], 251 and 331, respectively).

Chapter III

In the very first hour of Heidegger's 1919 *Kriegnotsemester* course (henceforth "KNS course")²²⁶ we find him laying the groundwork for the university reform which would remain a passion of his until his 1933 appointment to the rectorate at Freiburg.

The renewal of the university means a rebirth of genuine scientific consciousness and connections to life. But relations to life are renewed only by going back into the genuine origins of the spirit. As historical phenomena they need the peace and security of genetic solidification, in other words, the inner truthfulness of a worthwhile, self-cultivating life. Only life, not the din of hurried cultural programs, makes an "epoch." (KNS 56/57:4-5)

Though his references to the "genuine origins of the spirit," "genetic solidification," and life's "inner truthfulness" remain vague, they at least serve to indicate a tendency which would remain decisive for Heidegger through all the twists and turns his thinking would take over the next several decades. The life of the intellect, especially as manifest in the university community, has genuine content only insofar as it draws its inner motivation from the concrete lives of those who think. The university cannot simply be a place we go to learn to participate in a "great conversation" which could just as well subsist without our personal investment. Instead of being a place where concepts only pile upon existing concepts, spawning theories that beget theories still more subtle, the university must once again become a place where the original motivation of all theory whatsoever from out of

²²⁶ The course was titled "The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview." Heidegger had originally announced that it would be a course on Kant, but the title and topic were changed before the start of the semester, a semester which ran from January until April of 1919 and was designed to accommodate veterans returning from the war.

the life of the community is confirmed and rendered transparent. Such a renewal would have appeared especially urgent for the generation returning home from the Western front. Nevertheless, Heidegger cautioned his students that its time remained well into the future. “Today we are not ripe for **genuine** reforms in the sphere of the university. Becoming ripe for them, moreover, is a task [*Sache*] for an **entire generation**” (KNS 56/57:4).

It was only fourteen chaotic years later, however, that Heidegger found the time to renew the university already at hand—and with himself uniquely positioned to facilitate it. Upon assuming the rectorship at Freiburg, he moved quickly (though not necessarily successfully) to implement the reforms he had announced more than a decade earlier. Thus after years of warning about the crisis of the sciences, Heidegger suddenly found his opportunity standing directly before him. The time had at last come to decisively re-root German *thought* in the existence of the German *people*. Against all liberal-humanist appeals to “freedom of thought,” it must be insisted that such freedom amounts merely to caprice if thought is left to float adrift from the life of the people which sustains it. By contrast, the *genuine* freedom of *Denken* can emerge only when it is moored to the *Volk*.

Even for those entirely unfamiliar with Heidegger’s work, the airing of such sentiments by the newly installed Nazi rector would hardly have come as a shock. Nor—assuming they had perused at least the first chapter of Rosenberg’s 1930 best-seller²²⁷—would they have found anything to be surprised about in Heidegger’s subsequent identification of the origins of the German spirit in classical Greece. Science, he insisted, can only truly exist in the academy “if we place ourselves again under the power of the

²²⁷ Rosenberg’s *Myth of the Twentieth Century* sold a million copies, although it was no doubt considerably less widely read than such a startling figure would suggest. Hitler himself claimed it was too difficult to get through and that most Nazi leaders had likely read little of it (Evans [2005], 250).

beginning of our spiritual-historical existence [*Dasein*]. This beginning is the departure of Greek philosophy” (RA 11). Far from maintaining a dispassionate interest in truth as such, Greek science represented, for the Greeks, their fundamental response to the mystery of being, their grand failure in the face of being overwhelmed by fate.²²⁸ Despite its apparent banality, the existence of the ordinary German folk retains to this day an indelible reference to this ancient beginning.²²⁹

If one abstracts, however, from the charged political context of the rectoral address, it is clear that Heidegger’s 1919 and 1933 pronouncements on university reform share much in common. Science can only be rooted anew by reconnecting it to its origin, an origin it is always in danger of forgetting in the wake of its own progress. In 1919 this means science must ultimately be referred to “life,” which as a “historical phenomenon” requires “genetic solidification.” By contrast, this reference to “life” has dropped out entirely by 1933, now replaced by a reference to the beginnings of the Western philosophical tradition. But this apparent departure is really the result of a consolidation in Heidegger’s own thought. When we look below the surface we find that between the 1919 KNS class and the 1927 publication of *Being and Time* Heidegger had ingeniously assimilated the project of the *Lebensphilosophen* to a historico-philosophical project, so much so that in the introduction to *Being and Time* he was able to present the methods of *Phänomenologie* and

²²⁸ “All knowledge concerning things remains from the start delivered up to fate’s overpowerment and fails before it” (RA 11).

²²⁹ And in fact H.S. Chamberlain, whose work Rosenberg aspired to emulate and complete, had maintained the supreme significance of this unlikely connection since the turn of the century. “This barbarian [i.e., the German], who would rush naked to battle, this savage, who suddenly sprang out of woods and marshes to inspire into a civilized and cultivated world the terrors of a violent conquest won by the strong hand alone, was nevertheless the lawful heir of the Hellene and the Roman, blood of their blood and spirit of their spirit” (Chamberlain [1899], 494). Of course in all this he is deeply influenced by Wagner, into whose family Chamberlain eventually married. Nietzsche, before the break with Wagner, paints a striking portrait of the modern German, exhausted by his own “culture,” throwing it off in favor of Greece at the culmination of §§20 and 23 of the *Birth of Tragedy*. See Nietzsche (1872), 97-98, 111.

Destruktion as two sides of the same coin. No longer invested in the rhetoric of “life,” Heidegger nevertheless took it upon himself to show that what the *Lebensphilosophen* had really been after—a regrounding of science in the basic experiences that underlie our conceptual abstractions—was possible only by means of historical research which could unprejudice our eyes in the face of life.²³⁰ In other words, to root philosophy in “life” is really just to root it once again in its own history. Thus Heidegger’s conclusion in 1933 was more than just a reflection of Rosenberg’s racial thesis; it was the culmination of more than a decade of Heidegger’s own thought: the essence of the German people just is their rootedness—however forgotten it may be today—in the beginnings of Greek philosophy.

Many years after the debacle of his rectorship, in July of 1961, Heidegger was invited back to his hometown of Messkirch to say some evening words at its Seventh Centennial Jubilee. What does it mean, he asked his audience, to come back home anymore? Whatever significance the idea of homecoming may once have held is quickly disappearing amidst the technological marvels of the modern world. After all, for the world-savvy cosmopolitan, home can easily be everywhere and nowhere. Gesturing towards the antennae perched on the houses, he admits to his audience that “they indicate that people are no longer at home in those places where, from the outside, they seem to ‘dwell’ [“*Wohnen*”]” (H 16:575). Once the cosmopolitan was a stranger in the midst of a self-sustaining community; now even in the humble homes of Messkirch there appear to be no traces left of that “inner truthfulness of a worthwhile, self-cultivating life” to which he had referred back in 1919.

²³⁰ This is not to imply that Heidegger’s interest in the history of philosophy was a new one or slow to develop. Far from it: it always represented (even in his 1915 thesis) his deepest philosophical passion. My claim is only that he succeeded more and more, as the 1920s wore on, in transposing the *Lebensphilosophie* project into a historical one. As he finds less and less use for the language of *Existenz* and *Phänomenologie* in his later thought, the transposition is more or less completed. But the latter topic exceeds the scope of my project here.

For someone who had always maintained that the pastoral existence of the German peasantry was the lifeblood of even the nation's most abstract cultural achievements, the vanishing of that way of life, which Heidegger witnessed first-hand, posed an apparently insuperable obstacle not only to his thinking, but to thought in general. Faced with this consequence, however, he hesitates. Despite all appearances to the contrary, he insists, home has not disappeared from the modern world just yet. "For a moment we are reflecting on whether and how there is still home amidst the alienation [*Umheimischen*] of the modern technological world. It still exists and concerns us, but **as** that which is **sought after** [*aber als die Gesuchte*]" (H 16:579). That is, home is present for us even in its palpable absence: as long as we *seek* home, the essence of homecoming cannot altogether vanish from this world.²³¹

Such a solution may seem to be a bit too convenient. Faced with the elimination of the way of life in which he had always sought to ground his philosophy, Heidegger simply relocates the source of his thought from that way of life itself to the search, however futile we might already know it to be, for its traces. But such a verdict on Heidegger's thought would be too quick, for in fact the answer he gives to the question of home in 1961 was the same as the answer Heidegger had *always* given to this question. As we will see, even in his earliest lectures the appeal to "life" was never intended to be an appeal to a determinate region of phenomenological or historical content from which the free-floating theories of the day might be materially reconstructed and thereby grounded. Nor are the Greeks assigned such a role in the context of Heidegger's history of philosophy. The Husserlian motto *To the things themselves!* never represented, for Heidegger, the imperative to turn to

²³¹ Although he turns to "The Anaximander Fragment," this is precisely the logic in Heidegger's thought that Derrida exploits in tracing the logic of *différance*. See Derrida (1968), 23-26.

life *itself*, or to the phenomena *themselves*, if by such things are understood beings that might be given to us in their bodily presence, so to speak. Heidegger himself could adopt such a motto only on the understanding that it offered a *directive* to phenomenological research. To put it in his 1961 terminology, we might say: yes, there is life—yes, there is Greece—but as that for which we are searching. And as he himself put it in 1933: philosophy must be the most rigorous response possible to the inevitable failure of this search.

Phenomenology and Life Philosophy

This is not to say that Heidegger was not attracted to Husserl's radical rhetoric on this score. Heidegger was, and would always remain, suspicious of the real foundations of the theories bandied about in the schools. "Philosophers," he complained to his students, "no longer philosophize from the issues [*aus den Sachen*] but only from out of the books of their colleagues" (L 21:84). In Husserl, by contrast, he found—or so it initially appeared to him—the ultimate advocate for rooting theory, in the most general sense, in something immediately demonstrable. The entire method of phenomenology, after all, was designed to ensure that all theory be rigorously grounded in—and meticulously built up from—evidence which is available to everyone and requires no prior initiation. In this way Heidegger, following Husserl, would demand the birth certificates of the conceptual constructions of the philosophical tradition, and they would be deemed genuine only insofar as they could be traced back to a phenomenal basis which could be concretely demonstrated in intuition. This basic methodological point shone forth—for Husserl, at least—with supreme self-evidence.

But enough of erroneous theories. No conceivable theory can make us stray from the **principle of all principles: that each intuition affording**

[something] in an originary way is a legitimate source of knowledge, that whatever presents itself to us in “Intuition” in an originary way (so to speak, in its actuality in person) is to be taken simply as what it affords itself as, but only within the limitations in which it affords itself there. Let us continue to recognize that each theory in turn could itself draw its truth only from originary givenness. Thus, every assertion that does nothing further than give expression to such givennesses through mere explication and meanings conforming precisely to them is actually . . . “an **absolute beginning**,” called upon to lay the ground in the genuine sense, a *principium*.²³²

The legitimation of cognition in general resides in the intuitive sphere, and such legitimacy can be transferred upwards into theory only insofar as the latter restrains itself from doing anything more than merely conferring expression upon what is seen in intuition. Only in such a manner can concepts of all varieties be rigorously grounded.

Husserl’s principle of principles promised a return to philosophical honesty in the grand tradition of British empiricism, although Husserl, of course, thought that the empiricists had built rather too much into their theories (including assumptions regarding the indirectness of perception) from the very start. Indeed, the key insight of modern philosophy stemmed not from the empiricists (though their critical insights were certainly to be admired), but from its rationalist founder. If we want to understand how a bare intuition can be rendered accessible for the most basic level of description, we would do well to turn back to Descartes’s *Meditations*. In the First Meditation Descartes meticulously clears away all the typical assumptions that are naturally attached to our intuition of the phenomena, most notably, the assumption that the objects we perceive actually exist as part of the natural world. When we suspend the “natural attitude,” however, what remains for us is a pure field of phenomena—the same objects intended in the natural attitude, but now considered only and precisely as they are *intended*. Unfortunately, Descartes, after

²³² Husserl (1913), 43 (§24).

creating the logical space for phenomenology, moved straightaway to the questions of traditional metaphysics in the Second Meditation. But he had made tangible the possibility, at least, of a purely descriptive science of phenomena.²³³ If we follow Descartes up to, but no further than, the point at which the “natural attitude”—the positing of external objects as really existing—is put out of play, we have the blueprint for a method aimed at rigorously securing “an intrinsically *sui generis* region of being that can indeed become the field of a new science: phenomenology.”²³⁴

Although both were reluctant to acknowledge it, over the next decade Husserl and Heidegger would move away from the “principle of principles.” In each case, Natorp’s critical review of *Ideas* I was an important catalyst for their paths of intellectual development,²³⁵ but, as we would expect of two thinkers working independently, their responses assumed quite divergent characters. For Husserl himself, his work on passive synthesis in the wake of Natorp’s review led him to his mature “genetic” method of phenomenology, where intuitive evidence will be assimilated to a phenomenological variety of interpretation.²³⁶ As is well known, Husserl admitted little of this publicly. A month before Heidegger’s disputation with Cassirer in Davos, Husserl could still say with

²³³ On Husserl’s view, Descartes “stands before the greatest of all discoveries—in a sense he has already made it—yet fails to see its true significance, that of transcendental subjectivity” (Husserl [1929], 9 [Hua I:9-10]).

²³⁴ Husserl (1913), 58 (§33).

²³⁵ For his own part, Natorp clearly intended it as a friendly review which would nevertheless raise some basic questions about Husserl’s methodology. Two factors, I think, help to explain its significance. (1) He succeeded in summing up the Neokantian worry about life philosophy in a simple and direct manner and applying it to phenomenology. (2) Natorp himself was esteemed by (and, for his own part, sympathetic to) both Husserl and Heidegger. Despite the latter’s polemical remarks about the Marburg school (especially in the context of Kant interpretation, where Natorp’s aggressive reading of B160-161n in the first *Critique* helped to confirm Cohen’s rejection of the Transcendental Aesthetic), he almost always saved his true vitriol for Rickert. Cohen and Natorp are generally credited with having a genuine philosophical motivation for their narrow interpretation of Kant (see, e.g., PIK 25:78). Windelband and Rickert are typically accused of trivializing and distorting any real philosophical point of the Marburg School beyond recognition (see, e.g., HCT 20:20).

²³⁶ On Husserl’s genetic phenomenology as a response to Natorp, see Luft (2011), 207-234, esp. 227-230. Much of my analysis here is indebted to Luft’s work.

confidence that “we must regard nothing as veridical except for the pure immediacy and givenness in the field of the *ego cogito* which the *epoché* has opened up to us. In other words, we must not make assertions about that which we do not ourselves *see*.”²³⁷ But beneath the veneer of a stable global theory of phenomenology that appeared to be essentially unchanged from *Ideas I* (1913) to the appearance (in France) of the *Cartesian Meditations* (1931) there were springing up from Husserl’s incredibly disciplined and detailed research results which were very much difficult to square with the publicly affirmed founding principles of the science. Heidegger, too, was not entirely explicit about his move away from the research project of *Ideas I*,²³⁸ although it was clear enough that the conception of phenomenology put forward in §7 of *Being and Time* strayed considerably from anything resembling a Husserlian orthodoxy. Be this as it may, as late as WS 1927-1928 Heidegger could still celebrate Husserl’s “rediscovery” of the basic character of cognition as intuitive (PIK 25:83-84), and it was not until 1929 that it finally became obvious to both Husserl and Heidegger that their philosophies could no longer constitute a shared, phenomenological path.²³⁹

In fact, Heidegger had been offering strongly heterodox readings of Husserl’s phenomenology since at least 1919.²⁴⁰ The pressure that he brought to bear, aggressively and consistently, on Husserl’s position emanated from the direction of life philosophy. Life

²³⁷ Husserl (1929), 9 (Hua I:9).

²³⁸ This is not to say that he would not openly criticize Husserl. But even when he did, the sense of a shared endeavor managed to come through convincingly. So, for example, in 1925 Heidegger accuses Husserl of neglecting the question of the meaning of being and failing to provide an adequate basis for the question of the human being. In the same breath, however, he carefully measures his critique and acknowledges that Husserl may well have sufficiently answered such objections in his recent research (Heidegger admits he is not fully aware of its contents). “It almost goes without saying,” he tells his students, “that even today I still regard myself as a learner in relation to Husserl” (HCT 20:168).

²³⁹ See Sheehan (1997b), 28-32.

²⁴⁰ See, e.g., p. 182 below on Heidegger’s reading of Husserl’s principle of principles in the KNS class.

philosophy was a diverse philosophical movement, and not an exclusively philosophical one at all. From Nietzsche to Dostoevsky, from Goethe to Spengler (whose *Decline of the West* first appeared, presciently, it seemed, in 1918), the emphasis on capturing life in its dynamic facticity was ubiquitous in immediate postwar Germany. Like Husserl, *Lebensphilosophie* criticized traditional philosophy for its overreliance on conceptual abstractions the provenance of which was no longer clear. Unlike Husserl, who could articulate a clear methodology aimed at securing ultimate foundations for thought, the diffuse movement of life philosophy naturally gave rise to a bewildering array of suggestions as to how this might be done and, perhaps more convincingly, explanations of the failures of traditional thought to do so. At any rate, nothing like a research program (like Husserl's) had emerged from the movement.

The exception to this characterization, however, may have been the most important philosophical contributor to this movement, even if he himself would not have identified with *Lebensphilosophie* (of course, few did). This was Dilthey, and his influence on Heidegger was profound. Dilthey was hardly a poet, and his accession in 1882 to the Berlin chair at one time occupied by Hegel contrasts sharply with Nietzsche's itinerant academic exile during that same decade. Nor is the first volume of the *Introduction to the Human Sciences* likely to be mistaken for *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. But however strange a bedfellow Dilthey may have been for the movement, his philosophical interests pushed him again and again in the direction of its foundations. In a century still effectively dominated by Comte's positivism, Dilthey was urgently after a foundation for the *Geisteswissenschaften* that could justify the autonomy and distinctiveness of their methods vis-à-vis the mathematical natural sciences. In Dilthey's view the foundation of early modern philosophy—he has in

mind the epistemology of Locke, Hume, and Kant—is inadequate for erecting such a foundation. The problem is that the human sciences—and we can take biography as paradigmatic here, as Dilthey tends to do—have a subject matter that lies beneath and is prior to the matrix of cognitive concepts with which philosophers have been centrally concerned. To reconstruct and explain the story of a life requires us to find unities of concepts that reflect the deepest unity of a human being’s experience. To restrict the sphere of legitimate concepts to those available to a *cognitive* subject, who is centrally concerned to justify claims about the world, already forecloses this possibility. “No real blood,” Dilthey laments, “flows in the veins of the knowing subject constructed by Locke, Hume, and Kant, but rather the diluted extract of reason as a mere activity of thought.”²⁴¹ Life as it is really lived—that whole of experience which includes the activity of reasoning that philosophers have privileged but is by no means reduced to it—this is what must be grasped in an original manner if the human sciences are to be rendered secure in their foundations, for this lived experience constitutes the basic “facts,” as it were, to which they are finally responsible, no matter how subtle or ingenious their expressive form.

Even this much, however, undersells the radicality of Dilthey’s project. He does not seek only to juxtapose the foundations of the human sciences with those of the natural sciences. For the unity of the basic *Erlebnis* that grounds the human sciences is that to which even the foundations of the abstract mathematical sciences must be traced back if

²⁴¹ Dilthey (1883), 50 (I:xviii). This may appear to be a rather fantastic description of the work of Hume, in particular, but Dilthey’s complaint is not, of course, about the conclusions of any of the early moderns, but rather the limitations their starting points impose on their inquiry. Even the empiricists, Dilthey thinks, are dealing in a currency (ideas: whatever is present before the mind, as Locke tells us) that stands in need of a prior methodological justification.

we are to be able to understand their genesis and significance. Thus Dilthey's project emerges in its universal scope:

I will relate every component of contemporary abstract scientific thought to the whole of human nature. . . . The result is that the most important components of our picture and knowledge of reality . . . can be explained in terms of this totality of human nature. In the real life-process, willing, feeling, and thinking are only different aspects.²⁴²

The parallels with the Husserlian project are clear enough, and of course they are not entirely accidental.²⁴³ Both were concerned to get back behind the foundations of the special sciences provided by early modern philosophy. Whereas Husserl sought deeper foundations in the givenness of pure intuition, Dilthey sought them in the "real life-process."

The advantage of Husserl's approach, when compared to that of Dilthey, is that the reference to the phenomenologically reduced field of intuition appears to be much more determinate than the gesture towards the "real life-process." But it is entirely possible that Husserl can only buy such determinacy at a certain price. The principle of principles, we will recall, instructs us to begin simply with what is there to be seen, but an argument (even if it is a good one) seems to be required to show that the phenomenological reduction is actually a viable path to such simple seeing.²⁴⁴ The very character of Dilthey's appeal to life, on the other hand, is designed to obviate any concern that he has not sufficiently radicalized the foundations of science by reaching an ultimate starting point, but, of course, for this very reason the appeal to life appears to remain vague in his thought, perhaps even

²⁴² Dilthey (1883), 51 (I:xviii).

²⁴³ Husserl admits Dilthey into the "first rank" of philosophers and credits him with the "intuition of genius," even though he was "not a man of rigorous scientific theorizing" (Husserl [1928], 181 [§48; Hua 4:172-173]).

²⁴⁴ Natorp hints at something like this in his review of *Ideas I*: "Why is any method at all permitted to uncover [what is absolutely given], since to uncover it, after all, just means to **give** it?" (Natorp [1917-1918], 239).

hopelessly so.²⁴⁵ Dilthey himself recognizes and acknowledges the unique place this appeal holds in his thought; it is a primitive that Dilthey can only “evoke” in his reader’s “memory,”²⁴⁶ not pin down through conceptual determination. Heidegger, attracted to Dilthey’s unflinching resolve to radically ground his analysis, but dissatisfied with the unexplained appeal to “life,” will seek to preserve the former while working out a rigorous methodology for reaching the latter.²⁴⁷ The end result will be that Husserl’s phenomenology will be given a lived basis prior to the priority of ordinary intuition—at least as Husserl would have understood and recognized the latter. But Heidegger will take himself to be adhering to Husserl’s own methodological directives, in particular the principle of principles, for quite some time.

Eventually, Heidegger’s commitment to a recognizably Husserlian phenomenology would wither away, although it is difficult to say just when he would have taken himself to

²⁴⁵ See, e.g., the criticisms of Betanzos (1988), 55-56.

²⁴⁶ See his attempt to do just that at Dilthey (1910), 126-127.

²⁴⁷ How central does this make Dilthey for the development of the structure of the problem that would ultimately emerge in *Being and Time*? In the same year the latter was published, Heidegger credited Dilthey with providing “the impetus for the development of phenomenological research” (HPC 3:305). Robert Scharff has argued, forcefully and in detail, that Dilthey deserves pride of place among Heidegger’s formative influences, not so much for the *content* of Dilthey’s thought that Heidegger was able to appropriate, but as a model of the *manner* in which philosophy ought to be done if it is to be answerable to the standpoint of life. I can go at least halfway with Scharff: I think it was the demands of the *Lebensphilosophen* that most deeply animated him—or at least came to animate him relatively early on. And indeed he consistently singles Dilthey out from amongst those influences as contributing insight on the most decisive points. But I am uncomfortable with the view that Husserl, e.g., or Kant, later on, merely provided conceptual structures which were filled in by (as Scharff says) “Diltheyan intuitions.” Perhaps, to choose one example, Heidegger’s development of the method of formal indication owed originally, or at any rate most decisively, to a Diltheyan impetus. (I do, after all, present an account largely so motivated in this chapter.) There can be no question, though, that Heidegger’s appropriation of Husserl’s procedure of formalization not only helped him fill in the details of a method, but provided an articulation of it that pushed back, as it were, on the original motivations that led to the borrowings from Husserl in the first place. In other words, the process of working through Aristotle, Husserl, and Kant (and, still later, Nietzsche) did not just show Heidegger how to fulfill Diltheyan desiderata through more satisfactory means; doing so revealed to him new “intuitions,” if you will, regarding life and history that exerted their own force on his thought. But see Scharff (1997), esp. 127-128. In 1925 Heidegger allows that Dilthey had alive in him the tendency to raise the question of being, but he immediately adds: “With the great indeterminacy of Dilthey’s formulations, precisely in the dimension of fundamental phenomena, it is impossible to document the presence of this tendency objectively” (HCT 20:173-174).

have moved beyond it.²⁴⁸ And even in his later work he would often emphasize the necessity of the path carved out by *Being and Time*.²⁴⁹ By contrast, the later Heidegger shows almost no residual sympathy for the claims of *Lebensphilosophie*, and in his directives for the *Gesamtausgabe* he left the decision as to whether his early Freiburg lectures courses—the courses in which his commitment to *Lebensphilosophie* is clearest—merited publication at all in the hands of his literary executors.²⁵⁰ Already by 1937, Heidegger’s final verdict on *Lebensphilosophie* is swift and harsh: to appeal to *Erlebnis*²⁵¹ is precisely to *avoid* an encounter with the true subject matter of philosophy (see esp. C 65:109).²⁵²

Natorp’s Challenge

Natorp’s review of the *Ideas* had a threefold significance. On the one hand, its basic stance remained decisive for Cassirer’s attitude towards phenomenology throughout the 1920s.

²⁴⁸ One possibility is that Heidegger had decided relatively early on that he had broken with Husserl but chose to downplay the significance of the break for professional reasons. In his personal letters (to Löwith and Jaspers) of 1922 and 1923 he is casually dismissive of Husserl’s entire project, writing even that “I am now convinced that Husserl was never a philosopher, not even for one second in his life” (quoted in Sheehan [1997], 17). Whatever weight one chooses to afford such silliness, the details of Heidegger’s continued engagement with Husserl undermines its validity. But it is certainly possible that Heidegger harbored more fundamental doubts about Husserlian phenomenology than he was typically willing to let on in public. For Husserl’s part, the failure of the attempted collaboration, in 1927, on the article on phenomenology for the *Encyclopædia Britannica* was probably the turning point, and by the time he studied Heidegger’s writings in detail in 1929 the break had become obvious—and disappointing—to him (Sheehan [1997], 23-32).

²⁴⁹ At any rate, this is what Heidegger writes in his preface to the seventh edition of 1953.

²⁵⁰ The decision to publish them came only in 1984; they constitute a “supplement” to the division of the *Gesamtausgabe* devoted to Heidegger’s lecture courses. This is why their volume numbers exceed those of the (later) Marburg courses, even though the basic organization of the *Gesamtausgabe* is supposed to be chronological. See van Buren (1994), 15. For a critical and vitriolic—and entirely justified, I might add—indictment of the principles adopted by the *Gesamtausgabe* in the early 1980s, see Kisiel (1995a).

²⁵¹ Despite the fact that it passes itself off as a counter-concept to machination, “*Erlebnis*”-talk in truth just affirms the latter all the more decisively and unconditionally (see C 65:134n).

²⁵² The story of the decline and fall of Heidegger’s *Lebensphilosophie* vocabulary is one that deserves its own study. Two factors, however, must be emphasized: (1) As we will see, Heidegger came to see the appeal to *Erlebnis* as less formal than he had initially hoped. Even by the mid-1920s Heidegger was becoming convinced that referring to lived experience presupposed—or at least gave the impression of presupposing—too much. (2) Connected with this, but beyond the scope of this paper, is the biologicistic connotations that became harder and harder to separate from “life” once the Nazis swept into power. This context is important to understanding Heidegger’s confrontation with the thought of Nietzsche at the end of the 1930s.

On the other hand, it provided not only Husserl but also Heidegger with the lens through which they would refine their versions of phenomenological methodology in the 1920s. This is no accident: Husserl had brought Natorp's criticisms to Heidegger's attention in September 1918.²⁵³ For his own part, Heidegger surely shared some inward sympathy with the spirit of Natorp's criticisms,²⁵⁴ and so it was all the more important for him to show why they did not reach the heart of the matter (as he claims at KNS 56/57:102). As a matter of fact, it is not always easy to see where exactly Heidegger diverges from Natorp, and it may well be that Heidegger ends up considerably closer to Natorp than he does to Husserl. Be that as it may, Heidegger is basically concerned to defend Husserl, including—and especially—Husserl's principle of principles, which bore much of the force of Natorp's critique.

For his own part, Natorp is nearly completely convinced that Husserl's project is at bottom the same as his own. The difference in their views is "almost merely terminological,"²⁵⁵ and the apparently radical difference in their treatment of subjectivity "has been dissolved, under closer scrutiny, almost into nothing."²⁵⁶ For all that, however, Natorp insisted that the kind of immediate access to phenomena promised by Husserl's phenomenological reduction was entirely illusory. The stated goal of phenomenology was to get below the level of concepts altogether so that their intuitive basis, upon which they are constructed, or through which they are constituted, might be met with by a fresh set of unprejudiced eyes. Thus Husserl speaks as if the description of the phenomena could

²⁵³ Kisiel (1993), 518n14.

²⁵⁴ An outward sign of this is Heidegger's claim that Natorp is the only one to have brought "scientifically noteworthy objections" against Husserl's position (KNS 56/57:101).

²⁵⁵ Natorp (1917-1918), 226.

²⁵⁶ Natorp (1917-1918), 246.

somehow proceed independently of the conceptual structures which the phenomena purportedly constitute. In description, we are supposed to accept what is offered in intuition “simply as what it affords itself as.” But isn’t any description, however careful and restrained, immediately a conceptualization?²⁵⁷ Can there really be an “absolute beginning” of phenomenological inquiry in the way Husserl imagines?

Indeed, Natorp’s basic challenge to Husserl comes most clearly to light when he accuses him of falling into a species of the old rationalist amphiboly first diagnosed by Kant. Husserl is perfectly correct to note that a self-giving intuitive cognition is *demande*d, or *presupposed*, by any cognition that purports to be objective, but only deeper, transcendental researches into the *possibility* of such self-giving would justify Husserl’s positing of a (Cartesian) pure field of phenomenological research. In this way,

The **requirement** to exhibit pure consciousness appears to be conflated with **that which can be exhibited in actual cognition**. . . . A more detailed investigation of how and through which methods such an exhibition is even possible, i.e., the **transcendental** investigation into the **possibility** of a pure exhibition of that of which we are purely conscious, yields the conclusion that it can be exhibited in its absoluteness just as little as the transcendent object, which **requires** nothing less absolute but is not on that account **given**, even possibly so.²⁵⁸

Husserl’s neglect of the transcendental question leaves him open to one of the oldest charges in the book: the act of describing consciousness *changes*, through the very act of description, the character of that which is supposed to be described.²⁵⁹ In other words, in trying to grasp the stream of lived experience, Husserl inevitably stills the stream and thus

²⁵⁷ As Rickert expressed the point several years later, “It seems to me that the irrational is **scientifically** admissible in one way only: by forming **concepts** of it. This is because whatever we have not somehow conceived and whatever we are unable to designate by means of rationally comprehensible words cannot be spoken of in science at all, regardless of how suprarational the content may be of that from which we form our concepts” (Rickert [1921], 7-8).

²⁵⁸ Natorp (1917-1918), 238; see also 240-242.

²⁵⁹ Natorp (1917-1918), 240.

fails to grasp its character as a “**streaming** stream”: “The stream in its flowing forth is something other than that which is apprehended of it and held fast in reflection.”²⁶⁰ Husserl, of course, is hardly to be blamed: no reflection, as such, could reach the “streaming” stream. But the consequence, which Husserl appears unwilling to acknowledge, is that the field of phenomenology is “given”—if we insist on retaining a somewhat misleading expression—only as an infinite task. Transcendental subjectivity must become, as it is for Natorp, something to be *recovered*, not something accessible as given through the phenomenological *epoché*.²⁶¹

Confronted with such a dilemma, Natorp simply cannot bring himself to believe that Husserl would continue to insist on the givenness of the phenomena, and this is why he projects the collapse of Husserl’s phenomenology into Natorp’s own reconstructive psychology—hence his confidence in the existence of a shared endeavor underlying their apparently irreconcilable research programs.

Now, Natorp’s review of the *Ideas* made such an impression on Heidegger, I suspect, in large part because he found so much of it congenial to his own motivations. Granted, Heidegger thought Natorp drew a conclusion precisely opposite to the one he should have drawn: instead of concluding that Husserl’s project was essentially Neokantian, Natorp should have acknowledged just how far removed from Neokantianism Husserl’s phenomenology *had* to be.²⁶² Indeed, in the KNS course Heidegger attempts to stake out the grounds for the position Natorp thinks Husserl simply cannot countenance: doubling down

²⁶⁰ Natorp (1917-1918), 237.

²⁶¹ On the task of recovering subjectivity from the objectified world (which must remain always only a task), see Zahavi (2003), 173n9.

²⁶² Note that this foreshadows Heidegger’s rejection of Cassirer’s attempt at Davos, a decade later, to fold phenomenology and Neokantianism back together again.

on both the principle of principles and the possibility of accessing subjectivity in advance of objective (in Natorp's terms, objectivating) reflection. He does so, however, by emphasizing the very features of subjectivity that Natorp takes to support his own position. And—as we will see—at the end of the day it is by no means certain just how much of Natorp's view Heidegger is really committed to rejecting.

What is immediately striking about Heidegger's encounter with Natorp is his deep reluctance to lay at Husserl's feet the charge that one so often hears repeated nowadays: the charge of an overly observational, or theoretical, stance towards the phenomena. Such a charge is not without its *prima facie* plausibility. But at the time Heidegger was not moved by it at all. In response to Natorp's criticisms, Heidegger refuses to give an inch on Husserl's principle of principles, instead offering a rather remarkable reinterpretation of it, an interpretation according to which Husserl had already anticipated the basic thrust of Natorp's criticisms but had implicitly rejected the exclusively theoretical standpoint which undergirded them.²⁶³

Recall that Natorp's view is that if we want to approach the field of originary intuition (in Husserl's sense), we have no choice but to try to reconstruct it from the objective world which is itself constructed on its basis. Natorp agrees with Husserl that attention to transcendental subjectivity is essential; without it, our account of reality will harbor an objective prejudice and remain incomplete. But Husserl's attempted shortcut to subjectivity, the phenomenological *epoché*, is impossible; we must instead traverse the long, roundabout way of beginning with constructions (in the Marburg tradition: the fact of science) and reconstructing on their basis that which grounds their genesis.

²⁶³ Heidegger could find some freedom in this area since (as far as he was aware, at least) Husserl had not yet responded to Natorp (KNS 56/56:101).

But what could possibly serve as a criterion for the success of the reconstruction? This is the critical point Heidegger puts forth in the KNS class. Having abandoned all hope of accessing subjectivity except through that which it constructs as objective, what is the basis for Natorp's claim that it really is subjectivity, after all, which is being reconstructed? If we examine Natorp's premise carefully—the premise that only what is *objective* is at all given to us in phenomenological analysis—we will see that it rests on an illicit restriction of experience. For, *pace* Natorp, we do not first and foremost comport ourselves to a world of “objects” at all.²⁶⁴ The problem is that Natorp (not Husserl!) has taken the mere observation of a thing as paradigmatic for our comportment to the world in general. In fact, within the confines of the observational stance what Natorp says is perfectly right: we are absorbed by the object, and we are absorbed by it, moreover, no further than it is in itself, as distinguished from the possible multiplicity of experiences of it. As Heidegger puts it,

In the mere experience of a thing a remarkable breach shows itself between experiencing and experienced. What is experienced [*das Erlebte*] has entirely broken out of the rhythm that characterized the minimal experience and stands on its own, intended only in cognition. The sphere of objects is generally characterized by being merely intended, by being that at which cognition **aims**. The sense of reality is the intendability, persevering through a multiplicity of experiences, of everything objective. (KNS 56/57:98)

Now, if “the mere experience of a thing” is taken as paradigmatic of experience in general, then Natorp's approach indeed stands as the only way to do justice, however inadequately, to transcendental subjectivity: to recognize that between experiencing, constructing subjectivity and experienced, constructed objectivity there is a necessary and exact correspondence, a correspondence which makes possible the recovery of subjective acts by analyzing objects into the constitutive acts through which they are objectified. Between the

²⁶⁴ See Natorp (1917-1918), 241. He takes this to be a presupposition shared by Husserl.

subjective and objective poles of cognition there is nothing but one unitary path: the law of the construction of the objective world. And yet the immediate subjectivity in which this law is active remains infinitely distant for us.²⁶⁵ At best we can be on the way to the recovery of subjectivity.

Natorp's prejudice in favor of cognitive comportment prevents him from taking Husserl's principle of principles seriously (KNS 56/57:109), and in fact it is a prejudice which is a symptom of this very neglect. Cognizing an object is not the only comportment we bear to things in the world; in fact, theoretical experience relies on an interruption of our typical commerce with things, and it is only intelligible against the background of this pretheoretical understanding of the world. The experience of *things*, i.e., the species of comportment in which we find ourselves merely representing objects, relies on what Heidegger goes so far as to call an *Ent-lebnis* of *Erlebnis*—a devivification of lived experience (KNS 56/57:90, 100). By contrast, we typically deal with the world in a direct, engaging, and practical manner. Here we find Heidegger experimenting with terminology to capture this sense of engagement. The manner of this comportment he simply calls "worldly" (KNS 56/57:74); in contrast to the *world* of things is a *worldly* "environment." It is not even clear that we should say that the environmental *exists*, for it is not—not directly, at least—objectively determinable from a theoretical point of view. Heidegger suggests we say only that it "worlds," not that it even "is" (KNS 56/57:73, 91; cf. MFL 26:220ff.).

Heidegger's terminological acrobatics in trying to describe the more original sphere of *Erlebnis*, over against Natorp's reduction of it to theoretical cognition, may only seem to

²⁶⁵ As Heidegger parses Natorp's point, "The process of objectification has its infinitely distant goal in the unity of objectivity, which is the unity of the lawfulness of consciousness. And precisely the law of this lawfulness is the infinite task of the opposite path of cognition, that of subjectification. Both meet and become identical in the infinite" (KNS 56/57:106).

confirm Natorp's point. In retreating to language such as "*es weltet*" Heidegger is stretching his conceptual resources to the limit, if not well beyond that. In either case, however, Natorp's dilemma appears to remain insurmountable: *either* Heidegger is relying, despite his grammatical transgressions, on concepts of world and the environment to furnish immediately falsifying descriptions of *Erlebnis*, *or else* he is giving up the descriptive enterprise altogether and putting nonsense in place of meaning (as Carnap, of course, would charge a decade later).²⁶⁶ Only by illicitly playing on the unclarity of expressions like "*es weltet*" can Heidegger give even the appearance of offering a description of *Erlebnis* that captures its character as *Erlebnis*.

On the other hand, Natorp, in his attempt to recapture subjectivity *through* objectivity, is clearly in danger of falling into the trap of trying to explain subjectivity through categories heterogeneous with it.²⁶⁷ "Above all," Heidegger complains, "it cannot be seen how the immediate is to be more easily attained, or accessible at all, through a mediated theorization which travels along the path of dissecting analysis. From where would I ever draw the standard for reconstruction?" (KNS 56/57:107). In other words, the resources at Natorp's disposal for the task of reconstruction are inadequate for the success of the reconstructive project. To be sure, Natorp himself conceives of subjectivity as the infinitely distant—and hence actually unobtainable—goal of reconstruction. But Heidegger is perfectly within his rights to wonder what then remains, if anything, of Natorp's idea of *recovering* transcendental subjectivity and hence grounding a genuine alternative to the method of Husserl. The upshot seems to be that Natorp acknowledges the existence of

²⁶⁶ See Carnap (1932).

²⁶⁷ Here the worry is the classical one raised by Kierkegaard against Hegel. We must constantly bear in mind, he insists, that "the subjective problem is not something about an objective issue, but is the subjectivity itself" (Kierkegaard [1846], 115).

subjectivity only to bar himself, contrary to his own intentions, from any point of entry into it.²⁶⁸ As Heidegger says, Natorp's "systematic panlogical basic orientation keeps him from any free access to the sphere of lived experience, to consciousness."²⁶⁹ Because of his immediate pivot to the objective, "this is and remains essentially a theoretical consciousness of objects, and indeed one resolved into the lawfulness of constitution" (KNS 56/57:108).

Heidegger's criticism of Natorp is hardly decisive; in fact, like Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel (see n. 267), it begs the question rather obviously. If we look a bit closer, however, we find something interesting: Heidegger's insistence on a preobjective subjectivity is nearly matched in its intensity by Natorp's insistence on the very same point. The lesson that Natorp draws from the *Ideas* is that Husserl has reached only the first rung of true Platonism: Husserl remains captivated by the fantasy of fixed, immovable essences, whereas Plato's highest accomplishment was to finally "liquefy them into the ultimate continuity of the thinking process."²⁷⁰ In contrast to the picture suggested by Husserl, or at least in contrast to the results delivered by the method he recommends, "thinking is **movement**, not standing still; just as a point cannot be so much as 'determined' for and through itself before a line is drawn, things that stand still should be considered merely as gateways."²⁷¹ If this is so, then, far from disclosing a pure field of phenomena for research into essences, even the phenomenological reduction (whose exemplary methodological

²⁶⁸ Natorp himself acknowledges that (subjective) reconstruction and (objective) construction are finally distinguishable only by indicating them in different ways. Since "**every** difference in the act expresses itself in something of its correlate and, indeed, is **primarily** represented in the latter," one must conclude that "nothing remains left over but the difference in the **direction** of the regard" (Natorp [1917-1918], 244-245).

²⁶⁹ Heidegger would have understood Neokantian "panlogicism" to include the Southwest School, as well (although possibly with the exception of Lask). See, for example, Rickert (n. 257 above) on the universality of logic in philosophy.

²⁷⁰ Natorp (1917-1918), 231.

²⁷¹ Natorp (1917-1918), 230.

character is now called into doubt) can at most disclose a manifold of gateways to pure consciousness, not pure consciousness itself.

Indeed, Heidegger will insist upon similar points throughout the 1920s. But while, for Natorp, such considerations tell decisively against the possibility of getting straightaway “to the things themselves,” Heidegger draws the opposite lesson: if Natorp’s conclusion has the appearance of inevitability, that is only because we shrink away from the radical demand of phenomenology all too easily. In fact, the transcendental researches that Natorp, invoking Kant, claims are necessary (to establish the possibility of phenomenology) actually belie the very theoretical prejudice that the things themselves suffice to dissolve.

For this reason Heidegger begins his defense of Husserl by citing his principle of principles and emphasizing its fundamental import with respect to the matter at hand (KNS 56/57:109). Husserl’s insistence that no theory can lead us astray when it comes to this principle is a clue to his deeper intention here (which Natorp has missed). No theory can lead us astray here precisely because the principle is *pretheoretical* in character.²⁷² But it can only be valid as a pretheoretical principle if in fact there is a realm of phenomena prior not just to any philosophical theory, but to any theoretical comportment to the world more generally. What is this pretheoretical realm of phenomena which is indicated in Husserl’s principle of principles? Heidegger tells us that the principle is nothing other than

the original intention of any genuine life, the original bearing of lived experience and life as such, the absolute **sympathy with life** that is identical

²⁷² It should be noted that, even in the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl had conceived his project as metatheoretical—scientifically investigating the constraints on theory-formation in science. He says, “We are dealing with **systematic theories which have their roots in the essence of theory, with an a priori, theoretical, nomological science which deals with the ideal essence of science as such.** . . . In a profound sense, we are dealing with the theory of theory, with the science of the sciences” (Husserl [1900-1901], I:152 [§66; Hua 18.1:244]; see also I:155-156 [§69; Hua 18.1:248-249]).

with lived experience itself. . . . The same basic bearing first becomes absolute when we live in it, and no system of concepts, however high it has been built up, will reach this; it is only reached through phenomenological life in its growing intensification of itself. (KNS 56/57:110)

Here we see Heidegger first clearly stake out a position which will remain crucial for his thought throughout the following decade: phenomenology is ultimately not a first-order competitor to traditional philosophical theories, but rather a way of life in which philosophy must be grounded. It is not that Heidegger wants to dismiss or even diminish the significance of traditional philosophical questions; instead, he wants to return the discussion of such questions to the life-contexts in which they arise and from which they can gain their bearing. The goal is not simply to replace philosophy with lived experience, but to trace, livingly, the genesis of philosophy from life itself. This means that philosophy must henceforth not content itself to be a mere theory—even a theory *about* life—but must rather be life itself, according to a certain mode.²⁷³

To speak of phenomenological life's "growing intensification of itself,"²⁷⁴ as opposed to the construction of a "system of concepts," answers Natorp by challenging his supposition that phenomenological description is dependent on concepts which have a form which is necessarily foreign to the "streaming stream"²⁷⁵ of life. By contrast, Heidegger's suggestion is that the form of phenomenological concepts is isomorphic with the form of life. To be sure, this requires a new way of thinking about philosophical

²⁷³ In 1925 Heidegger would credit the kernel of this insight to Dilthey. In approaching "the reality of psychic life itself," Dilthey advanced to the "most extreme position" he was able to attain with respect to the concept of life. Dilthey says that the structures of psychic life are "the primary vital unity of life itself and not merely classificatory schemata for its apprehension" (WDR 155). On this connection, see also Kisiel (1983), 173-176.

²⁷⁴ The "growing intensification of itself" that occurs in living brings us close to the Christian provenance of Heidegger's method, which I admittedly undersell in this chapter. Dahlstrom, who emphasizes the theological and transformational aspects of formal indication, can be a helpful complement to my presentation (see esp. Dahlstrom [1994], 790-795). Dahlstrom, for his part, seems to me to undersell the Husserlian background rather severely.

²⁷⁵ See p. 176 above.

“concepts,” but if we build our understanding of conceptuality itself up from the ground floor of life, there is no reason this cannot be accomplished. As we will see, Heidegger adopts as one of his chief tasks of the early 1920s the development of a method for concept-formation in philosophy that is designed to allow the forms of philosophical concepts to emerge from life itself.

On the face of it, such a project may well still appear to be absurd. Natorp certainly thought so. He considers—just for a moment—the possibility that Husserl is after a presentation of pure consciousness which is not itself conceptually mediated, but is instead aimed at the *living* of our lived experience. But he just as quickly dismisses the notion: “Why on earth would a **science**, a **method**, be required for that?”²⁷⁶ No doubt Natorp was keeping in mind Husserl’s insistence that philosophy be (or at any rate become) a rigorous science. And it must be immediately acknowledged that it is by no means clear how *life itself*—where that at least indicates that we are not ultimately dealing with a *theory* of life—could be rigorous in any even remotely analogous way.

Four years before his death, Dilthey observed the following about the “modern philosophy of life”:²⁷⁷

Insights are united in unsystematic but impressive interpretations. In its substitute of persuasion for orderly proof this kind of writing is akin to the ancient art of the sophists and rhetoricians, whom Plato banished so sternly from the realm of philosophy. And yet a strong, inner relation joins some of these thinkers with the philosophical movement itself. Their art of persuasion is strangely combined with an awful seriousness and a great sincerity. Their eyes remain focused on the riddle of life, but they despair of solving it by a universally valid metaphysics, a theory of the world-order. Life

²⁷⁶ Natorp (1917-1918), 237. Presumably, Heidegger was eventually able to convince Natorp that such a casual dismissal was in fact too quick: see n. 283 below.

²⁷⁷ Dilthey names Carlyle, Ruskin, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, and Maeterlinck.

is to be explained in terms of itself—that is the great thought that links these writers with experience of the world and with poetry.²⁷⁸

Dilthey's words are apt, and he raises the crucial question Heidegger must face in the years to come: is there anything linking the "great thought" of *Lebensphilosophie* with the rigor of philosophy besides its unquestionable seriousness and sincerity? Heidegger speaks of a *movement* of phenomenological life: towards "self-intensification." But how, as a form of life, is such a movement to be distinguished, and what, if anything, could serve as a criterion of its rigor? As Heidegger fully realizes, the adequacy of his answer to Natorp depends almost entirely on showing that a normative conception of philosophical rigor can be retained on the life-philosophical approach. The basic problem of method, Heidegger announces, boils down to how this rigor is to be achieved, and in this way "it becomes clear why the problem of method occupies a more central position in phenomenology than in any other science" (KNS 56/57:110). Nevertheless, it does not appear that Heidegger was able to satisfactorily articulate anything more than the most general sketch of such a method in 1919. It is clear that the criteria for philosophy are to be located in lived experiences, precisely *as* they are lived, but, beyond that, Heidegger's basic idea remained sketchy. To be sure, in the final hour of the course he makes some extremely suggestive statements, and it has even been claimed that the KNS course represented Heidegger's "breakthrough to the topic" of *Being and Time*.²⁷⁹

The pre-worldly and worldly signifying functions have what is essential to them in drawing out the characteristics of the event; that is, they go along (experiencing and experiencing the experienced) with experience, live in life itself and, going along with it, are at once originating and carry their provenance in themselves. (KNS 56/57:117)

²⁷⁸ Dilthey (1907), 31.

²⁷⁹ Kisiel (1993), 21, 458.

But this was not yet enough to keep worries like Natorp's at bay. What was needed was an articulation of the awful seriousness of life philosophy that linked it in an intelligible way to something recognizable as *philosophy*.

Philosophy and Method

The 1920s could well be reckoned Heidegger's methodological decade. In *Being and Time* Heidegger tells us that "the expression 'phenomenology' signifies primarily a **methodological conception**" (BT 27). To be sure, he never means to conflate method with technique (see BT 27, 303), and sometimes he even explicitly denies that he is trying to provide a methodology for phenomenology (O 63:79). But this is simply a reflection of the fact that, even in his earliest years, Heidegger did not really take the "method" of philosophy to be separable from philosophy proper. Later on, he will take this to what may well be its logical conclusion: by 1937, he holds that we can at best cultivate what he has come to call a "basic attunement," a disposition that only becomes more difficult to attain as we try to understand and comprehend it. As Heidegger says, "Every recollection of this basic attunement is always only a cautious preparation for the way the basic attunement comes over us and attunes us [*auf den stimmenden Einfall der Grundstimmung*], which must remain something basically fortuitous" (C 65:22).²⁸⁰ In the more or less faithful hands of his perceptive student Gadamer, Heidegger's early search for a genuinely philosophical methodology was finally turned against method in the most general sense.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ In short, and very roughly: attempts to describe how one ought to encounter the philosophical tradition do more to prevent a radical engagement with the tradition than they facilitate it. "Every naming of the basic attunement in a single word fixes on a false notion. Every word is taken again from the tradition. That the basic attunement of the other beginning must bear multiple names is not an argument against its unity but rather confirms its richness and strangeness" (C 65:22).

²⁸¹ *Truth and Method* must not be understood narrowly as a defense of truth against the inroads of just those specific "scientific" methodologies which are designed to legislate in advance the conditions for the appearance of truth, although it is that, too. As Gadamer puts it elsewhere, hermeneutic reflection "destroys

On the other hand, even in the 1930s—and well beyond those years—Heidegger retained a privileged place for *beginnings* in philosophy. His old mentor Husserl had never really been able to escape the need to begin ever anew, a predilection that resulted in his apparent inability to ever deliver on the promise of *building* upon the foundations of phenomenology he had laid early in his career—and then laid over and over again after that.²⁸² But a case could be made that beginnings held an even more central place for Heidegger than they did for Husserl. At any rate, like Husserl, Heidegger had principled reasons for taking his beginnings so seriously, and in the early 1920s he again and again confronts “introductory” questions about the nature and method of philosophy head-on—and often at an almost embarrassing length.

In WS 1921-1922 Heidegger offered the first of his courses on Aristotle. Although it appears that Heidegger did consciously intend for the course to provide a general initiation into phenomenological research in the history of philosophy, the “introductory” section of the course rapidly grew out of proportion to its allotted task. As it stands, the manuscript of the course stands entirely under the heading “Introduction.”²⁸³ As he introduces his students to philosophy, he notes that the very idea of philosophy presents something of a puzzle: since the question of the nature, task, and subject matter of philosophy is itself a philosophical question, philosophy finds itself in no position to borrow its methodological

self-understanding and reveals a lack of methodological justification” (Gadamer [1971], 281), even though, to be sure, such neediness in thinking is finally the condition for universal agreement. Cf. Kisiel (1969), 363.

²⁸² Of course, as the tens of thousands of pages of Husserliana amply testify, such an “inability” was merely apparent. External observers who had access only to his published works, however, could be forgiven for wondering whether Husserlian phenomenology really could make progress beyond the foundational questions and so furnish a new ground for the sciences. For the publication history, see Luft (2011), 3-7. Like Husserl, Heidegger tended to publish only the very tips of the icebergs of his concrete research.

²⁸³ It subsequently became the first draft of what he projected as an introduction to a book on Aristotle. An intermediate draft (in October of 1922) was sent by Heidegger to Marburg and Göttingen. See Kisiel (1993), 555n12. Both Misch (at Göttingen) and Natorp (at Marburg) were impressed, and the manuscript led directly to Heidegger’s being offered the Marburg post (effectively replacing Hartmann, who was being promoted to Natorp’s chair) in June 1923 (Ott [1988], 122-124).

principles from another science. And yet if it cannot receive a binding directive from elsewhere, it is equally difficult to see how it could produce one for itself in a way that does not beg the question, for it could only do so, it seems, if some determinate conception of the nature, scope, or method of philosophical inquiry were already presupposed.

In practice, to be sure, we tend to avail ourselves of a rough and ready solution to this problem: we simply take our directive from what others whom we already agree are “philosophers”—Socrates and suchlike—have actually accomplished in the past, much as Hume sets out to answer questions about virtue in the second *Enquiry* by asking about the acts we typically recognize as virtuous.²⁸⁴ But it is hard for most of us to escape the feeling that such an approach has all the advantages of theft over honest toil. Heidegger remains correct today, I believe, when he says that the question *What is philosophy?* “gives rise for the most part to an abundance of annoyance” (PIA 61:13).

Heidegger insists, however, that the question, considered carefully, has fundamental implications for philosophy and its method. It is not exactly that the problem admits of a neat *solution*. Instead, Heidegger wants to show that the problem itself is a philosophically productive one: taking it seriously bestows at the very least a positive directionality on philosophical inquiry. This is because the strict constraint that the problem imposes on us—we must determine the point of philosophy *philosophically*—determines the specific form which all basic concepts in philosophy must assume. If they are to play foundational roles in philosophy,²⁸⁵ they must maintain an openness to the inescapable indeterminacy of philosophy’s starting point.

²⁸⁴ See Hume (1751), 6-7 (§1).

²⁸⁵ And indeed they *are* assigned a function in Heidegger’s phenomenology somewhat analogous to the role of regional essences in Husserl’s.

As Heidegger well realizes, it follows from this that research in philosophy is, in an important sense, never independent of the question of what philosophy itself is. And this is apt to be frustrating not only for those who would like to have done with preliminary questions and move on immediately to subdisciplines of philosophy, whether that means logic, physics, or ethics, but even for phenomenologists. Isn't the very point of phenomenology to quit it already with the handwringing and look at the things themselves? But

philosophy can be reproached for turning perpetually upon preliminary questions only if the criterion for judging it is borrowed from the idea of the sciences and if it is demanded that philosophy solve concrete problems and construct a worldview. I wish to increase and keep awake philosophy's need to be ever turning upon preliminary questions, so much so that it will actually become a virtue. About what is proper to philosophy itself, I have nothing to say to you. (IPR 60:4-5)

Because, however, philosophy must be essentially about itself, this perpetual turning *back* to preliminary questions does not mean turning *away* from philosophy's genuine subject matter. Indeed, "The two questions of philosophy are, in plain terms: 1. What is the main issue [*Hauptsache*]? 2. Which way of posing questions is genuinely directed to it?" (PIA 61:12). And Heidegger could have added: the two questions are inseparable. For in philosophy we must keep before us *only* the *Hauptsache*, even while we remain radically nondogmatic about what that actually is.

Thus Heidegger is separated by only the thinnest of margins from what he refers to as Neokantian "panlogicism." Fourteen years before he would (nominally) supervise Heidegger's habilitation work, Rickert laid out his methodological program as follows:

We give priority over every substantive assertion to an investigation into the extent to which science has the right to make any assertion here at all. Thus

every problem of the general conception of the world and life is transformed into a problem of logic, of epistemology.²⁸⁶

Never mind that Rickert, as a member of the Southwest, not Marburg, School of Neokantianism, maintained an essential place in his thought for a nonrational reality to which all our concepts are responsible. The transposition of substantive questions into epistemological ones is unavoidable and in part reflects the need to combat the insidious threat of *Lebensphilosophie* on scientific terrain. In fact, Rickert offers a rather remarkable diagnosis of the spirit of the *fin de siècle*:

Our courage to pursue knowledge, at least in the sense that Hegel possessed it, has been broken. For us, epistemology has become a matter of good conscience, and we will not be prepared to listen to anyone who fails to justify his ideas on this basis. Perhaps this will appear to later—and happier—times as a sign of weakness. . . . At this point, those who are contemptuous of epistemological investigations must all be seen as fanatics who pose a greater threat to the establishment of a comprehensive theory of life and the world on a scientific basis than those all too modest and understanding natures who want nothing more than specialization in science.²⁸⁷

Rickert's dilemma between Hegelian courage and Kantian humility presupposes, of course, that the real subject matter of philosophy recedes into the background when preliminary and methodological questions come to the fore. Heidegger would spend the better part of the 1920s working to undermine this view.

Formal Indication

Of course Husserl, too, had argued that philosophy, because it must ground the legitimacy of the regional sciences, can derive neither its basic concepts nor its standards of rigor from

²⁸⁶ Rickert (1901), 21. Such a result would never have been acceptable to Heidegger, for there is no *a priori* guarantee that the problems of logic will reproduce, faithfully or otherwise, "the general conception of the world and life." *Logos*, Heidegger will try to demonstrate at some length in 1925, is always *about* something, at least according to its Greek conception: for the Greeks, "the basic achievement of speech consists in making visible, manifest, *what* one is speaking about, *what* one is discussing" (L 21:6; cf. PIK 25:202-203). Thus logic has inescapable metaphysical foundations, the theme of his SS 1928 lecture course.

²⁸⁷ Rickert (1901), 21.

them. So there is a sense in which Heidegger is merely repeating Husserl's polemic in the *Logical Investigations* against nineteenth-century naturalism and materialism when he insists that "the concept and sense of **rigor** is originally philosophical and **not** scientific; only philosophy is originally rigorous; it possesses a rigor in the face of which the rigor of science is merely derivative" (IPR 60:10). On the other hand, for both Husserl and Heidegger the rejection of derivative standards of philosophical rigor was directed also against the Neokantians, who, despite their shared aversion to psychologism, would not go so far as to grant to philosophy a distinctive content (like Husserl's pure field of phenomena) given to it independently of the results of the regional sciences. Here, too, Heidegger shares and—as we have seen in our review of the KNS class—even amplifies Husserl's concerns.

For Heidegger, the peculiar rigor of philosophy must be determined by its thoroughgoing and unsurpassable directedness towards what really matters, the *Hauptsache*, but this directedness must remain radically nondogmatic about the content of the latter. Nominally, at least, the Heidegger of the early 1920s is perfectly happy to adopt the slogans and terminology of the *Lebensphilosophen* as his own. It is "life" to which philosophical concepts are to be referred if they are to retain their fundamental significance and rigor. But what is "life"? The common complaint about the *Lebensphilosophen*, of course, was that their appeal to life remained vague and indeterminate. Heidegger's idea, however, is to expose the philosophical function of this very indeterminacy.²⁸⁸ For Heidegger it is sufficient that the reference to life, or lived experience, lends philosophy a certain directionality *back* from concepts and abstractions

²⁸⁸ And when Heidegger gives up the language of *Lebensphilosophie*, it will not be because the reference to life is too empty; rather, he will decide that it is too conceptually (in this case, biologically) laden. See n. 252.

to the concrete experiences in which they were originally formed. A formal indication should indicate precisely this directionality: “a connection [*Bindung*] is pregiven that is indeterminate with respect to content, but determinate with respect to the manner in which the connection is carried out [*vollzugshaft bestimmte Bindung*]” (PIA 61:20). Were the indication to immediately determine the content of its object, Heidegger would already be falling into the trap Natorp has laid for him, for the conceptual content of the formal indicator would immediately falsify the pre- or protoconceptual phenomenon. On the other hand, the *vollzugshaft bestimmte Bindung* must be determinate, intending what philosophy is after without yet rendering it transparent.

In the next paragraph Heidegger goes on to speak of a *Verstehenvollzug*: “In a decisive sense, with [the phenomenological definition], the understanding’s enactment [*Verstehenvollzug*] is such that the path from out of a basic experience [*Gründerfahrung*] is traversed ‘back’ in the way it is indicated” (PIA 61:20). Now, “fulfillment,” “actualization,” “enactment,” “performance,” and even “consummation” are all more or less adequate English alternatives for Heidegger’s “*Vollzug*.” The *Vollzug* is a working-through, a carrying-out, of the directedness we find ourselves caught up in within the task of philosophical definition.²⁸⁹ It requires, as it were, the active participation of the philosopher herself and is not ultimately separable from the latter. The “formal” aspect of formal indication means that what is enacted in philosophy cannot be set down losslessly in a finished doctrine, and it would be a serious mistake to complain that we could never traverse the path from the *Vollzug* to the *Gehalt*, for to lose the *Vollzug* in a determinate content—that is, to lose the

²⁸⁹ The main text of the Introduction course can profitably be read as a progressive determining of this sense of movement.

actualization in something which has been actualized—is precisely the danger that Heidegger is trying to fend off with his use of formally indicative concepts. As he insists,

As indicative, the definition is characterized by the fact that it precisely does not fully and properly present the object which is to be determined and instead only indicates it—genuinely indicating it, though, so that it directly gives in advance its principle. It lies in the sense of indication that concretion cannot be had without further ado but rather presents a task of its own kind and a task of enacting constituted in its own manner. (PIA 61:32)

Thus we can see why Heidegger warns his students in this course, just as he does in many others, that philosophy is apt to be a frustrating subject: it is of its essence to *never* to get to its content, but to remain always, in principle, only on the way to it. On this matter, as we have seen, he is uncompromising: “About what is proper to philosophy itself, I have nothing to say to you” (IPR 60:5). Instead, “the only way of arriving at what is proper” consists in “exhausting and fulfilling what is improperly indicated,” i.e., “following the indication” itself (PIA 61:33).

Now, as we have seen, the difficulty endemic to philosophy is that its subject matter cannot be directly delineated in advance, for any definition that staked out a determinate region of questions, concepts, or phenomena as “the philosophical” would beg important philosophical questions. This is what the *Lebensphilosophen* grasped, even if inchoately, and it is why they were loath to pin down the reference of their basic concepts—if they can even be called “concepts”—in a logical manner. And it is why Dilthey insisted he could only “evoke” the experience of life, not explain it. But it must be insisted, Heidegger thinks, that such insight is by no means merely negative. In fact, it reveals an essential characteristic of philosophy, namely, that it must approach its ultimate subject matter in such a way that this matter is not determinately grasped in advance, but which nevertheless indicates a

grounding direction for our inquiry—a *how* of the inquiry that waits on its actual performance by the thinker.

Although in the early 1920s Heidegger does not acknowledge—and, perhaps, does not even realize—as much, this position already gives his “phenomenological” research a very different inflection from that of Husserl.²⁹⁰ The very titles of their basic methods suggest as much: Heidegger’s *Anzeige*, standing against Husserl’s *Intuition* or *Anschauung*.²⁹¹ For Husserl, we will recall, the appeal to intuition is meant at once to clear away all prejudicial theoretical constructions that might intrude upon the phenomenon in its pure givenness.²⁹² Heidegger’s public avowal of this thesis only thinly veils his suspicion of any method, phenomenological or otherwise, that purports to render a field of intuition directly available for description. In fact, we can go further: for Heidegger, the temptation to straightaway describe, in Husserl’s sense, a given phenomenon is precisely what must be resisted, and the method of indication is explicitly designed to hold intuition (again, in Husserl’s sense, at least) at bay. Alternately, we might say that the intuition which *fulfills*, for Husserl, is replaced by the intuition which is always only *fulfilling*, where by that we

²⁹⁰ Even if Heidegger realized the irreconcilable nature of the differences that were emerging between Husserl and himself, he may well have been reluctant to announce it openly, for alongside the Introduction course he was concurrently teaching a “phenomenological practicum for beginners,” graduates of which would be qualified to enroll in Husserl’s advanced seminar. Husserl and Heidegger would continue this arrangement until the latter left for Marburg in 1923. See Kisiel (1993), 462-463, 554-555n11. On the other hand, however, Heidegger boasted to Löwith that at the end of the course he had completely destroyed the foundations of Husserl’s phenomenology (Sheehan [1997], 17). See also n. 248.

²⁹¹ See, e.g., Holzhey (2010), 30-32. It is unwise, however, to insist too much on this contrast, for Heidegger had, after all, connected his methodology decisively to Husserlian intuition in the KNS class (and would continue to do so consistently throughout the 1920s). So for *Heidegger*, at least, the contrast suggested here turns out to be a false one.

²⁹² Granted, Husserl never thought that adopting the phenomenological attitude was merely a matter of course. Just as Descartes presents his doubting in the First Meditation as a path that requires patience and vigilance (it is presented, after all, as a *meditation*), so Husserl is far from asserting that the natural attitude can be casually tossed aside.

understand that, so long as philosophy is philosophy, the process of *Vollzug* is never complete.²⁹³

At no point, however, does this prevent Heidegger from drawing his theoretical apparatus from classical Husserlian sources. In particular, the Husserlian provenance of “form” is absolutely crucial for Heidegger’s thought here. In both the *Logical Investigations* and in *Ideas I* Husserl had distinguished between genus and form, a distinction which tracks that between material and formal essence. The highest (most general) material essences are those that furnish the basic concepts of the highest regional ontologies, e.g., the essence *any nature whatsoever*. Regions, however, are always regions of (possible) empirical objects, and the regional ontology is always bound to the objects which can be given within that region.²⁹⁴ This means that the ascension to the highest genus, the material essence of a region, remains constrained by the form of intuitive givenness specific to that region.

In contrast to all regional ontologies stands formal ontology.²⁹⁵ Essences in formal ontology are not constrained by the regionally specific form of givenness; in fact, because

²⁹³ Contrast this with the standpoint of the *Logical Investigations*. “Consciousness of fulfillment” is described as one in which “the act of pure meaning, like a goal-seeking intention, finds its fulfillment in the act which renders the matter intuitive” (Husserl [1900-1901], II:206 [Sixth Inv., §8; Hua 19:566]). This is the basis of identity, which is “there from the start as unexpressed, unconceptualized experience. . . . A more or less complete **identity** is the **objective datum which corresponds to the act of fulfillment**, which ‘appears in it’” (Husserl [1900-1901], II:207 [Sixth Inv., §8; Hua 19:568]). Again: “In the unity of fulfillment, the fulfilling content coincides with the intending content, so that, in our experience of this unity of coincidence, the object, at once intended and ‘given,’ stands before us, not as two objects, but as **one** alone” (Husserl [1900-1901], I:200 [First Inv., §14; Hua 19:57]). In this sense, at least, we could say that the object of philosophy, for Heidegger, never stands as “one alone”—something that forges a basic link between the thought of Heidegger and that of Derrida.

²⁹⁴ See Husserl (1913), 18 (§9).

²⁹⁵ Interestingly, this is a distinction Heidegger thinks Kant was unable to draw; in other words, Kant reduces the formal to the general (PIK 25:63-64). This is why Kant cannot ultimately reach the radicalness of Husserl’s phenomenology and why he is, indeed, up to a certain point, best understood (as the Marburg School would have understood him if they had conceived of his project ontologically) as offering a regional ontology of (mathematical) nature, not the formal ontology which, by Heidegger’s lights, would have to precede it (cf. PIK 25:200-206, 425-427). As Heidegger gives Kant more and more credit for his radicalness,

they must fit all possible material essences, all formal essences must be completely empty of materiality.²⁹⁶ Thus a formal “region,” though it may initially appear to be nothing more than a higher (more generic) material region, is in fact not really a *region* in the same sense at all. As Husserl says, “The so-called ‘**formal region**’ is thus not something coordinated with the material regions (the regions simply); **it is not genuinely a region but instead the empty form of region in general.**”²⁹⁷

To take Husserl’s example (which is recited faithfully by Heidegger in WS 1920-1921),²⁹⁸ “color” results from a generalization upon, e.g., “black.” But the essences of “black” and “color” are material essences, and as such they only are what they are with reference to the look of the ink on this page. This look admits of a range of imaginative variation within a range of possibilities in which the same essence will still appear,²⁹⁹ and yet “**generalization** is bound in its enactment to a determinate **material domain**” (IPR 60:58; cf. 60-61). The formal attitude, by contrast, “is not bound to materiality (to the region of material things and such), but is materially free. It is also free from any order of stages: I don’t need to run through any lower generalities to ascend stepwise to the ‘highest generality’ ‘object in general’” (IPR 60:58).

What, then, is the motivation for formal predication? In virtue of what is a stone, for instance, an example of an “object in general,” which is not merely a “highest generality” but instead a formal category? Once again, Heidegger turns to Husserl for guidance. In the *Logical Investigations* Husserl had emphasized that the formal objective categories

however, he will decide that Kant was actually very close to drawing this distinction, after all. In fact, this is one way of determining the point at which Kant had to fall back on a more traditional understanding of metaphysics.

²⁹⁶ Husserl (1913), 22 (§10).

²⁹⁷ Husserl (1913), 23 (§10).

²⁹⁸ Heidegger specifically cites §13 of *Ideas I*, which is where we find the example in Husserl (IPR 60:57).

²⁹⁹ This, for Husserl, is the “eidetic scope” (Husserl [1913], 28 [§13]).

are independent of the particularity of any material of knowledge. . . . They are therefore solely in relation to our varying thought-functions: their concrete basis is solely to be found in possible acts of thought, as such, or in the correlates which can be grasped in these.³⁰⁰

For Husserl, this means that we isolate that part of the motivation that directs our consciousness to objects in general which can be located purely in the subject and its thinking. As Heidegger takes up Husserl's point, we must abstract from all "what-content" of an object and focus only on the "how" in which the object is intended. The motivation which directs our consciousness to the object

arises from the **sense of attitudinal regard** [*Einstellungsbezugs*] itself. I do not see the what-determination [*Wasbestimmtheit*] from out of the object, but rather see its determination "onto" it [*ich sehe ihm seine Bestimmtheit gewissermaßen "an"*],³⁰¹ as it were. I must look away from the what-content [*Wasgehalt*] and see only that the object is a given, attitudinally grasped one. Thus the formalization arises out of the relational sense [*Bezugssinn*] of the pure attitudinal regard itself, not out of the "what-content in general." (IPR 60:58-59)

On Heidegger's interpretation of Husserl,³⁰² formalization can (and must) be accomplished without a progressive generalization because, instead of abstracting from the "what-content" of the object, we retreat from the content altogether and attempt to grasp the mode of its intention, the relation *we* bear to the object. In other words, "The determination turns **away** from the materiality of the object and considers the object according to the

³⁰⁰ Husserl (1900-1901), I:153 (Prol., §67; Hua 18:245-246). The precise source of Heidegger's strategy is not as transparent here. He refers generally to the final chapter of volume I (the Prolegomena) of the *Logical Investigations* (IPR 60:57). But I suspect this is the passage he has in mind.

³⁰¹ More straightforwardly: I *apply* the object's determination to it. But Heidegger is contrasting "*Heraussehen*" and "*Ansehen*": instead of seeing the determination from out of the object, we see the determination in our application of it to, or upon, the object that receives it.

³⁰² Husserl is not the only source of Heidegger's interest in formalization. As Kisiel has shown, Lask, whose influence on Heidegger was at its peak in the wake of his untimely death in 1915, makes many of the same points. In neither Husserl nor Lask, however, is the connection between form and life, which would come to constitute its chief interest for Heidegger, made explicit. As Kisiel describes Heidegger's situation at the end of 1919, "Phenomenology needs only to improve upon the schematization of formalization and expand it into the full intentional structure dictated by the phenomenon of life" (Kisiel [1995b], 229).

aspect in which it is given; it is determined as **that which is grasped**, as that upon which our cognitive regard falls” (IPR 60:61).³⁰³

Heidegger’s innovation lies not so much in a novel interpretation of Husserl’s doctrine of formalization, but in an application of it to metatheoretical questions in philosophy. This lends Husserl’s idea of formalization a somewhat surprising existential cast. The “content” of philosophy turns out to reside not in what we originally sought after as its *content*, but rather in the mode of intention that reveals itself in stepping back from what was intended as such. In a slogan, the “object” of philosophy is not its *what*, but its *how*. Husserl’s attempt to isolate the formal from the material finds itself transposed into Heidegger’s attempt to isolate the *Vollzug* required in philosophy from the *Gehalt* in which it always risks losing itself.³⁰⁴ Thus we can already see how Heidegger manages to keep his distance from Husserl despite their great proximity. The project of fundamental ontology, as it is pursued in *Being and Time*, bears a strong resemblance to Husserl’s desire for a phenomenological grounding for the regional sciences (see BT 10-11). But philosophy cannot be a foundation for the latter in quite the way that Husserl, following Descartes, imagined, for philosophy remains essentially a task to be accomplished, ever again anew.³⁰⁵ It is a foundation for the rest of the sciences only in that it preserves for them their essential connection to the inner truthfulness (as he had put it already in 1919) of life.

³⁰³ As Heidegger puts the point in WS 1921-1922, “The formal is not the ‘form,’ and the indication its content; rather, the ‘formal’ is always approaching the determination, approach-character” (PIA 61:34).

³⁰⁴ Ryan Streeeter, who does not, however, make the essential reference to Husserl explicit, puts the point extremely well: “It is, therefore, the task of philosophy to do what other disciplines—preoccupied, as it were, with the ‘thingness’ of the objects of their research—cannot do, namely to take up the object of its investigation by *enacting* it so as to come to comprehend it more fully” (Streeeter [1997], 418).

³⁰⁵ As Heidegger notes suggestively, “What is needed is a radical interpretation of the ‘formal’ itself: existentiell sense of the formal” (PIA 61:33). Note that this remark is almost certainly a later (1922-1924) addition to the manuscript of the lecture course (see Kisiel [1993], 232).

Traditional philosophy comes up short in that it perpetually loses, or covers over, the enactment-character of philosophy in a rush to determine its specific content.³⁰⁶ For this reason “the formal indication is a **defense**, a prior **securing**, so that its character as an enactment still remains free” (IPR 60:64). It is a method which indicates the proper “way” to philosophy only by insisting on the need to perpetually stay along that way and hence “free.” When Heidegger decided upon the motto for his *Gesamtausgabe*—“Ways, not works”—he was at least true to the conception of philosophy he had developed even in his earliest years. In a way, formal indication is primarily not a positive prescription for how to do philosophy, but a *warning*.

Why is it called “formal”? The formal is something relational [*Bezugsmäßiges*]. The indication should indicate beforehand the relation of the phenomenon—in the negative sense, though, as if to warn! A phenomenon must be pre-given in such a way that its relational sense is held in suspense. (IPR 60:64)

And yet this warning does not preclude, but first makes possible, a determinate, if free, path for philosophy. “The understanding that approaches genuinely is not in the full sense a grasp of the sense of being [of the phenomenon] but is precisely determined by the character of the approach—only by that but precisely by that” (PIA 61:34).

“Only by that but precisely by that”—that is the source of the distinctive rigor of Heidegger’s phenomenology in the 1920s, and it is on this basis that he pinned his hopes on the possibility of a scientific philosophy³⁰⁷ in which the “freedom” permitted by formal

³⁰⁶ This, too, is correctly emphasized by Streeter. As he puts the point, “This direction, following from the character of the method, is incomplete, wanting completion in a concrete context although there is not enough in this direction itself to satisfy this want. That want must be satisfied by those who appropriate the text in an existential way” (Streeter [1997], 417; cf. Zahavi [2003], 173n9).

³⁰⁷ Heidegger would gradually abandon the claim (which he advanced, at any rate, only periodically early in his career) to be proceeding “scientifically.” Although I cannot show it here, it seems to me that this is, however, not so much a substantive shift for Heidegger as it is a recognition of the limits of the discourse of “science”—or at least a sign of the successful coopting of that term by the logical positivists in the 1930s.

indication does not dissolve into arbitrariness. But philosophy, even when pursued scientifically, will not look much like any of the positive sciences, nor will the standards of rigor for the latter carry over to the former (or vice versa). Whereas the discourse of positive science depends on the presence of a strictly defined and shared terminology that is tethered tightly to a determinate region of objects, the basic concepts of philosophy, just like the concept of philosophy itself, must retain the flexibility to apply to phenomena that are more precisely uncovered only gradually through the very process of philosophizing. We might say that the task of philosophy is to restore to its basic concepts the questionability that scientific conceptualization, with good right (at least within certain methodological limits), attempts to cover over. Philosophical concepts cannot be clarified by affixing to them a formal definition that permanently fixes their reference; rather, to be *philosophically* rigorous, such concepts must remain restrained from falling into any such fixed signification. As Heidegger puts it,

It belongs, rather, to the sense of philosophical concepts themselves that they always remain uncertain. The possibility of access to philosophical concepts is entirely different than in the case of scientific concepts. Philosophy does not have at its disposal an objectively formed material context into which concepts can be integrated in order to be determined. There is a difference in principle between science and philosophy. (IPR 60:3)

Heidegger's distance from Husserl here is real, but it is precisely measured. It is Husserl's own view that "basic concepts in philosophy cannot be pinned down in definitions by means of fixed concepts capable of being identified each time on the basis of immediately accessible intuitions"; in fact, "as a rule it is necessary instead to undertake lengthy investigations before those concepts can be clarified in a definitive way and

determined.”³⁰⁸ Heidegger could agree with much of this, but the idea that such concepts could finally be determined³⁰⁹ in this way (at which point we could commence with the positive work of philosophically grounding the sciences) is not one Heidegger can ultimately accept. Interestingly, Husserl concludes his introduction to *Ideas I* by acknowledging that “detailed critical comparisons with the philosophical tradition . . . are necessarily foregone if only on account of the scope of this work.”³¹⁰

Much the same could be said about *Being and Time*. It, too, foregoes the “detailed critical comparisons with the philosophical tradition”—and, again, for reasons more accidental than essential: Heidegger needed to publish the torso of his great work if he were to have any hope of attaining the rank of *Ordinarius*.³¹¹ He confessed to Jaspers that it was an “intermediate piece.”³¹² At least part of the reason for this was that it was essential for the historical part of *Being and Time* (which never appeared) to go well beyond the “critical comparisons” mentioned by Husserl. As we will see in the next chapter, the positive philosophical task of *Being and Time* was intended to be absorbed entirely into a research program in the history of philosophy. Without such a research program, the method of formal indication he had developed in the 1920s would indeed be consigned to arbitrariness, for the reference to life required—as he had realized even in his earliest lectures—historical research if it were to be rendered concrete.

³⁰⁸ Husserl (1913), 7-8 (Int).

³⁰⁹ And Husserl does mean something strong by “determined” here. He says, “In the course of the reflections elaborating on them, each of the terminological expressions mentioned above”—he has in mind the expressions for the philosophical concepts *idea* and *essence*—“should acquire its fixed sense through specific expositions that are evident in themselves” (Husserl [1913], 8 [Int]). This is certainly going well beyond what Heidegger would be comfortable with.

³¹⁰ Husserl (1913), 8 (Int).

³¹¹ The Marburg faculty wanted Heidegger to effectively replace Hartmann, who left for Cologne in 1925. The ministry of culture returned Heidegger’s proofs to him, refusing to promote him until the work actually appeared in print, which it finally did in 1927 as an offprint of the journal edited by Husserl and Scheler (Safranski [1994], 143).

³¹² Safranski (1994), 144.

Philosophy and Its History

From the start, Heidegger had conceived his WS 1921-1922 Introduction course as a preliminary engagement with Aristotle which could be deepened the following semester. Yet at a certain point Heidegger seems to have realized that the “introductory” matter had taken on a life of its own.³¹³ Well past the midway point of the semester, Heidegger—up to this point having cited only Plato among the Greeks³¹⁴—suddenly sees fit to reassure his students³¹⁵ that this is, in fact, a class on Aristotle.³¹⁶ He does so not by tracing a connection between his methodological considerations and the main body of Aristotle’s work, but by explaining to his students that it is artificial to separate the “introductory” and “historical” aspects of phenomenological research anyway.

It is not at all as if the present “introductory” matter were the proper, main issue [*Hauptsache*] and the interpretation of Aristotle an optional application, chosen according to taste and accidental expertise; or as if the introduction were the discussion of the genuine issues and systematic problems [*der eigentlichen sachlich-systematischen Probleme*] and the rest a historical

³¹³ At the beginning of the course, at least, it appears that both Heidegger and his students were expecting to grapple with the details of the Aristotelian corpus. Heidegger offers a brief historical overview of the reception of Aristotle in the middle ages and modernity and recommends the editions of Aristotle and his Greek commentators recently completed by the Berlin Academy of Sciences (PIA 61:8). For those who were not enrolled in Heidegger’s SS 1922 course on Aristotle, we can only hope they found a way to put their Academy editions of Aristotle to good use.

³¹⁴ In fact he will not actually cite a passage from Aristotle the entire semester.

³¹⁵ In 1921 he confessed to Löwith that his “single task”—that of “critically deconstructing the traditional complexity of western philosophy and theology”—was “completely unsuited to the classroom and to progress” (quoted in Bambach [1993], 130n28).

³¹⁶ Fresh in Heidegger’s mind was an incident from the year before in which several students in his Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion course had complained to the dean of the faculty about its lack of religious content; apparently Heidegger had gone on about “introductory” matters long enough for their taste. Under pressure from the dean to get to the point already, Heidegger could hardly resist firing a parting shot before turning to Paul’s Letter to the Galatians. It deserves to be quoted in full: “Philosophy, as I understand it, is in a bind. In other lecture courses the listener is given an assurance at the beginning: in a lecture on art history he can look at pictures; in other courses he gets his money’s worth for his exams. In philosophy things are otherwise, and I can’t change that since I didn’t invent it. But even so I would like to rescue myself from this calamity, break off these highly abstract considerations, and lecture to you, starting with the next hour, about history. Indeed, I will do so without any further considerations regarding beginnings and methods. I will take as my point of departure a particular concrete phenomenon—mind you, under the assumption that you will misunderstand the entire procedure from beginning to end” (IPR 60:65). For the story, see Kisiel (1993), 171-172.

illustration; or as if the introduction concerned us directly and the historical consideration were a matter of mere scholarly interest; or as if we all had a personal stake in the introductory matters whereas, on the contrary, the interpretation of Aristotle were nonbinding, something standing isolated, on its own, next to the systematic questions of the introduction, but without the urgency that might perhaps attach to the latter. (PIA 61:110)

In fact, this was just a reminder of the position Heidegger had staked out at the very beginning of the class:

For any epoch, the history of philosophy comes into view as clearly, is understood as deeply, is appropriated as strongly, and on that basis is critiqued as decisively, as philosophy, for which and in which history is there and in which anyone is related to history in a living way, **is** philosophy, and that means (1) maintaining a questioning, and specifically a fundamental questioning, and (2) seeking concretely after answers: research. (PIA 61:3)

In brief, if Aristotle (or anyone else, for that matter) is to be understood philosophically, that means that we must be able to interpret the basic concepts of his thought within the formal-indicative context of philosophical concept-formation in general. This means that Aristotle's concepts are philosophically significant just insofar as they can be traced back to their concrete provenance in lived experience. In brief, Heidegger is after what is *living* in Aristotle's thought—not, however, in the sense of what we today may still find acceptable, but in the sense of the way Aristotle's concepts express something recognizable from out of life itself.

As we have seen, however, the reference to "life itself" here, if it is to mean anything, cannot be captured by any particular content—certainly not by cordoning off a region of phenomena and labeling it "life"—but must rather be allowed to indicate a mode of directedness towards any content whatsoever. Indeed, our access to the phenomena of lived experience, presupposed by any phenomenological interpretation of Aristotle, is not immediate, for the basic method of phenomenology consists in holding at bay, as vigorously

as possible, the tendency to overlay concepts onto the phenomena of life. What Heidegger now wants to insist upon, however, is that insofar as we can comport ourselves at all to life itself, we do so in a way that turns out to be conditioned by the way life has historically been interpreted, and that means—most fundamentally—as it has been taken up by the philosophical tradition. Concretely, when we work back from life itself, we find that the conceptual scaffolding that attached to it bears the precise yet intricate stamp of the history of philosophy. The conclusion is one that Natorp could certainly appreciate (and one that, given his praise for the Aristotle manuscript, he likely did): neither an investigation into lived experience nor an investigation into the history of philosophy is possible in abstraction from the other. In other words, the history of philosophy, when uninformed by research into lived experience, is empty of genuinely philosophical content, while the latter sort of research, when pursued with historical naïveté, results in an ersatz phenomenology which uncritically reproduces the categories of the history of philosophy in its stubborn attempt to directly confront life itself.

Indeed, Heidegger's departure from Natorp is subtler still than his departure from Husserl. What is decisive is only that Heidegger's phenomenology is construed through and through as a species of living—life's "growing intensification of itself," to which he had alluded in the KNS class³¹⁷—not a cognition, philosophical or otherwise, that would be opposed to the former (and which would approach life only asymptotically). Whereas Husserl had always given the *Umkehrung* characteristic of phenomenology (that is, the reversal of the direction of regard that follows from our transposition of ourselves out of the natural and into the phenomenological attitude) an interpretation along the lines of a

³¹⁷ See p. 183 above.

higher order of thinking, Heidegger regards it as continuous with life itself. “Where does the phenomenological begin?” Heidegger asks in WS 1920-1921. Does the turn away from what is objectively historical to what is historical in its enactment yank the phenomenologist out of history or, conversely, insert her into history for the first time? “This objection is legitimate,” Heidegger concedes, “but it maintains as its background the conviction that the philosophical has a special dimension. That is the misunderstanding” (IPR 60:90).

At any rate, Heidegger presents his would-be scholars of Aristotle with a notably stark conclusion. Although the “introductory” considerations have dominated the course up to this point and may well appear, by virtue of being pursued first, as though they could stand on their own, in fact they have no significance whatsoever apart from the phenomenological research they have served to “introduce”:

Accordingly, this introduction, if taken and used on its own (which would run counter to its proclaimed sense), is not just one half of a treatise standing alongside, as its other half, the concrete interpretation of Aristotle, but is nothing at all without the latter, at most a misunderstanding of philosophy. (PIA 61:112)³¹⁸

As we will see in the next chapter, the introduction to *Being and Time* is basically a repetition of this fundamental phenomenological point.

Reflecting, in 1925, on the legacy of the phenomenological movement (of which he still considered himself a part), Heidegger laid out, albeit programmatically, the task of integrating phenomenology with Dilthey’s insights into the historical character of

³¹⁸ This claim just complements the one at IPR 60:65 (see n. 316 above). Taken together, it is clear: neither an introduction to philosophy (and philosophy is *always* introduction) nor the history of philosophy have any chance at being understood when abstracted from one another.

existence. Phenomenology was at first defined by its simple, even self-evident principle: *To the things themselves!* By means of this principle

phenomenology wanted not so much to position itself outside history as to remain unaffected by it. But this is impossible, for every discovery stands in a historical continuity and is co-determined by history. Alive in phenomenology itself are historical motives that partially condition its traditional ways of raising questions and its approaches, concealing the proper access to the matters themselves [*zu den Sachen*]. Phenomenology must first gradually ease its way into the possibility of extricating itself from the tradition in order to make past philosophy free for itself and for a genuine appropriation. (WDR 159-160; cf. WDR 176)

We must be careful here, however. It might be assumed that for phenomenology to gradually extricate itself from its own tradition would imply its final ascent to a space which is beyond the reach of historical conditions generally. Nothing, of course, could be further from Dilthey's intentions. Heidegger's complaint against traditional phenomenology is by no means merely a call for it to attend to the ways in which its own posing of questions bears the stamp of the philosophical tradition (although it is that, too). Instead, Heidegger's ultimate goal—which he identifies with the general goal of phenomenology—is to make possible a “genuine appropriation” of the history of philosophy. This is the goal to which the slogan *To the things themselves!* was in fact pointing all along.

It is not without a tinge of irony that the most vociferous critic of philosophers who philosophize from their colleagues' books would end up affirming that the positive content of the things themselves is, after all, present only in the great ideas of the Western philosophical tradition. To be sure, it was not as if Heidegger found himself reduced to mining Spranger's work on adolescent psychology³¹⁹ for ersatz philosophical insight, and of

³¹⁹ See n. 218 above.

course he had never intended to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the history of philosophy as an integral part of phenomenological research. And yet by the end of the 1920s it was crystal clear to Heidegger that the impulses of life philosophy, which phenomenology had sought to clarify and regiment, could hardly be insulated from the historical, philological, and above all scholastic minutiae against which those impulses had always rebelled. Only through these could that existential passion, that "awful seriousness" of which Dilthey had spoken, find its genuine fulfillment.

Chapter IV

Scheler, at least, was immediately convinced that in *Being and Time* Heidegger had finally said what *Lebensphilosophie* had been trying for so long to say. Writing in September of 1927, Scheler, who is generally critical of the residual existential solipsism he diagnoses in Heidegger's approach, nevertheless begins his appraisal of the book with a stark acknowledgement: "In his unusual and far-reaching book, *Being and Time*, vol. I, Heidegger is the first person to get to the heart of the matter."³²⁰ Now, whatever his own estimation of his book's merits, Heidegger himself would never have dreamed of claiming such an accomplishment. And this is not because he would have wished to remain modest in the wake of the book's success; Heidegger was hardly possessed of any notable personal humility. It is simply because *Being and Time* never gets to the point. The explicit goal of the treatise, Heidegger tells us on the very first page, is "the concrete working-out of the question of the meaning of '**being**'" (BT 1). Not only does the published portion of *Being and Time* break off well before this, but even the "provisional aim" of the treatise—"the interpretation of **time** as the possible horizon for any understanding of being at all" (BT 1)—is not accomplished by the book's end. So *Being and Time* actually treats neither being nor time in the manner which was supposed to justify the title of the treatise.

³²⁰ Scheler (1927), 134.

Predictably,³²¹ Heidegger finds himself bogged down by preliminary considerations which quickly assume unanticipated proportions.

Of course, Scheler did not mean to commend Heidegger for having raised, once again, the most traditional of all philosophical questions; he wished to say that Heidegger had, despite his missteps, raised the question of human existence with acute urgency and philosophical acumen. Even if we grant Scheler his praise, however, one could be forgiven for wondering what any of this has to do with the tasks Heidegger apparently sets out at the beginning of the treatise. On the other hand, if we do focus our attention on Heidegger's analysis of concrete human existence—much of which he had worked out, here and there, across his lecture courses of the 1920s—we find it weighed down by a dauntingly elaborate and opaque theoretical edifice. At any rate, whether one's interest is the experience of being human or Greek metaphysics, it is hard to see in either case just how *Being and Time* is supposed to make any positive progress over the course of its four hundred pages.

If Heidegger's book appeared to be neither fish nor fowl for life philosophers and historians alike, there was at least a good explanation for this. To crudely borrow a Kantian idiom: appeals to the lived experience of human beings that are not grounded in traditional philosophical concepts are blind, while discussion of the philosophical tradition that has become unmoored from its reference to lived human life is altogether empty. We have already seen why this should be so: the phenomenological demand to begin from the concrete, prior to all theoretical construction, is, by Heidegger's lights, an entirely valid one, but the concrete domain of phenomena can by no means be accessed with transparency at

³²¹ See p. 202 above.

one fell swoop, for the historically conditioned interpretations (which we often fail to even recognize as such) which impose themselves on the phenomena can be held at bay only by means of a sustained effort to treat the phenomenological field according to its properly *formal* aspects. In other words, the “things themselves” of phenomenology must be indicated, but they must *only* be indicated, so that in our analysis we follow the indication itself, rather than any material content we might happen to indicate along the way. On the other hand, the historical theories that condition our understanding of lived experience, and against which the demand for formalization in phenomenology is supposed to guard, have their own significance only in the phenomena to which they are discursive responses. Thus their mode of conditioning the phenomena of lived experience cannot be understood or disarmed independently of going back to this very experience. Clearly, the challenge, for Heidegger, is to articulate a philosophical methodology that will lay out in detail how both sides of philosophy, the analysis of the lived experience of being human and the reclamation of the phenomenal basis of all theory that conditions our understanding of the former, are to be pursued simultaneously. The primary task of the introductory sections of *Being and Time* is to show, at least in outline, how such a thing can be possible.

Now, the Heidegger of *Being and Time* would accept hardly any of the characterizations of his project I have offered in the preceding paragraphs. In large part this is because by 1927 Heidegger has basically eliminated appeals to “life” or “lived experience” from his philosophy. In place of such appeals stands a series of emphatic and unrelenting appeals to *existence*.³²² Such a shift in terminology is not without its

³²² Heidegger is still willing to cite the life philosophers sympathetically. See esp. the discussion of Dilthey and Yorck in §77. Heidegger closes the section by saying, “Thus it becomes plain in what sense the existential-temporal analytic of Dasein is resolved to foster the spirit of Count Yorck in the service of Dilthey’s work” (BT

importance, and below I will emphasize the increase in formal-indicative power that Heidegger took his new terms—foremost among them “*Dasein*” and “*Existenz*”—to make available to him. At the same time, the significance of the shift should not be overblown. Theodore Kisiel has argued in detail that Heidegger’s breakthrough to the topic of *Being and Time* was already accomplished in KNS 1919,³²³ and although the methodology suggested there would require elaboration and clarification throughout the following decade, Kisiel’s claim seems to me to be basically correct. Heidegger would cycle through different formal-indicative concepts³²⁴ to indicate the phenomenal basis to which all theory, in faithfulness to Husserl’s principle of principles, is to be ultimately responsible, but even in 1927 the underlying goal of the appeal to *existence* is nothing other than that of his earlier appeal to *life*, and the basic methodology of *Being and Time* is in general very much continuous with that of his earlier work. As it would turn out, Heidegger’s appeal to existentialist terminology would prove even more fleeting than his appeal to the language of *Lebensphilosophie* (though the canonization of *Being and Time* has tended to obscure this fact). At any rate, what is remarkable about *Being and Time* is not Heidegger’s sudden conversion to “existentialism,” whatever significance we wish to attach to that, but rather the subtlety with which he treats the methodological problems that had exercised him for the better part of a decade.

403-404). Scheler (BT 47-48) and Simmel (BT 249n) are referred to in a somewhat favorable light, although both are criticized for relying on an insufficiently critical conception of the human being in their research.

³²³ See esp. Kisiel (1993), 21-25.

³²⁴ Cf. Derrida’s “*différance*,” which he insists, quite correctly, in my view, can be neither a word nor a concept (Derrida [1968], 7). Any word or concept which would succeed in pointing to the phenomenon it purports to indicate would, at that very moment, no longer point to it at all, but neither can it avoid pointing altogether. Thus Derrida speaks of a “chain in which *différance* lends itself to a certain number of nonsynonymous substitutions” (Derrida [1968], 12). The same could be said, I think, in regard to Heidegger’s formal-indicative concepts of the 1920s: because the nature of the indicated is to resist its determinate indication, the criterion of success of a formally indicative term must immediately be the mark of its failure, as well.

***Being and Time* and the Early Freiburg Years**

It would be foolish, of course, not to acknowledge the apparently dramatic differences between *Being and Time* and the lecture courses that preceded it. For those who take the blind alleys and *Holzwege* of Heidegger's earliest and latest thought as exemplary,³²⁵ the comparatively structured and scholastic *Being and Time* will always appear as a well-meant, perhaps even brilliant, aberration. Many commentators regret the emergence in *Being and Time* of a quasi-technical conceptual matrix that tends to obscure the motivations teeming beneath the surface of the work.³²⁶ To such judgment (and, to be clear, I do share some deep sympathies with it), the task of interpreting *Being and Time* is really the task of destroying it after the pattern of Heideggerian *Destruktion*: loosening up its own concepts so that the character of those concepts as primarily *responses* to phenomenal difficulties is rendered transparent.³²⁷ To the extent that he appears to be laying static foundations for philosophy (and, by extension, for the regional sciences founded through it), Heidegger has relegated to his readers the more essential task of destroying those very foundations.

Such complaints against *Being and Time* are not new; in fact, their genesis can be traced back even further than the publication of the book itself. Heidegger's student Löwith had proofread its galleys in 1926 and made ample use of the manuscript in his own habilitation.³²⁸ As Löwith saw it, *Being and Time* represented a perplexing (though perhaps

³²⁵ See, e.g., van Buren (1994), 5-9.

³²⁶ Most significant among these critics are Kisiel and John van Buren. Both suggest the presence of essential continuities between Heidegger's earliest work and what is characteristic of his later thought. See Kisiel (1993), 458; van Buren (1994), 365-366. For both, it is dangerous to take *Being and Time* as paradigmatic of Heidegger's thought, for the apparently static structure of the work stands in sharp contrast to the dynamic and self-deconstructive work of his earlier and later periods.

³²⁷ See the more detailed discussion below, p. 245.

³²⁸ See Kisiel and Sheehan's editorial notes (Kisiel & Sheehan [2007], 290).

unintentional) abandonment of Heidegger's Freiburg ambition of producing a philosophy which assumed the form of lived experience all the way down. In place of that, Heidegger's own quasi-transcendental analysis of the constitution of existence took on, if you will permit the expression, a life of its own—a life which was no longer identical, however, with the life which it purported to be the analysis *of*. To be clear, Löwith is not concerned that Heidegger has given up the *language of Lebensphilosophie*; he is perfectly comfortable with the shift to an existentialist register. But lost in the hurry to define the *structures* of existence is the lived experience (or whatever you want to call it) of *existing itself*. Löwith's early objections to Heidegger (which he communicated to him in August of 1927) are remarkable not just for their anticipation of so much twentieth-century criticism; they bear a striking resemblance to Heidegger's own criticisms of Natorp's "panlogicism"³²⁹ nearly a decade prior:

The main objection that I have against the "**principled**" ontological analysis which is brought into play far too quickly (in accord with the claim of dealing with **the** Dasein as such), is that the decisive ontic-existential distinctions—the questions of **accent**—get lost in an "absolute indifference" (Hegel). But as crucial ontic-existential distinctions, they are also crucial **for** the ontological formalization, an expression that you however will surely no longer grant and allow to be applied!³³⁰

Here Löwith refers, of course, to the roots of Heidegger's "fundamental ontology" in Husserl's "formal ontology," suggesting, however, that Heidegger himself would no longer accept his Husserlian heritage as governing his analysis in *Being and Time*. To understand his claim that "the decisive ontic-existential distinctions" get lost in Heidegger's work, however, a brief terminological digression is first necessary.

³²⁹ See p. 181 above.

³³⁰ Löwith (1927), 293.

In *Being and Time* Heidegger contrasts the “ontic” with the “ontological,” a distinction that maps roughly and imperfectly onto the traditional philosophical distinction between the *a posteriori* and the *a priori*. We say that a cognition of something, or, more generally, a comportment to it, is *ontic* if it refers to (particular) beings, while a cognition or comportment is *ontological* if it is a cognition or comportment which is already presupposed in any ontic cognition or comportment whatsoever. It is called “ontological” because it refers to the constitution of a being that is necessary for any comportment towards it as the particular being that it is. It provides the logic of its being, if you will; it sketches the outline of that which enables it to even be a being for us in the first place.³³¹ Nevertheless, the ontic-ontological distinction maps imperfectly onto the *a posteriori-a priori* distinction, and this for several reasons. First, while the latter distinction is primarily epistemological, the former is not limited in advance to our cognitive comportment to beings.³³² If, for example (as Heidegger argues is actually the case), the *cognitive* mode of comportment to beings is derivative of a more practical form of existential comportment (what we might call “understanding,” in Heidegger’s sense of “knowing one’s way around”

³³¹ A rough comparison with Kant could be drawn as follows. The “logic” of the being of beings, for Heidegger, would include both varieties of subjective conditions for the appearance of beings distinguished by Kant, the sensible and the intellectual. For Kant, the validity of the “logic” of beings extends beyond the conditions of appearance to those beings as they are in themselves, i.e., as they are even beyond the boundaries of human sensibility. Heidegger, who is committed to rejecting this interpretation of logic (see n. 286 above; logic, Heidegger holds, is essentially semantic, or intentional: though the Greeks grasped this in a sense, their ontology, dominated as it was by *presence*, was inadequate to this insight [see BT 165]), will naturally understand the latter to be the generic category of comportment to beings. For Heidegger, logic can be associated with reason only because the more basic signification of *logos* consists in “merely letting something be seen” (BT 34).

³³² Obviously the question of the provenance(s) of the family of modal distinctions (not just *a priori-a posteriori*, but necessary-contingent and analytic-synthetic, as well) is still very much a live issue in contemporary Anglophone philosophy. But I take it that the *a priori-a posteriori* distinction is at least *prima facie* an epistemological one.

in the midst of beings),³³³ the ontic-ontological distinction will also ultimately derive from, and in the first instance be applicable to, this broader mode of comportment. Thus the ontological comportment in virtue of which ontic comportment is possible may not be cognitive in nature; at least, nothing inherent in the ontic-ontological distinction rules this out. Second, unlike (Kantian, at least) *a priori* cognition, there may turn out to be nothing “subjective” about ontological cognition. It is, of course, not *ontic* (about beings), so there is one important sense, at least, in which it is not “objective,” but what Heidegger wants to keep open is the possibility of reconceiving the nature of the subject-object relation on the basis of the form of ontological cognition—a possibility which is obviously foreclosed if the former is already conceived as the basis of the latter.

The existentiell-existential (*existenziell-existenzial*) distinction, in turn, maps imperfectly onto the ontic-ontological distinction. I’ll have a lot more to say about “existence” more generally in a bit, but for now suffice it to say that existentiell possibilities (for action) are those which are directed to some particular possibility (say, hopping on the Greyhound bus headed to Toledo). Heidegger reserves the term “existential” for a use something like that of “ontological”: the “existential” refers to the structure in terms of which existentiell possibilities can even appear as possibilities in the first place. Existential structures are structural in a way analogous to that of the Kantian categories, which is, of course, no accident, since “existentials” are related to existence (*Dasein*) in much the same way Kant’s categories are related to the subject.³³⁴ As Heidegger says, “The question of

³³³ In brief, to *understand* something is to be able to freely grab a hold of appropriate possibilities for acting within a particular situation, possibilities which only arise as possibilities for us in the context of projects in which we find ourselves already involved. See BT 142-148.

³³⁴ As early as SS 1923 Heidegger contrasts categories and existentials (see O 63:31 and, in this connection, Kiesel [1993], 275), and by *Being and Time* he assigns existentials a special methodological role.

[structure] aims at the explication of what constitutes existence [*Existenz*]. We call the coherence of these structures **existentiality**” (BT 12).

Let’s return, now, to Löwith’s complaint. “The decisive ontic-existential distinctions . . . get lost in an ‘absolute indifference’ (Hegel).” The reference to Hegel here is actually helpful: Hegel speaks of how the negation of all determinacy gives rise to an absolutized indifference that forms a substrate for external determination.³³⁵ That is, in trying to hold together our manifold determinate cognitions of a (single) object, we are inevitably driven to posit an indifferent substratum as their ground, in which the essence of the object is supposed to reside. Such an essence is the condition of the unity of even a single cognition, but because there is no account of why the essence should bind together just these and not other accidental determinations, the contribution of the moment of essence to cognition is (initially, at least) merely negative, sweeping aside the determinations through which the object was cognizable at all in favor of an “absolute indifference” through which it would be cognized not merely as it (manifoldly) appears, but as it really is.³³⁶

As applied to the case of *Being and Time*, Löwith’s objection is supposed to be the following: what is ontic and existential in our comportment to beings is entirely lost in the ontological and existential analysis that provides its conditions of possibility. That is, we gain access to how life “really is” only by invoking structural features which are indifferent to the manifold appearances of life itself. For someone who had always maintained that the lived experience of our comportment to beings must be preserved in the analysis of it (as Heidegger had firmly insisted against Natorp), such a result should have been manifestly

³³⁵ See Hegel (1812-1816), 375.

³³⁶ Cf. Kant’s criticism of the idea of cognizing an object as it would be *in itself* through its relational predicates (CPR B67).

unacceptable. Heidegger certainly acknowledges in *Being and Time* that philosophical research has to be seized as an existentiell possibility (BT 13), but if Löwith is right, the existentiell possibilities of existence which motivate ontological questioning do not “reappear” and are not otherwise recaptured in the conclusion to which the end of the book points. Instead, we find pronouncements to the effect that in *time* we find the being of existence against which the meaning of being in general is to be worked out (BT 1, 404). Löwith’s worry is that Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, shorn of its original existentiell motivation, risks degenerating into a possibility that I, you, or anyone can take up and maintain an external relation to, much as you might buy this or that toaster at K-Mart without thereby investing yourself or the toaster with any essential connection. In short, *Being and Time* looks suspiciously doctrinal, in contrast to the way of life Heidegger had seemingly promised in his lecture courses.

Löwith (correctly) pursues this connection between the “decisive ontic-existentiell distinctions” drawn in *Being and Time* and the philosophical methodology Heidegger had earlier developed at Freiburg. The ontological analysis rests—or at least *ought* to rest—on a kind of “formalization.” As we have seen, Heidegger’s recourse to (Husserl’s) formalization was originally designed to get at lived experience without conflating it with that which is an object of experience in and for life; formalization thus represents a pure indication of direction—towards the living of life, away from what is “lived” in it—for philosophical inquiry. Now, Löwith’s idea is that “ontic-existentiell distinctions” should be “crucial **for** this formalization” insofar as they partake of the living immediacy of our everyday comportment towards beings. To say that such distinctions are finally “lost” in *Being and Time* is basically to accuse Heidegger of neglecting existence itself in his attempt

to give an account of its structure. In other words, Löwith takes Heidegger to be hesitating at precisely the most essential moment of his earlier methodology. Löwith continues,

I believe that your most unique insight into the problematic of the ontic-ontological circle . . . must lead to clinching this dialectical movement at **one** end and “founding” it: not however at the ontological *a priori* (although this is apparently the consequence of philosophizing), but rather at the ontic-anthropological end.³³⁷

Again, Löwith’s worry is that the fundamental ontology Heidegger is seeking is subsequently called upon, after the fact, at least (as “the consequence of philosophizing”), to “found” the “ontic-existential distinctions” upon which the ground of fundamental ontology was laid in the first place. To Löwith’s mind, this stands the order of founding precisely on its head and represents—as comes nearly to the surface several times in Löwith’s complaint—a tacit betrayal of the methodology of formal indication. To clinch the “dialectical movement” Löwith speaks of at one end would require philosophy itself to move entirely in the orbit of its purported object from the getgo. This, of course, was the root of Heidegger’s Freiburg insistence that in order to be answerable to life, phenomenology must itself become, from its very beginnings, a way of life, clinching, in Löwith’s terms, the movement of phenomenology at the “ontic-anthropological end.” Insofar as *Being and Time* fails to do so, Heidegger turns out to succumb to the very panlogicism he took himself to have diagnosed in Neokantianism.

Heidegger’s reply, as he explains, was delayed several weeks by external circumstances. Husserl, with whom he was still close, had invited him to Freiburg during his summer vacation for a weeklong visit.³³⁸ When he was finally able to respond to his

³³⁷ Löwith (1927), 293.

³³⁸ This visit marked the beginning of Heidegger’s abortive involvement with the *Encyclopædia Britannica* entry on phenomenology. See Sheehan (1997a), 41.

student, however, his reply was clear:³³⁹ in the first place, Löwith's immediate assimilation of the "ontic" to the regional sciences—anthropology, psychology, and the like—was misguided. Philosophy cannot take up the regional sciences as they are; instead, its research into their inner logic must run ahead of them.³⁴⁰ Thus the priority of the ontic and the existentiell (see esp. BT 13) cannot signify the priority of anthropology or the like. Even philosophical anthropology (of the sort Heidegger took Löwith to be pursuing) was not of foundational methodological significance; it simply represented one way in which the existential analytic might be extended and filled in (BT 45). So to call the *roots* of the ontological analysis "anthropological" is at best extremely misleading.

Notwithstanding this, Löwith's basic point may well still stand: does the ontic—assuming we understand this correctly now—get swallowed up in the midst of its subsequent ontological analysis? Heidegger is perfectly willing to accept Löwith's challenge on this point, and he proceeds to defend the continuing relevance of his Freiburg methods with a notable vehemence:

I too am of the conviction that ontology is to be founded only ontically, and I believe that nobody before me has explicitly seen this and said so. But ontic founding does not mean **arbitrarily** pointing to something ontic and going back to it. Rather, the ground **for ontology** will only be found by knowing what it itself is and then allowing it, as such, to destroy itself [*sie dann als solche sich zugrunderichten läßt*]. (LL 36)

³³⁹ It was also peppered with condescension: "Veiled attacks and glancing blows, delivered with great seriousness, are part of the mood in which one's first undertakings are brought out. After a decade such gestures settle down, provided that one can link all the passion that swells within the **safety of a riverbed** to a **life's work** that will really stir the waters" (LL 33).

³⁴⁰ See BT 10-11; also 49-52. Heidegger's barely concealed target here is Neokantianism's insistence on beginning with the fact of science. Though Marburg Neokantianism directed itself squarely against psychologism long before the polemics of Frege and Husserl, the school was unable to clarify the basis of their opposition on account of their hesitation over the role of psychology and anthropology in Kant's philosophy (L 21:51). In fact—although he always tried to treat the issue with some delicacy—Heidegger finally came to think that Husserl's own attempt to reject psychologism failed, in spite of the genuineness of Husserl's intentions. This is suggested in the WS 1925-1926 course (see esp. L 21:53-62, 89-90), and he finally communicates his worries to Husserl himself in the midst of their attempted collaboration on the *Encyclopædia Britannica* article (see Husserl & Heidegger [1927], 138).

Heidegger obviously not only *agrees* with Löwith about the ontic foundations of ontology; he identifies this point with one of the most basic insights that sets him apart from the philosophical tradition. But, he says, we cannot simply “point to something ontic and go back to it.” Ontology itself implies a specific way of going to the ontic and the existentiell; without a guiding idea of ontology, by which the ontic is opened up for us in such a way that it leads out onto the ontological analysis, the ontic foundations of ontology are as well as useless for the entire project.

But how are we supposed to secure such a guiding idea of ontology? Although it may not be obvious—and this is evidenced by Löwith’s reaction—Heidegger insists that his strategy remains fundamentally unchanged from his earlier work. The goal is indeed to get back to the phenomenal comportment towards beings upon which all others are founded: the facticity³⁴¹ of immediate lived experience, or, if you prefer, existence. But precisely the problem of going back to this facticity demands that we employ a method which can indicate in a radical—and therefore formal—way the ontic-existentiell basis of ontology, and this cannot simply mean, as Löwith had put it, “clinching this dialectical movement . . . at the ontic-anthropological end.” Rather, the idea of ontology must itself become the directive back to its own, ever-receding ontic foundation. This is why Heidegger protests so vehemently against Löwith’s suggestion that his refusal to start at the ontic-anthropological end represents a betrayal of his earlier work. In fact, just the opposite is true:

The problems of facticity persist for me in the same way as they did in my Freiburg beginnings—only much more radically, and now **in the**

³⁴¹ As Heidegger explains at the beginning of his SS 1923 course: “‘Facticity’ is the designation we will use for the character of the being of ‘our’ ‘own’ **existence** [*Daseins*]” (O 63:7).

perspectives that were leading me on even in Freiburg.³⁴² . . . I first had to go all out after the **factic** [auf das **Faktische**], pushing it to its extremity, in order to even arrive at **facticity** [die **Faktizität**] as a problem. Formal indication, critique of the customary doctrine of the *a priori*, formalization, and the like are all still there for me, even if I do not speak of them anymore. (LL 36-37)

“Even if I do not speak of them anymore”: actually, Heidegger *does* manage to speak of all these in *Being and Time*,³⁴³ although it is certainly true that he does not develop any of these themes in detail (as he had typically done in his lecture courses). The case of “formal indication” is especially instructive: he refers to it casually on numerous occasions—apparently assuming its meaning is obvious to the reader—but never actually explains the point of the concept.³⁴⁴ Whatever the fate of his objections, Löwith was very much within his rights to find this state of affairs surprising and perplexing. Why would Heidegger’s application of his well-worn methods have suddenly become so opaque?

***Being and Time*, as Published**

The very title of the book, it must be recognized—“*Being and Time*”—is ambiguous. The book bearing that title was originally published with the designation: “First Half.”³⁴⁵ As we will see, even that subtitle is generous to the actual content of the book, for only the first third of the “treatise,” as Heidegger describes the project in §8, is contained within its

³⁴² Heidegger’s point seems to be that he has now entered *into* the work which he could only project (or, assume a perspective upon) in his Freiburg days.

³⁴³ Heidegger at least hints at his critique of the doctrine of the *a priori* at BT 50n, 229; and esp. 321. Formal indication—with which formalization is, of course, intimately bound up (see p. 198 above)—is alluded to on many occasions, notably, however, at BT 116, 231.

³⁴⁴ Most likely, this was a casualty of the frantic pace at which *Being and Time* was finished. “Formal indication” is a shorthand in Heidegger’s writing by now, and he probably worked under the assumption that at some point he would include an explicit discussion of it in his book. It is simply impossible to say whether he simply neglected to include such a discussion, or whether, at the end of the day, he took its inclusion to be unnecessary, given the extensive methodological reflections in the second introduction (but never got around to excising the unexplained, though now superfluous, references to “formal indication”). In either event, it certainly appears (and the letter to Löwith only confirms this) that the basic method employed in *Being and Time* is either identical to or a close relative of formal indication.

³⁴⁵ See n. 311 above for the professional pressures that led to Heidegger’s decision to bring out *Being and Time* before it was anywhere near finished.

covers. The final (third) division of Part One, along with the entirety of the (three-division) second part, would never appear. At least in 1927, Heidegger typically uses the title “*Being and Time*” to refer to the treatise as a whole, including its unfinished but projected parts. Only in the seventh edition of 1953 did Heidegger finally remove the designation “First Half” from the book’s title page. This is important because the content of the published book *Being and Time* can only be properly understood in the context of the original *Being and Time* project as a whole.³⁴⁶ As we will see, the published sections of *Being and Time* are preliminary—not only in the sense of being a first attempt to work out the question, but, most crucially, in that they were drawn up with the expectation that they would be subject to a systematic reinterpretation in light of the projected, but never published, second part of the project.

As it stands, and as noted at the beginning of this chapter, the title “*Being and Time*” is a very odd one for the book to bear. Most of the book contains an analysis of existence: Division One is the preparatory fundamental analysis of existence; Division Two deals with the connection between existence and temporality. Obviously the concept of existence (*Dasein*) is of overriding importance for the finished text. Its basic role, Heidegger tells us on several occasions, is to function as a *formal* indicator (see BT 53, 231, 313), even if he never specifies just what that’s supposed to mean. For any student of Heidegger’s earlier work, of course, this poses no great mystery: truly philosophical concepts *always* have the form of formal indicators, for the “content” to which such concepts are supposed to be responsible recedes through the very act of indicating it. Thus “life itself,” to use

³⁴⁶ Cassirer, for one, understood this. In the third volume of his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* he puts off a “critical discussion” of *Being and Time*: “Such a discussion will be possible and fruitful only when Heidegger’s work is available as a whole” (Cassirer [1929], 163n2).

Heidegger's old terminology, recedes from any attempt to grasp it conceptually. The proper form of the concept which is to "grasp" it, then, must in turn be determined by this movement. Formally indicative concepts point to the immediacy of lived experience and in this pointing draw us ourselves in the direction of what is lived, requiring us to complete the act only in and through the very act of living.

In order for a concept to genuinely function as a formal indicator, then, it must actively prevent the reification of the object to which it points, and on this score not all terminology is created equal. We can see why Heidegger would have been drawn to the idea of *life* (as so many of the *Lebensphilosophen*, of course, were): the act of living itself presents an intuitively sharp contrast with any concepts *of* life that would try to capture its flow (and which inevitably still its stream, as Natorp said). Nevertheless, Heidegger began to be dissatisfied with the concept of life as the 1920s wore on, and by 1927 Heidegger was convinced that only "existence" could do the conceptual work that was needed here. It is not immediately apparent why this should be the case, but some of the shortcomings Heidegger saw attaching to his earlier terminology may help clear the way here. "Life," Heidegger now insists, says rather too much. To be sure, Heidegger is still willing to acknowledge that there may well be a sufficiently austere understanding of "life" according to which it does indeed form the subject matter of philosophy. "In the tendency of all serious and scientific 'philosophy of life,'" Heidegger says—adding that such an expression "says about as much as the botany of plants"—"there lies an unexpressed tendency towards an understanding of the being of existence [*Dasein*]" (BT 46; cf. L 21:216). But now Heidegger is skeptical that "life" can help bring this subject matter into focus at all, laden as it is with a disorganized panoply of traditional connotations, ranging from the subjectivist

to the biological and positivist. As such, “life” inherits much the same problems as do “subject,” “spirit,” and “person”—all of which have been used to refer to what is supposed to lie on this side of objectivity. All these terms, Heidegger says, refer, perhaps despite themselves, to “determinate, ‘formable’ [*ausformbare*] phenomenal domains: but they are always used alongside a curious failure to see the need for asking about the being of the beings thus designated” (BT 46). If this is true, then it follows that “life” is no longer a good candidate for a *formal* indicator: since it indicates an *ausformbar* domain, it cannot, in principle, reach the form-giving basis (Heidegger is agreeing with both Husserl and Natorp here) which so many thinkers have desired to indicate with it.

It is in *Being and Time* where Heidegger is willing to push his point about the *formal* the furthest, and we may well wonder whether he did not do so at the expense of the indicative power of his terminology. What is “existence” supposed to be able to accomplish that “life” was unable to? When Heidegger introduces the term “*Dasein*,” it has all the appearance of a completely technical term. He insists that *Dasein* not be conflated with the human being (*Mensch*), for the reference to the human, like the reference to life, ends up saying rather more than we had meant. Heidegger’s vigilance on this score, it should be noted, is rather short-lived: by 1929, Heidegger explicitly and emphatically makes sense of the analytic of existence in terms of the human being.³⁴⁷ Of course, no formal indicator can ever assume a completely technical character, for its indicative power depends on its independent ability to point us in the direction of the ultimate subject matter of

³⁴⁷ The first page of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is actually quite striking on this score. Heidegger refers to the human being in almost every sentence. Part of the motivation here, of course, is to sow the seeds of his eventual attempt to show that he is the true inheritor of Kant’s fourth question, *What is the human being?* In Heidegger’s words, “The idea of laying out a fundamental ontology means setting out the characteristic ontological analytic of existence as a necessary prerequisite and, through it, making clear for what purpose and in what way, within which boundaries and under which presuppositions, it poses the concrete question: What is the human being?” (KPM 3:1).

philosophy.³⁴⁸ And yet it should do *no more* than such pointing, either. Whether or not Heidegger's language of *Dasein* is ultimately well suited to such a task, we should begin by understanding it as his attempt to further formalize the demand at the heart of both life philosophy and phenomenology: the demand to root the analysis of the beings to which we comport ourselves in our own immediate lived experience. The word "*Dasein*" can be thought of as a more formal indicator for Husserl's phenomenologically reduced field of experience, a field which, for Heidegger, can initially *only* be indeterminately indicated, but to which the analysis is ultimately responsible all the same (see L 21:33).

It is no accident that *Dasein*, probably the most important concept in *Being and Time*, is also the one that has caused the most trouble. For English-speaking readers of Heidegger, the trouble is compounded by the difficulties that attend even the most thoughtful English translations of the German "*Dasein*": it has been translated as everything from "human reality"³⁴⁹ to "being here/there" or even "being-t/here."³⁵⁰ More often than not, it has simply been left to stand untranslated. All these approaches lead to serious problems, and I am not aware of, nor am I about to suggest, any that do not. If we leave it untranslated, "*Dasein*" invariably takes on the character of a technical term in English contexts, and this is contrary both to Heidegger's intention and to his aggressively nontechnical choice of words here. Many translations, especially "being-t/here," are really

³⁴⁸ Of course, nothing keeps us from defining a new term to play such a role, and this, unfortunately, is basically the situation in which English readers presented with the untranslated, quasi-naturalized "*Dasein*" find themselves. But the point is that in such a case the real formal-indicative power of the concept will be derived from the concepts through which the new word is understood, whatever these may happen to be (cf. Gadamer [1985], 107). In any event, it is incorrect to oppose, as is often done, the "ordinary" sense of the German "*Dasein*" with, as one interpreter puts it, "Heidegger's own utterly technical, specific, ontological sense of 'here-being'" (Hemming [2013], 30-31).

³⁴⁹ See Sartre (1943), 49-56; de Beauvoir (1949), 7.

³⁵⁰ See Streeter (1997), 415. Vallega-Neu uses "being-t/here" for Heidegger's use of "*Da-sein*" in the 1930s, but distinguishes between this later usage and his usage in *Being and Time*. See Vallega-Neu (2003), 36n8.

translations in name only, and they suffer from the same difficulty. “Human reality” and, as Thomas Sheehan has suggested,³⁵¹ “human existence”³⁵² fare better on this score, but they introduce a reference to the human that is at best implicit in the sense of the German “*Dasein*” and which, more importantly, Heidegger takes pains to exclude from the sense of the term on methodological grounds (see BT 46).

Sheehan’s other suggestion, simply “existence,” is, considered in itself, very probably the best translation of the genuine sense of “*Dasein*” in *Being and Time*. Unfortunately, the translator of that work must distinguish between “*Dasein*” and “*Existenz*,” and any translation of “*Existenz*” other than “existence” is plainly artificial and misleading. I am not at all sure what the optimal—or even an acceptable—solution is to this problem. Perhaps the translator really is best served by leaving the term in the original German. Thankfully, it is not my task here to provide principles for a translation of *Being and Time*, but to try to clarify just a few of its basic concepts. For these purposes I actually think it is probably best to use the English “existence” to translate both “*Dasein*” and “*Existenz*.” I will say more about this shortly. But obviously this will at times require me to indicate which of Heidegger’s (closely connected) concepts I have in mind.

How does this matrix of existential concepts come into *Being and Time* in the first place? In historical perspective, of course, the motivation is clear: ever since the 1919 KNS class Heidegger had been trying to make sense of and defend the claim of phenomenology to be able to get back to the pretheoretical foundations of all theory. In “going all out after

³⁵¹ See the foreword to his translation of Heidegger’s WS 1925-1926 lectures on logic. He even goes so far as to claim, elsewhere, that the human being is *die Sache selbst* for Heidegger (Sheehan [2001], 193; also 199-200). Similarly, Kisiel holds that “the best English translation of *Dasein* itself is the ‘human situation,’ provided that one at once retains the full temporally distributed particularity of the indexicals, ‘here, now, mine,’ that it is meant to convey” (Kisiel [1993], 423).

³⁵² Sometimes Heidegger actually does speak of “*menschliche Dasein*” (e.g., BPP 24:21).

the **factic**,” as he recounted it to Löwith, he had finally arrived at “**facticity**” as a problem (LL 37; quoted above). Like Husserl, Heidegger wanted to provide new and firm foundations for the sciences, though it is unlikely the two ever understood this in anything like the same sense. For Heidegger, this project was always rooted in his campaign for university reform:³⁵³ making transparent the grounding of even the most abstract speculations of modern science in the shared life of the national community. Heidegger was convinced that this regrounding of the sciences could be accomplished by Husserlian means, although, as we have seen, he found himself forced to stretch the letter of Husserl’s phenomenology to its limit. In particular, the field of phenomena which Husserl had (originally, at least) hoped to lay bare by the phenomenological reduction became itself a kind of problem which could only be indicated (the problem of facticity, in Heidegger’s terms). If the basic organizing principle behind the division of the regional sciences were to be clarified, if, that is, the meaning of being in general were to be investigated phenomenologically, this could only be accomplished by first confronting the problem of gaining access to facticity.

In *Being and Time*, the problem of facticity is brought to the fore from the getgo, as something immediately demanded by the inquiry into the meaning of being. Being, Heidegger notes, is a peculiar thing to ask about, really, for it cannot be held in front of a cognitive gaze (as just another object inquired into) in the manner of particular beings. And yet an understanding of being, on the part of the questioner, is presupposed in any comportment to beings whatsoever. The question of being thus immediately directs us back to one particular being: the being *for whom* beings can even *be* in the first place, in

³⁵³ See p. 160 above.

other words, the being who already has some sort of understanding of the meaning of being. As Heidegger puts it, it is not that we have rigorously demonstrated the methodological priority of this being, but rather that a certain priority has “announced itself” (BT 8) in the very posing of the question.

This being, of course, Heidegger indicates as *Dasein*, and we must leave its precise relation to other beings an open question for the moment. Above all, we must not presuppose that *its* sort of being can simply be read off from the sort of being attaching to those beings to which it comports itself, even though *Dasein* has a natural tendency to lapse into precisely this presupposition (see, e.g., BT 58, 130).³⁵⁴ Rather, we must try to follow whatever clues can be found in the attempt to indicate this being. And on this score we immediately notice something simple: this is a being for which “being is an issue” (BT 12). This has two related senses. On the one hand, we have the familiar point that *Dasein* is able to comport itself to other beings and thus already lives in an understanding of the beingness of these beings, even though the nature of this beingness remains inexplicit for it. On the other hand, *Dasein* is, on its own part, and for its own sake, related to these beings—again, however, in a manner which is basically unclarified. That is, *Dasein* finds itself somehow amidst a world of things that simply *are*. *Dasein*, by contrast, does not just have, as an already acquired possession, its own being; instead, by being held out, as it were, into the realm of beings, it sustains an inherently problematic relationship to the totality of what just *is*. In simpler language, *Dasein*’s own being is not given to it, but presented to it as a task for it: for its part, it has to *be* the being that it is.

³⁵⁴ This has a double sense for Heidegger: the *analyst* of *Dasein* has a marked tendency to fall into this error (as is evident in the history of philosophy), but this tendency is derivative of a natural tendency on the part of *Dasein* to take itself for something it is not. See, e.g., BT 19.

If we strip away the ethical and metaphysical scaffolding of Sartre's notorious reading of this point,³⁵⁵ Heideggerians should not be too proud to acknowledge that the core of his interpretation is absolutely on the right track: existence is not something that is simply given to us, but imposes onto us a task, however indeterminate a formula that may appear to be. To be sure, the (English) language of "existence" complicates matters somewhat, but it seems to me that its formally indicative power is often undersold by those who would like to dissociate Heidegger's work from the popular postwar existentialism it helped to inspire. Indeed, Heidegger indicates the distinctive task assigned to *Dasein* with the term "*Existenz*": "That kind of being [*Sein*] towards which existence [*Dasein*] can comport itself in one way or another, and always somehow does, we call **existence** [*Existenz*]" (BT 12). If that has something like the look of a tautology in English, it should. *Dasein* is fundamentally the *possibility* of existing: *Existenz* is the possibility of *Dasein* to be itself (since its being is never simply given to it as a *fait accompli*). Here the resonances of "*Dasein*" and "*Existenz*" are at least helpful: *Dasein*, as a living existence, is pulled to really "make something of itself," as we say, i.e., to actually *exist*. Thus "existence [*Dasein*] always understands itself in terms of its existence [*Existenz*], a possibility of itself to be itself or not be itself" (BT 12).

One might wonder, of course, how existence, or anything, for that matter, could *not* be itself. Isn't everything what it is and not some other thing? Heidegger's point is that the evidence for such a presupposition would have to be demonstrated from out of existence itself. But what we find there is that we are *not* simply given to ourselves wholly and completely: we encounter the need to decide what to be in advance of our actually being

³⁵⁵ See Sartre (1946), 290-292.

that thing. For *Dasein*, then, the decision to be or not to be itself precedes its simply *being* itself.³⁵⁶ There is a sense, I suppose, in which Heidegger will grant the objection, for if we try to understand existence as just another being—one being among others to which we might comport ourselves—then, indeed, we will not be able to render existence itself intelligible *as* existence. But this, of course, is precisely Heidegger’s point: we cannot hope to understand existence itself by drawing inferences from “everything,” i.e., the totality of what simply has being.

Existence and the Meaning of Being

Let us briefly review what we have found. Heidegger begins *Being and Time* by acknowledging that the question of the meaning of being does not appear to be a particularly pressing one at the moment—either on the current philosophical landscape or in terms of its relevance to contemporary life. If anything, what arouses curiosity nowadays is the fact that the ancients apparently troubled themselves so much over such an obvious concept. As Heidegger puts it, what Plato and Aristotle “wrested with the utmost intellectual effort from the phenomena, fragmentary and incipient though it was, has long since become trivialized” (BT 2). Nevertheless, Heidegger thinks it is essential to recognize that an answer to the question of the meaning of being is presupposed in all our everyday dealings with beings. Manifestly, it would appear, we *do* have an answer to this question, even if it is not one we are prepared to formulate explicitly. In any case, the question has a distinctive kind of priority: it is not just historically prior to other questioning in

³⁵⁶ By no means do I mean by this to assimilate Heidegger to Sartre’s radically ahistoricist position, which has little in common with Heidegger’s deeper project. Although I cannot trace Heidegger’s complex argument here, his view is that the possibilities for existing among which existence must choose are projected forward from out of its past—projected forward from projects into which existence ultimately finds itself thrown (see BT 135). So when existence finally chooses to be itself, it does so by appropriating the heritage which is handed down to it, not by imagining a new future for itself from out of thin air (see BT 382-387).

philosophy (although this is not entirely accidental, either), but it is the most basic category in terms of which we relate to other beings at all. For just this reason, we cannot hope to understand being in terms of a generalization from beings, for an understanding of being is precisely what is presupposed in any comportment to beings whatsoever. But how, then, is being to be understood, if not from the pattern of beings?

Now, it would be convenient if we could simply *look* at what is preobjective in our experience—that in our experience which depends on no objective reference, or, no comportment to beings, at all. Then we could trace the ways in which beings become represented *as* beings for us; this, of course, is Husserl's basic gambit, that of isolating preobjective, but object-constituting, noematic structures by means of bracketing the positing of the existence of the natural world. As we have seen, Heidegger is wary of this strategy of Husserl's, but at the same time he is unwilling to give up (what he perceives as) the core of Husserl's phenomenology, turning throughout the decade of the 1920s to the method of formal indication to indicate, but not exhibit straightaway, what Husserl had hoped to expose through his phenomenological reduction. In *Being and Time* Heidegger chooses the term "*Dasein*" to try to achieve this.

A good formally indicative concept ought to help us resist the natural urge to understand what it indicates as a kind of object which could be given to us in the fullness of its content as an object of cognition. *Dasein*—not *Leben*, *Bewußtsein*, or *Subjektivität*—is the concept Heidegger now thinks is best able to aid us in this resistance. Whether we ultimately agree with him or not, it is easy, I think, to see some of the reasons why he came around to this view. On the one hand, unlike several of the alternatives (especially those favored by the Neokantians), "*Dasein*" is relatively independent of the philosophical

tradition. Its carrying less baggage with it gives it a greater inherent formality. This is not to say, however, that “*Dasein*” is really in any way free from the tradition; one of Heidegger’s key methodological points (which we will shortly consider in more detail) is that the formal-indicative power of any concept is exhausted by its ability to give direction to the historical inquiry through which we may recover the force of the tradition. All we can really say, at this point, is that “*Dasein*,” when compared to “*Leben*” and other terms, resists its objectification longer and thus helps sustain the questionability that our path of questioning requires. On the other hand, the indicative force of “*Dasein*” should direct us to the kinds of meditations on its “to-be” character that we have already discussed at length in trying to distinguish its meaning from that of “*Existenz*.”³⁵⁷ And of course these considerations are closely interconnected: only because “*Dasein*” indicates the *task* of existence can it hold out against its collapse into a traditional determination of being (which has always been understood, we gradually come to see, in terms of presence).

Although Heidegger claims, plausibly, I think, a phenomenological heritage for his method in *Being and Time*, he ends up occupying a position that is by no means as foreign to Neokantianism as is often imagined. This is hardly an accident, of course, since his earliest, formative methodological meditations were carried out in conversation with—even if in opposition to—Natorp’s methodological criticism of Husserl. In particular, it should be emphasized that the analysis of *Dasein* by no means provides us with an immediate, untrammelled access to that which it indicates. It indicates, of course, the being that I myself am (BT 41), since I am the being for whom beings can be objects of comportment in the first place. But who, exactly, am I? What kind of being belongs to

³⁵⁷ See p. 226 above.

existence? How am I proximately “given” to myself? Not, Heidegger says, as a “mere, formal, reflexive awareness” (BT 115), as the Neokantians held. And yet the way in which I appear to be given to myself in the first place—in, as Heidegger says, “average everydayness”—is not *as* myself at all, but rather as *das Man* (BT 129).³⁵⁸ That is, I am initially *given* to myself as “just anyone,” if you will—simply a being among others who accordingly does not have to *decide* upon her existence but can simply *be* in the mode in which others already are.³⁵⁹

If this were the *only* way in which we could be “given” to ourselves, *Being and Time* would be a short enough book, and its stated goal—raising once again the question of being—would in any case be foreclosed from the very start. Only because existence (*Dasein*) functions as a formally indicative concept can this outcome be avoided: it points beyond the “given” content of existence (according to which we find ourselves in average everydayness as *das Man*) to the form of that existence which cannot be immediately given in the same way. Of course, as even Heidegger’s own reference shows, the Neokantians had wanted to emphasize the essentially formal nature of subjectivity. But we must be careful, Heidegger thinks, not to preemptively narrow the sense of “formal” that is operative here, and this is the trap into which Heidegger takes the Neokantians, with their emphasis on the form(s) of consciousness, to have fallen. Instead, we must follow more vigilantly the indication of the “form” of existence as a directedness away from all that which we are continually prone to mistake for its content, content smuggled in even by attempts to focus on subjectivity or consciousness.³⁶⁰ To be sure, we can only extricate ourselves gradually

³⁵⁸ As Gadamer correctly notes, the reference to *das Man* is “not only to be understood polemically in the sense of a cultural criticism of the century of anonymous responsibility. Behind it was the critical motive that questioned the concept of consciousness itself” (Gadamer [1979], 85).

³⁵⁹ Cf. Sartre’s diagnosis of bad faith. Sartre (1943), 86-116.

³⁶⁰ See the detailed discussion of formal indication in Ch. IV above.

from the misunderstanding of ourselves from which we always start. There is no phenomenological reduction by which we could, at one stroke, transform our everyday understanding of ourselves into a field of the phenomenological *a priori* ripe for description. Natorp was right about that. But he was not willing to follow the clue of the “formal” all the way.

Of course, the heart of Löwith’s objection is that, in *Being and Time*, at least, Heidegger was not willing to do so, either. In *Being and Time* the move from the initially misunderstood content to its indicated form is in the first place supposed to be achieved by means of an analysis of structuring conditions of possibility, conditions of possibility which in each case are brought to light under the guidance of the formal indication of existence. Through this process the structures of existence’s everydayness reveal themselves to be derivative modes of more basic ways of existing, ways which actually come closer to expressing what we had intended to indicate at the start of the inquiry. Heidegger calls his task here a “preparatory fundamental analysis of existence,” since only by referring to structuring conditions of possibility will we be able to bring to focus the significance of these structures that are incompletely understood in average everydayness: idle chatter, for example, is only intelligible as a derivative mode of authentic disclosive speech (BT 167-170). The more primordial existential structures we uncover will themselves, in turn, be unified by further structural levels. Thus at several points throughout *Being and Time* Heidegger’s methodology can appear to be straightforwardly transcendental, in the sense of beginning from given facts and ascending, step by step, to their conditions of possibility.

There are reasons, however, to be cautious here, given the nature of Heidegger’s method of formal indication. First, the “fact” of human existence is not really given as such,

but rather, at first and for the most part, as a result of existence's natural tendency to misunderstand itself. Thus the existential structure we uncover gives us not just the conditions of possibility of a given fact, but a new insight into the nature of the fact itself. In fact, the "facts" of everyday life turn out not to have been what we originally took them as being: as Heidegger found out early on, existence does not wear its facticity on its sleeve. This means that uncovering the conditions of possibility of existence's facticity is an essential step in arriving at that very facticity. So although the existential structure is not the existence we had formally indicated, it represents a movement towards our goal. It is in this context that we must understand Heidegger's claim that the existential analysis itself must prove to be an existentiell possibility of existence, made first in the introduction (BT 13), but then reinforced at the beginning of the second division (BT 234, 267). Heidegger's goal, we must remember, is not just to provide his readers with an abstract analysis of the structure of human existence, but to lead them to participate in it in a living manner. The existential interpretation of these structures is therefore always ultimately responsible to the moment, as it were, of lived immediacy which we had initially indicated so insufficiently.

Being and Time: Division Two

Existence, we have seen, should most properly be understood as a task. How, then, do we carry it out? As Heidegger puts it, the question of existence, the question of whether *Dasein* will be *Existenz*, or, just as much, the question of whether existence will be itself, "never gets straightened out except through existing itself. The understanding of oneself which leads **along this way** we call **existentiell**" (BT 12). To choose this or that possibility, however, does not require us to represent these possibilities to ourselves, nor does it

require us to understand explicitly the structure of existing at all. Far from it: the possibility of coming to an understanding of the structure of existence is itself just one existentiell possibility among others. For this reason Heidegger insists that “the roots of the existential analysis, for their part, are ultimately **existentiell**” (BT 13; cf. L 21:248; PIK 25:38).

On its surface, this may simply appear to be a triviality: philosophy, as an activity of human beings, must be one possible way of life for them. But in fact it is a distinct echo of Heidegger’s commitment to philosophy as a *way* of life, not just an analysis of it, that dominates Heidegger’s thinking throughout the 1920s. The result is that *Being and Time*, even if we restrict ourselves to the published portion of that project, harbors a peculiar methodology. On the one hand, the (preliminary) goal of the book is an analysis of the *existential* structures of existentiell possibilities. But the analysis, in turn, must be shown to be itself capable of being lived (although the living itself, to be sure, remains a task to be always completed by the reader).³⁶¹ Thus there arises a distinctive conditioning relationship between the existentiell and the existential: although the existential analysis is supposed to lay out the conditions of possibility of (existentiell) existence, the former depends, in turn, on the latter—so much so, in fact, that existential analysis will demand what Heidegger calls an existentiell “attestation.” This is just what it sounds like: one possibility among others in which the existential structure itself is made transparent, in other words, an existentiell possibility which vouches for the analysis.

The basic task of the second division, as described by Heidegger in several places (see BT 17, 234), is apparently straightforward: we must *repeat* the preparatory analytic of Division One on an *ontological* basis. But to recover the “logic” of the constitution of beings

³⁶¹ See p. 199 above.

(and thus provide the requisite “ontological basis”) we will need to have a manner of access to *Dasein* that is not completely determined by its interpretation of itself as just another being. Division One provided an analysis of average everydayness, and as such concerned itself exclusively with the structure of inauthentic existence (BT 232). In the first instance, and for the most part, existence is, as we know, precisely *not* itself. And yet the structural analysis of Division One, following, as it does, the formal indication of existence, has already prepared the ground for the ontological repetition of its analysis. The inauthenticity of existence has by no means been merely a negative foil to our inquiry: “This indifference of the everydayness of existence [*Dasein*] is **not nothing**, but rather a positive phenomenal characteristic of this being. All existing [*Existieren*] is how it is from out of this kind of being and back into it” (BT 43). In a manner of speaking, the directedness back to the conditioning possibilities of existence already indicates, though incompletely, the ability of existence to be itself (i.e., for *Dasein* to achieve *Existenz*). As Heidegger says, “Manifestly, existence [*Dasein*] itself must, in its being [*Sein*], profess the possibility and manner of its authentic existence” (BT 234).

This is the transitional point at which we find ourselves at the outset of Division Two. Despite all the groundwork laid in the first division, we are still having a distinctive kind of trouble getting existence *as a whole* into view. This is not just the result of a faulty analysis or an accidental shortcoming of Division One; there is something about existence itself, Heidegger now points out, that resists our attempt to grasp it as a unified phenomenon (BT 233). Since the object of our analysis, existence, is the very being that in each case we ourselves are, a peculiar difficulty attaches to the task of grasping our object as a whole, or as a unity. Recall that it was troubles of just this sort that Natorp had been

keen to insist upon (against Husserl) in Heidegger's formative years. In Natorp's language, because subjectivity essentially *bestows* form and unity upon its objective constructs, subjectivity *in itself* cannot straightaway become an object *for itself*. Since Heidegger's reply to Natorp, as it developed throughout the 1920s, turned on his invocation of the Husserlian technique of formalization, we would expect him to make a structurally similar move at this point in *Being and Time*.

As a matter of fact, I think we should be able to see that this is, in essence, just what he does. Granted, his appeal to his established methodology is not always obvious, and Heidegger takes this to have seriously misled even those who, like Löwith, should have been best prepared to understand it. To see what Heidegger is up to, however, it is crucial to try to bring to clarity the problem with which he begins Division Two: that of bringing the *whole* of existence into view. It is striking that when Heidegger introduces *care* as the being of existence in I.6, he has already referred to what appears—on the surface, at least—to be the very same whole:

The being of existence [*der Sein des Daseins*], which sustains ontologically the structural whole as such, becomes accessible for us when we look all the way **through** this whole **at a single** originally unified phenomenon already lying in this whole in such a way that it is the ontological basis for each of its structural moments in its structural possibility. (BT 181)

Care, we might say, is supposed to function as a point of analysis by which we can look at and keep sight of—all at once—the other moments of the existentiell analysis of Division One. One might reasonably wonder, then, why there apparently remains yet *another* problem concerning the whole of existence at the beginning of Division Two.³⁶² To see what the new difficulty is supposed to be, the heritage of Heidegger's engagement with

³⁶² I thank Jessica Polish for forcing me to grapple with this question in conversation.

Natorp and his subsequent development of the method of formal indication are essential. In 1919 his idea had been that life is self-interpreting, that phenomenology merely presents life's own intensification of itself. Now he uses this insight to enact—or, better, to indicate the indispensability of a further enactment (on the part of the reader) of—the transformation of an analysis of existence into the register of existence itself.

As long as it is afforded a strictly limited significance, the result of Division One may be left to stand. Existence may, indeed, be characterized by care, but to “see” the structural whole in this way is not necessarily adequate to the formally indicated existence to which we pointed at the beginning of our inquiry. What is needed, Heidegger now specifies, is to “see” the existential structure as a whole in such a way that it “fills up” a real possibility for being. It shouldn't be in the form of a doctrine which we either produce or recite; rather, it's supposed to be something we experience as an existentiell possibility (see, again, BT 12-13). The conditions of possibility we're trying to give must themselves be full-blooded existentiell possibilities in such a way that, if we pull it off, there should be no room left over for the objection that we've failed to analyze everyday life as really lived and experienced; it should be transparent that our analysis not only is responsive to that demand, but issues itself in such a way that it shows this through existence itself. And because existence is always characterized by its “to-be” structure, this means that the endpoint of philosophy is not *understanding*—at least according to its traditional cognitive interpretation—but *decision*. Thus, again, the question of existence is only straightened out through existing (BT 12).

In Division Two of *Being and Time* this decision is laid out for the reader through Heidegger's famous discussion of being-towards-death. It is important to appreciate the

often-overlooked methodological role these sections of the text are supposed to play. In particular, Heidegger here focuses on the way that the possibility of death foregrounds the *formal* aspect of existence in a more radical way than has been possible in the text of *Being and Time* up to this point. To see this, first notice that every concrete existentiell possibility has in common a certain form, the form of possibility as such. Now, this form may not be thematically foregrounded in any particular living existentiell possibility. In fact, and for essential reasons, we tend to obscure or cover up the form of possibility as such: we tend to project forward possibilities as so many future states of affairs and take our decision-making as a kind of calculative play with various possible objective scenarios.³⁶³ But this is to effectively collapse possibilities into actualities, not to confront them *as* possibilities. In fact, Heidegger thinks, the only way to come face-to-face with a possibility as such is to drain the latter of all its possible objective content, i.e., the representation of it through constellations of possible states of affairs that may be brought about. And in its purest form, this is just what the possibility of (our own) death really is. It is the possibility of . . . , where that ellipsis cannot be filled in with any objective content without destroying it as the possibility that it is. Thus the possibility of dying expresses in the purest way the mere form of possibility and precludes our misunderstanding the existential nature of possibility on the basis of possibilities which are really just possible actualities.³⁶⁴

The key connection to see here is that between being-towards-death, the *form* of possibility, and authenticity, on the one hand, and the *formal* indication of existence

³⁶³ See Heidegger's discussion of the "situation" and the nature of decision in §62. In deciding, existence can never rigidify its need to decide into an objective choice made "once and for all," come what may. Instead, Dasein always reserves the possibility of "retrieving" itself for a deeper form of resolve (BT 308).

³⁶⁴ As any reader of Heidegger will immediately recognize (and perhaps object!), I am in fact truncating the movement of the beginning of Division Two rather severely. The attestation is ultimately traced to existence's wanting to have a conscience (BT 287-288). Suffice it to say that the structural point about possibility remains determinative throughout this movement.

(*Dasein*), on the other. Because the phenomenal content formally indicated at the outset of the inquiry reveals itself (though not objectively!) as pure possibility, existence “finds itself” only constantly on its own way to itself (rather than simply being there as objectively present, the way you find a domino under the couch). In my relation to my own death, which Heidegger terms “anticipation,” my existence is brought back from its dispersal into *das Man*—where I might as well be anyone—to myself, as such. In this context we should remember Heidegger’s earlier remark that “the being which is concerned in its being about its being is related to its being as its ownmost possibility” (BT 42). In anticipatory being-towards-death existence is brought back to itself.³⁶⁵

Is this something we can recognize as an existentiell possibility of existence? It had better be, if Heidegger’s analysis is really going to do justice to existence in the radical way his method requires. But what would it mean for existence to be brought back to itself? We can recall that the problem is one of getting existence as a whole into view here. But what kind of whole is appropriate to the form of existence? Existence is not, after all, an objectively present entity posited between two fixed nodes—authenticity and inauthenticity—which it might occupy, but is rather a possibility continually and indefinitely stretched between two projectable ways of being—to be itself or not. So even existence’s ownmost possibility, which would project its authentic being, cannot ultimately close off the openness of existence to its entanglement in inauthenticity (and the converse holds, too). This leads to a parallel methodological consequence: the existential analysis can never coincide objectively with an existentiell possibility, for the initial formal indication never objectively reaches the “material” we might suppose it had intended; rather, the

³⁶⁵ And this is to say that it is forced to reckon with itself as a nullity (BT 284-285).

relevant unity being sought by Heidegger in an attestation is a unity bound together *projectively*. In other words, the unity we are looking for here—getting existence as a whole into view—must match the unity disclosed by the preliminary analysis itself.

This is not the occasion to trace the development of Division Two any further. A general observation about the movement operative in it will have to suffice. The analysis there has to answer, on the one hand, to our ownmost, i.e., most authentic, possibility, while being responsible at the same time to our average everydayness, and the tension inherent here cannot be relieved by simply showing an identity between the two. But it doesn't follow from this that existence lacks a unified nature, only that the specific kind of unity appropriate to existence is the unity of a being whose being is essentially projective existing-in-possibility. The tension cannot be dissolved by way of a theoretical maneuver, but rather falls back upon each of us as a decision to be rendered. If *Being and Time* leads to clarity concerning existence, it does so not by laying it out theoretically as an object to be grasped, but by leaving us holding the bag with a pressing urgency: am I going to exist as the being which I am, or not?³⁶⁶ Philosophy, Heidegger holds, is therefore the *freest* possibility of human existence, “when individual existence understands itself—but that means: when individual existence has decided to understand itself” (PIK 25:39).

The Unkept Promise of *Being and Time*

The structure of *Being and Time*, as Heidegger had originally projected it, was not to be all that different from a typical structure he used in his lecture courses in the 1920s. His courses often had a historical subject matter (even if that was not made explicit in their titles), which Heidegger would preface by way of a substantive, usually overlong

³⁶⁶ Thus Magda King writes that “the first time one truly understands Heidegger’s questions one knows it by a cold shiver running down one’s spine” (King [2001], 3).

introduction to the basic principles of phenomenological research. As we have seen,³⁶⁷ Heidegger on one occasion even had to be rebuked by his own students to move from his preliminary considerations to the historical subject matter he had promised to treat. Without such external pressures bearing down on him, it should be no great surprise that he simply never got to the historical subject matter he had promised in *Being and Time*, or even to the third division of Part I, which of course was supposed (among other things) to lay the ground for the transition to the destruction of the history of philosophy. Heidegger himself acknowledged, just a few months before retreating to his Todtnauberg cottage to try to write *Being and Time*, that “we always underestimate the necessity and the difficulty of the positive preparation we have to make to avoid violating the past” (L 21:72).

What was the third division of *Being and Time*'s first part supposed to look like? According to Heidegger, this (never completed) division would enact the transition from the ontological analysis of existence to the temporal basis of existence's understanding of being. To be sure, Division Two already takes several decisive steps in this direction. Temporality is shown to be the ontological significance of care. Yet even this does not suffice to show the way in which the understanding of temporality is the ground of the meaning of being in general. Heidegger brings the published portion of *Being and Time* to a close by acknowledging the inadequacy of the notion of temporality at which we have provisionally arrived and by reemphasizing the signal importance of the method of the treatise as a whole:

The source and possibility of the “idea” of being in general can never be investigated by means of the “abstractions” of formal logic, that is, without any secure horizon for question and answer. It is necessary to look for a **way** of clarifying the fundamental question of ontology and to **go** along this way.

³⁶⁷ See n. 316 above.

Whether it is the **only** one or even the **right** one can be decided **only after one has first gone along it.** (BT 437)

Even Division Three, had it been completed, would not have settled the final score with the meaning of being. In fact, what Division Three should have brought to light is the insufficiency of the attempt to work out the temporal basis of the constitution of beings without an attendant destruction of the history of philosophy.³⁶⁸ Neither Husserl (in his lectures on the phenomenology of internal time consciousness) nor Kant (chiefly in the first-edition Transcendental Deduction in the *Critique*), despite their genuine diligence on this score, could have succeeded in the description of the phenomenon of time, for they were held in thrall to the traditional understanding of being as primarily and essentially *presence*. Division Three of *Being and Time*, facing the same obstacle, can only overcome it by being embedded in the larger project of *Being and Time* sketched in its introduction. It is to the Introduction to which we must now return if we hope to understand the significance Heidegger attached to Part II of *Being and Time*.

On its surface, the transition from Part I to Part II of *Being and Time* looks like the transition from philosophy proper to its history. But even the apparently secure “results” of Part I inherit the formally indicative character of its guiding method. This means that temporality itself must now serve to formally indicate the theme of time as it has been worked out in the philosophical tradition. As Heidegger puts it, what is *positive* in the inquiry into the determination of being by time is *entirely exhausted* by its function as a “directive for concrete historical research” with respect to the history of philosophy (BT 19). Thus what appeared initially as a properly “philosophical question” is resolved into an essentially historical inquiry, an inquiry which nonetheless remains tethered to and

³⁶⁸ See Schalow (2000), 182.

ultimately receives its guidance from the phenomenon of existential temporality worked out in Part I.³⁶⁹

The process of coming to grips with the tradition in this way Heidegger calls destruction (*Destruktion*). Several alternative English translations have been proposed: “destructuring” and “deconstruction” foremost among them.³⁷⁰ Whatever translation is preferred, the word should retain some measure of polemical edge, but it must be kept in mind that Heidegger does not intend anything like a critical attack on the tradition (which would, perhaps, serve merely to justify our own ignorance of it), but rather a piece-by-piece, patient taking-apart of its animating assumptions. Such assumptions, of course, do not generally *begin* as assumptions; rather, they gradually become such through the increasing difficulty of remembering the contexts of the problems to which these assumptions were originally supposed to be answers. In other words, what begins its life as an answer to a pressing problem slowly turns into an obvious starting point for further inquiry. Such inquiry makes progress, however, only at the cost of covering over the force and urgency of the original questions that gave rise to what now function only as obvious presuppositions. In this way the philosophical tradition, as it has been handed down to us, remains a reflection of the difficulties the phenomena presented to the most ancient thinkers, but it is a reflection that has grown increasingly pale as philosophical thought has consolidated its “progress.”

As the original difficulties recede further and further from view, it is increasingly the case that we take the reflection for the real thing—philosophy being more and more

³⁶⁹ Cf. Heidegger’s plan for his WS 1921-1922 course, discussed above, p. 202.

³⁷⁰ Van Buren defends understanding *Destruktion* as deconstruction (in the sense of “*Abbauen*”). This seems to me to be basically right, although it is a little hard to know what the general sense of the English “deconstruction” is supposed to be. See van Buren (1994), 30.

alienated from what gave rise to it in the first place.³⁷¹ Here again we can see the continuing strength of Heidegger's attachment to Husserl's principle of principles: because the vital content of the philosophical tradition has been reduced over time to all-too-familiar—even apparently self-evident—concepts and theories, we increasingly tend to take for granted that these concepts and theories speak to the genuine “problems of philosophy.” But we do so without taking the effort to demonstrate to ourselves just what these problems of philosophy really are. We proceed instead as if the gaps in the theories and the equivocations over concepts into which well-meaning thinkers are led illustrate the philosophical problems bequeathed to us by the previous generation,³⁷² but in truth we cannot make these problems our own, and hence recognize them as genuine *problems* at all, except by exhibiting for ourselves their provenance in existence.

But how do we do so? One might suppose that the principle of principles carries along with it an immediate, obvious answer: go back to the intuitive (or, adjusting for Heidegger's broadening of Husserl's notion of intuition: back to the existential) basis for all philosophical theories and trace their relevance systematically back to this lived basis. But this, as we have by now seen Heidegger insist time and time again, is simply not possible. We can, to be sure, *indicate* this phenomenal basis of all theory in general, but any *content* that we succeed in indicating is in every case already tradition-laden. So in order to destroy the tradition, it is not as if we could just blow it up and then proceed to reconstruct it from the materials left over from the explosion; instead, we must work painstakingly backwards

³⁷¹ Recall Heidegger's complaints about philosophers philosophizing from the books of their colleagues (p. 165 above)!

³⁷² Thus Heidegger consistently rejected the “history of problems” approach to philosophy which was associated with Windelband and, more loosely, Neokantianism as a whole. On this context of Heidegger's thinking, see Gadamer (1981), 434-435.

through the history of philosophical theory, unraveling it, as it were, by considering it in the reverse order of its historical consolidation. We can do so, of course, only under the condition that we have sufficiently indicated (and above all that means that the indication itself must be sufficiently formal) the living basis of the philosophical tradition and worked to clarify it—as preliminary as our results on that end must necessarily be—on the basis of this clue. Thus the function of *Dasein*, as a formally indicative concept for this lived basis of philosophy, is finally exhausted in its function as a clue to the destruction of the history of ontology.

On Heidegger's view, then, the result is that the necessity of grappling with the most ancient, obscure, and foreign-to-us determinations of the meaning of being presses in on us as the natural consequence of our original intention of indicating the lived experience to which philosophy is supposed to be adequate in the first place.³⁷³ Conversely, the obscure doctrines of the ancients “come alive” for us precisely because the meaningfulness of our interpretation is rooted in our coming to grips with the question of our own existence: without having done so, the animating questions of, say, Plato's dialogues will no longer be our own. But there is no royal road to achieving an understanding of Plato, Aristotle, or Parmenides. History of philosophy essentially looks backwards: from where *we* are, the most ancient thought is the most foreign, and to recover the context of its questioning, it is *first* necessary to work back through the more proximate history of philosophy in which the thought of the ancients has become sedimented.

³⁷³ This is why Heidegger can say that the existential analytic can be thought of as indicating not just the beginning but also the goal of phenomenological ontology: the existential analytic “has fixed the end of the guiding thread of all philosophical questioning at the point from which it **arises** and into which it **returns** [wohin es zurückschlägt]” (BT 38).

To destroy the history of philosophy in this way, it is first necessary to have some guideposts to mark off our way, and Heidegger indicates these at the end of the introductory material for *Being and Time*. Like Part I, Heidegger projects three divisions of Part II. Collectively, they will demonstrate the “basic features of a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology according to the guiding thread of the problematic of temporality” (BT 39). The three divisions, none of which would ever appear, were to be laid out as follows:

1. Kant’s doctrine of schematism and time as a preliminary stage in a problematic of temporality
2. The ontological foundations of Descartes’s “*cogito sum*” and the way medieval ontology is taken up into the problematic of the “*res cogitans*”
3. Aristotle’s treatise on time as a way of discriminating the phenomenal basis and the limits of ancient ontology (BT 40)

Kant’s thought, then, occupies a position of considerable privilege in the *Being and Time* project—at least as the latter was originally conceived: it was Kant’s thought that was supposed to serve as the pivot to the destruction of the history of philosophy with which *Being and Time* was to have concluded. This is not all to the advantage of Kant, of course; it implies that in his thought the Western tradition is sedimented and compressed—and for those reasons opaque—to a degree greater than in the thought of Descartes and Aristotle. On the other hand, the Kantian problematic still retains the power to speak to us in a relatively direct way—even though we are at first liable to misunderstand it. By contrast, coming to grips with Kant’s predecessors requires the preliminary working back *through* Kant. Only by following through on the clues that are proximally present to us in the form of Kant’s work can we begin to unravel the history of Western philosophy so that the question of being can truly be raised anew. The most basic questions in philosophy, Heidegger always maintained, were at the same time the simplest, and “they are ‘simple’

not just because they are still clumsy questions and haven't quite been understood, but 'simple' because you don't need elaborate contraptions to investigate them" (L 21:125). It is getting rid of the elaborate contraptions, unfortunately, which is complicated, and if we are to have any hope of doing so we must begin with Kant.

Heidegger's Self-Understanding in *Being and Time* and the Question of Kant

Why Kant? Why not, for instance, Hegel, to whom Heidegger devotes the penultimate section of Division Two of *Being and Time*? Indeed, despite Heidegger's respect for Hegel's work on the problem of time (see BT 428), he always held that Hegel was, in the end, far too quick to assimilate the phenomena of temporality to the concepts demanded by his own philosophical system, leading him to entirely miss the point of Kant's doctrine of schematism.³⁷⁴ By contrast, Heidegger always reserves the highest praise for Kant's ability to tarry with the phenomena and follow them wherever they lead, even if this tendency did not always prevail in his finished works (see PIK 25:396; and emphatically at 431). By no means does this mean that Kant was able, through sustained philosophical diligence alone, to directly access a field of given phenomena, while Hegel was stuck boxing with the shadows of the tradition; it merely means that when Kant *does* make a decision in favor of the tradition, we can trace this moment with more transparency in his work, which in turn allows the stakes of Kant's basic problems to come to light with exceptional clarity.

Kant's unflinching devotion to what appeared to him as the relevant phenomena allowed him to grasp more deeply than anyone else in the modern period the significance of time for the question of being. In the first *Critique*, which is supposed to lay a new and

³⁷⁴ See, e.g., L 21:201-202. Thinkers following Hegel, on the other hand, have not really posed the central question at all. Speaking of Bergson, Heidegger insists that "so far as contemporary analyses of time have attained anything at all essential beyond the work of Aristotle and Kant, it has more to do with our grasp of time and our 'consciousness' of it" (BT 433n).

permanent ground for a critical science of metaphysics, Kant sees time as the universal, inner form of our sensibility and the primary sensible condition of objective experience. The general problem of the Schematism is to show how time-determinations interact with the purely intellectual conditions of objective experience (i.e., the pure categories of the understanding) to generate schemata for the representation of objects. Kant had already seen, therefore, the importance of time for the constitution of objectivity. Transposed into Heidegger's language, this means that Kant had already seen the centrality of the phenomenon of temporality for *ontological* cognition.

Of course, as Heidegger is well aware, Kant had not argued that temporality provides the *general*, but only the *sensible*, condition of our comportment to beings, and the basic thrust of Heidegger's interpretation of Kant is to nudge Kant towards the former position. Thus Heidegger tries to show, unsuccessfully, I think, that Kant *wants*, at times despite himself, to understand even the *intellectual* conditions of objectivity in terms of temporality (although Heidegger is willing to grant that Kant was clearly uncomfortable with such a conclusion and distanced himself from anything like it in the second edition of the *Critique*).

Be this as it may—and we will consider the question in more detail in the following chapter—Kant lacked the groundwork that would have enabled him to grasp the phenomenon of temporality in a more original manner (see L 21:163). Along with the tradition, stemming from Aristotle's remarks on time in the *Physics* (L 21:249), Kant interprets temporality from out of an understanding of beings, not from out of an understanding of the being for whom beings are beings, i.e., existence. Now, this may appear to be an outlandish claim: wasn't it Kant, after all, who insisted most loudly on the

subjective nature of space and time? But this, as Heidegger sees it, hardly decides the issue: what is important is whether Kant's own understanding of the subject is suitably radical here to support such a purported insight.

We can already guess what is meant by "radical" in this context: the question is whether Kant's designation of existence as a subject is sufficiently *formally indicative* to prevent the premature interpretation of the "subject" along "objective" lines. And here we already know what Heidegger's answer will be. Without a formally indicative methodology, Kant necessarily lacks the preliminary *existential* analytic of the human situation which would allow him to interpret the temporalizing of the categories in the schematism from the inside out, as it were (L 21:378). Without the existential analytic, Kant is ultimately forced, despite himself, even, to fall back on the concept of time he inherits from the tradition. And what is decisive, of course, is not that his conception of time is "traditional"; that, Heidegger would concede, is at all events unavoidable. Rather, Kant lacks the destructive indication, which could only be provided to him by the preliminary results of the existential analytic, which would allow him to inherit the tradition in a positive and productive way—that is to say, in a way that would allow a decision about time to stand urgently before him and be recognized as such. Thus when Kant remarks, apparently quite casually, that the schematism is "an art hidden in the depths of the human soul,"³⁷⁵ Heidegger is quick to interject. This obscurity, he notes, is no mere accident. Rather, Kant's inheritance (from Descartes) of a traditional notion of the subject positively prevents him from conceiving the object-constituting function of temporality in an adequate manner. The

³⁷⁵ CPR A141/B180; quoted by Heidegger at BT 23.

result is that “the decisive **connection** between **time** and the ‘**I think**’ remained shrouded in complete obscurity” (BT 24).

On the one hand, then, Kant is accorded a sort of dubious significance: given his reluctance to cover over the phenomenon of time with concepts simply borrowed from the tradition, Kant is notable for his close encounter, as it were, with the existential conception of time, even if the encounter was one from which Kant ultimately “shrank back,” as Heidegger famously puts it (BT 23; KPM 3:160). This can make it sound as though Kant were of significance primarily because he found himself just on the verge of Heidegger’s later insight into the nature of time, only to pull back from it and decide instead—as if in a moment of weakness—in favor of the tradition.

Although there is, indeed, a genuine sense in which Heidegger took Kant to come very, very near to the necessity for an existential analytic, the basic thrust of this characterization of Heidegger’s relation to Kant must ultimately be rejected. There are two reasons for this. First, we must keep in mind the destructive context of Heidegger’s reading of Kant. By Heidegger’s own lights, it is not, in the final analysis, Kant who must progress to Heidegger’s deeper standpoint, but Heidegger who must go back to Kant to understand the meaning of the phenomenon to which existential time at best points imperfectly. Recall, once again, that the positive results of Division One of *Being and Time* were intended to be exhausted in the directive for historical phenomenological research which they were intended to provide. Granted, this means that we must trace Kant’s thought to the point at which the latter can be seen as a response to the need to render a decision about time (a decision Heidegger takes it is obscured in the second-edition Deduction), and then ask, further, what his decision in favor of the tradition really signifies (which drives our analysis

back to Descartes). But the goal in all this is not to correct Kant's faulty analysis, but to open up positive possibilities within the philosophical tradition that no longer appear to us as such. The goal of carrying on the project of *Being and Time* is not to be achieved by confirming already secure results through critical observations on traditional figures, but rather by learning to see Kant's decisions in the original contexts in which he was compelled to render them. To be sure, these contexts cannot be opened up if we have not at first secured a firm direction from our initial formal indication, but such firm direction must never be taken as a positive doctrine to which traditional theories may or may not be adequate. In fact, only by returning, first to Kant, and then finally to the Greeks, will the nature of the traditional sediment congealed in the apparent "results" of *Being and Time* itself be made transparent.

This brings us to the second point. Especially in light of Heidegger's quasi-transcendental methodology in *Being and Time* and his attempt to uncover the "existentials" of human existence, which are closely modeled upon Kant's categories, Heidegger's work is often compared, favorably or unfavorably, to that of Kant.³⁷⁶ I do not wish to cast doubt on the validity or interest of such work, but I want to insist on a point in light of which all Heidegger-Kant comparisons must ultimately be considered: the Kantian "flavor," if you will, of *Being and Time* is no accident. We must continually keep in mind that Heidegger's citation of Plato at the beginning of the book remains equally, perhaps more, appropriate at its conclusion: we, who used to think we understood the expression "being," have now become perplexed (BT 1).³⁷⁷ For the results of *Being and Time*, and that includes

³⁷⁶ Most notably, perhaps, in Blattner (1999); more recently by Hebbeler (2013).

³⁷⁷ And it is not as if Heidegger forgets the structural aspects of his work as he pursues his project. In the final section of *Being and Time*, he writes, "The conflict regarding the interpretation of being cannot be settled

its chief conclusion—that it is temporality in terms of which anything like being in general is to be understood—do not have interpretations that are independent of the philosophical tradition which remains to be destroyed.³⁷⁸ Heidegger does not have a “view,” e.g., of the ready-to-hand or the present-at-hand (to take some commonly cited themes); he does not even have a view of time as such.³⁷⁹ It is by no means the case that the phenomenological criticism of the traditional understanding of time (and thus being) in terms of presence, with which Division Two is apparently so centrally consumed, has afforded us an independent position from which to criticize this tradition. The existential analytic should upset the obviousness of the traditional interpretation not by suggesting that it might be *false*, but rather, and more precisely, by suggesting that we not have sufficiently understood that which is wrapped up in defining being in terms of presence in the first place.

Instead, we must patiently unpack the thought of being as presence by returning to those whose work has established this result. And our proximate historical forebearer here—at least as Heidegger thought at the time of *Being and Time*—is Kant. And now here is the key point: it will be no surprise if *Being and Time* bears a Kantian structure, for if Heidegger is right, the very analysis developed there ought to be understandable—

because it has not even been ignited yet. And at the end of the day this isn't the kind of fight that can be 'picked'; rather, arousing this conflict already requires a preparation. Towards this alone the foregoing investigation is **on the way**" (BT 437).

³⁷⁸ Frank Schalow puts the point well: "Because the *Seinsfrage* is inherently historical, [Heidegger] can ultimately reformulate it only by expanding the scope of his questioning to include a dialogue or a critical encounter (*Auseinandersetzung*) with those predecessors who first broached the topic of being" (Schalow [2000], 181).

³⁷⁹ I am inclined to agree with van Buren's verdict: "The phrase 'Heidegger's philosophy' is a square circle. 'His' thought is not a finished product but a constant beginning anew, not an answer but a questionable question, not an object but a controversial topic, not actuality but possibility, not presence but absence" (van Buren [1994], 44).

historically, now—first and foremost in Kantian terms.³⁸⁰ That is, the self-understanding of the standpoint of *Being and Time* is ultimately implicated in the destruction of the history of philosophy: not even Heidegger’s apparently programmatic and methodological remarks at the outset of the treatise carry a meaning that would positively go “beyond” Kant and the tradition. Simply put, Heidegger’s project has to be understood, first and foremost, in terms of Kant. This is not to say that Kant provides the *deepest* clue to the significance of Heidegger’s phenomenology—Heidegger ultimately wants to be able to understand his thinking as the repetition of the ancient inquiry into the question of being—but Kant is the thinker we must first come to terms with to make the project of *Being and Time* historically intelligible.

An understanding of Kant, then, is not, in Heidegger’s view, simply a desideratum of historically informed philosophy; it is essential to the phenomenological movement’s very comprehension of itself. For better or for worse, Kant stands in front of the door through which it must pass to understand its own deepest motivations.

³⁸⁰ Stephan Käufer has emphasized the importance of Heidegger’s work on Kant in WS 1925-1926 for his subsequent development of the analysis of temporality in the second division of *Being and Time* (see Käufer [2011], 174, 185-196). This is absolutely correct, as far as it goes. The point I am making here, however, is not just about the factual presence of Kantian notions in *Being and Time*, but rather about the necessity internal to *Being and Time* that it be Kantian.

Chapter V

In the first edition of 1929, Heidegger wrote in the Preface to *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* that he was offering the reader a “fitting supplement” of sorts to *Being and Time*:

In Part Two of *Being and Time*, the theme of the following investigation will be handled on the basis of a more fraught way of posing the question [*einer weitergespannten Fragestellung*]. By contrast, a progressive interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is foregone there. The present publication should supply it with an anticipatory addition. (KPM 3:xvi)

As we have seen, Heidegger had already designated Kant’s first *Critique* as the proper starting place for the second, destructive part of *Being and Time* in 1927. The “more fraught” manner of questioning Heidegger alludes to in 1929 is surely a reference to the methodology at work in *Being and Time*, which was designed with an eye to working back through the history of philosophy to return a sense of urgency to the ancient question of the meaning of being. In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, however, the implication is apparently supposed to be that he will be pursuing the very reading of Kant he had rejected in *Being and Time*. The *progressive* reading he is about to offer will thus stand in contrast to the *destructive* reading he had promised in the earlier text.³⁸¹

Just what is this contrast supposed to amount to? Heidegger immediately provides us with some guidance: “At the same time [this investigation] clarifies the problematic treated in the first half of *Being and Time*, in the sense of providing it with a ‘historical’

³⁸¹ I owe thanks to Johan de Jong for drawing my attention to this point and impressing it upon me.

introduction” (KPM 3:xvi). To the casual reader this claim may strike an odd chord: surely it is the *Greek* manner of questioning after being, and not *Kant’s*, that would provide the proper “historical background” which would make the path of questioning pursued in *Being and Time* intelligible (BT 1!). In fact, however, we have already seen why Heidegger might think that Kant’s philosophy, and his philosophy alone, would be suitable for such a role. Sometime around Christmas 1925³⁸² Heidegger had come around to the view that Kant was his proximate historical forebearer.³⁸³ On the one hand, this means that, on account of Heidegger’s proximity—and not just Heidegger’s alone, but the proximity of contemporary Western philosophy as a whole—to Kant, the task of destruction could *only* begin from the latter’s way of thinking. But if we understand the positive methodological role of *Destruktion*, we will immediately recognize that this also means that the true meaning of the “results” of Part One of *Being and Time* (bearing in mind, of course, that even the preliminary results expected from this part never fully materialized) must be understood, initially, at least, in a Kantian manner. To approach their deeper significance, we will of course have to destroy this semblance. But this will not be to show what is really

³⁸² See n. 445 below.

³⁸³ His relationship to Husserl was still a vexed one, however. Since he tended to see himself as continuing at least one important strain of Husserlian phenomenology, Heidegger never really classifies Husserl as a distinct historical interlocutor at all. Despite the reservations he at least privately harbored about Husserl’s project (see n. 248 above), he could claim that Husserl’s *Ideas* was “in its foundations essentially more radical than Kant could ever be” (L 21:284). It could be argued, I suppose, that Part One of *Being and Time* really amounts to a destruction of Husserlian phenomenology, but I’m not aware of any evidence that Heidegger himself saw his project this way. Publicly, at least, he presented himself as part of a basically Husserlian project; thus Kant and Husserl are never really competitors in his mind. Chad Engelland claims, by contrast, that in 1929 Heidegger had come to see Kant as *more* of a predecessor than Husserl. I think the evidence for a change of mind on Heidegger’s part here is slim. Yes, Kant grows in importance for Heidegger, but there is not really any indication that it is at Husserl’s expense. Even after *Being and Time*, Heidegger reads Kant as *anticipating* Husserl’s rediscovery of the centrality of intuition and as *falling short* of Husserl’s radicalness (PIK 25:64, 71). So at least in Heidegger’s mind it was consistent for him to regard himself as Kant’s heir and at the same time as a kind of Husserlian. If this has changed by 1929, it likely has more to do with his reevaluation of his own role in the phenomenological movement than it does with his deepened appreciation for Kant. But see Engelland (2010), 158.

the true content of *Being and Time*, but to try to slowly clarify what it was trying to say but, for essential historical reasons, could not.

This, I think, is what Heidegger is gesturing at when he indicates that the Kantbook is a “progressive” reading which can serve as a “historical introduction” for *Being and Time*. It is not progressive because it will advance philosophical questioning into exciting new horizons of research or contribute constructively to the existing historical literature on Kant. Indeed, at the very beginning of his WS 1927-1928 course on Kant’s first *Critique*, Heidegger told his students, “Philosophy does not evolve in the sense of progress. Rather, philosophy is the endeavor to unravel and elucidate the same few problems” (PIK 25:2). The Kantbook is “progressive” because it looks forward to the project of *Being and Time*, anticipating the structure of its basic concepts, concepts which are, of course, essentially and necessarily, albeit provisionally, Kantian.

If this is right, then the “progressive” and “destructive” readings of Kant, to follow the distinction suggested by Heidegger’s remark in the first-edition preface, are genuinely complementary, and could never really have been undertaken independently of one another. Indeed, if we turn to the main text of the Kantbook, we are struck at once by the immediate and manifold references to the project of *Being and Time*. “The following investigation,” Heidegger informs us,

poses for itself the task of interpreting Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* as a groundwork for metaphysics in order to thus place the problem of metaphysics before us as a fundamental ontology. Fundamental ontology means the ontological analytic of the finite essence of human beings which is to prepare the foundation for the metaphysics which “belongs to the nature of the human being.” (KPM 3:1)

It is thus clear that although the Kantbook is not quite the destructive text promised in *Being and Time*, it is not conceptually independent of it, either. It can be an “anticipatory

addition” to the second part of *Being and Time* by tracing its same steps in reverse order: instead of waiting for the results of the existential analytic, Heidegger here runs ahead of it, as it were, and offers the historical background that conditions those results ahead of time. In either case, however, the historical and “properly” philosophical projects cannot ultimately be dissociated from one another.

In terms of its immediate influence, the Kantbook must be reckoned a success.³⁸⁴ It went through four editions in Heidegger’s lifetime. For each edition, he prepared a new preface or remark with which to introduce the text. Beginning already in 1950, however, his prefaces took on an almost apologetic character. In the preface to the second edition, Heidegger begins by acknowledging the “constant offense” that readers have taken at the “violence [*Gewaltsamkeit*] of my interpretations.” Indeed, he admits, such allegations can be supported easily enough by reference to the Kantbook.³⁸⁵ He goes on to distinguish, however, between the methods appropriate to “historical philology” and “thoughtful dialogue,” emphasizing that each sort of inquiry has a kind of rigor that is proper to it and pointing out that the laws of thoughtful dialogue are even “more easily violated” than those of historical philology.³⁸⁶ Finally, however, Heidegger acknowledges that he has come up short in the attempt to respect not just the laws of philology, but, more importantly, the laws of dialogue, as well:

The failures and shortcomings of the present endeavor have become so clear to me . . . that I will abstain from making this work into a patchwork by compensating with additions, appendices, and postscripts. Thinkers learn from their shortcomings to be more persevering. (KPM 3:xvii)

³⁸⁴ “For more than a quarter of a century,” Dieter Henrich estimates, “it determined the method as well as the interpretive goal of almost all publications in the field” (Henrich [1955], 17).

³⁸⁵ By contrast, in January 1926 he had announced his original interpretive intention as one of bringing out “the unity of the problematic of the *Critique of Pure Reason* without doing violence to the work” (L 21:272).

³⁸⁶ On “thoughtful dialogue,” see WCT 8:182, delivered in SS 1952.

Between 1929 and 1950—and likely much closer to the former date than to the latter—Heidegger had come to realize that Kant was not the philosophical forebearer he had taken him to be. The story of Nietzsche’s usurpation of the place of Kant in Heidegger’s thought is crucial not just to understanding its own internal development; it is important for appreciating the genesis and limitations of the dominant narrative of the history of “Continental philosophy” even today. But it is a story that deserves its own treatment and will have to await another occasion.³⁸⁷

In the preface to the fourth edition, written in 1973, three years before his death, Heidegger reflected somewhat more wistfully on the nature and cause of his folly during his early years. As he eventually came to remember the events of this period,³⁸⁸ by 1929 it was already becoming clear to him that the question of being he had tried to raise anew in *Being and Time* remained almost universally misunderstood.³⁸⁹ And this, he was coming to realize, was not just the result of the incompleteness of the latter book, but because even his preliminary reflections in it had failed to do the work he had hoped they would do. In the midst of this disappointment, he turned to Kant and found in the first *Critique* a “refuge” with which to seek out “an advocate for the question of being which I had posed” (KPM 3:xiv). And yet his results, Heidegger belatedly came to realize, reflected far more of his own frustration with the failure of *Being and Time* than they did the innermost necessities of Kant’s thought. Finally Heidegger is able to freely admit that “in truth . . . Kant’s question

³⁸⁷ This story would need to be prefaced by an account of Heidegger’s reevaluation of the merits of post-Kantian German Idealism in the early 1930s. On this topic, see Dahlstrom (2005).

³⁸⁸ It is important to take nearly all of Heidegger’s later recollections with a grain of salt. His political memory is notoriously self-serving, and even his later reflections on his development as a thinker display a surprising amount of inaccuracy and even, perhaps, misrepresentation. See, in particular, van Buren (1994), 5-27.

³⁸⁹ This much, at least, does seem to have been Heidegger’s view even at the time. See Cassirer & Heidegger (1929), 199.

is foreign” to the “posing of the question in *Being and Time*” (KPM 3:xiv). Nevertheless, he insists, the Kantbook can remain an introduction “to the further questionability which still persists concerning the question of being set forth in *Being and Time*” (KPM 3:xv).

In the end, then, Heidegger gave up the high hopes he had once harbored for Kant. But was his encounter with Kant, abortive as it may have been, at least a productive one for Heidegger? Some of his most careful interpreters have concluded emphatically that it was not. In fact, there is a widespread (though by no means universal) tendency in the literature to regard Kant as something that befell Heidegger’s work from without in the mid 1920s. Kisiel, who has done more work than anyone in tracing the genesis and development of Heidegger’s main theme up to *Being and Time*, presents the most developed form of this picture:

We find Heidegger at the end of 1927 thoroughly convinced of being within the reach of the goal of a scientific philosophy. The bold claims induced by the spell of the Kantian transcendental philosophy apparently lead Heidegger to believe that something like a Kantian schematism of human existence is capable of definitively articulating the evasive immediacy of the human situation, that is, of “saying the unsayable.”³⁹⁰

And this, it goes without saying, is then taken as a dereliction of Heidegger’s basic philosophical stance.

To be sure, there is something to be said for the view that Heidegger’s way of speaking at the end of the 1920s is uncharacteristic of his thought as a whole. Although his style remains recognizably his own, it is during this period that Heidegger takes his most meaningful, if still tentative, steps in the direction of a rapprochement with mainstream academic philosophy in Germany. This can make it look as though Heidegger slipped,

³⁹⁰ Kisiel (1993), 457. Cf. van Buren’s general interpretation of the arc of Heidegger’s thought, n. 326 above. And compare both Kisiel and van Buren to Löwith’s original complaints communicated to Heidegger in 1927, discussed above, p. 212.

slowly but surely—and for a “true Heideggerian,” regrettably—into a mode of thinking more appropriate to those of his contemporaries who saw philosophy as a doctrinal, even scientific, enterprise. Although nobody would mistake *Being and Time*, with its boundless proliferation of neologisms, for a rote exercise in school philosophy, it nevertheless may appear, especially in light of Heidegger’s attempts to appropriate Kant’s Schematism in 1928 and 1929, to point to a doctrine of human existence which could stand on its own as a philosophical result. Thus it might be argued that Heidegger was, for a time, at least, bewitched by his own forays into transcendental philosophy, so much so that he lost sight of the urgency of the existential questions that had animated him in the first place. In 1928 he told his students that “the intention of this course is to achieve a philosophical understanding of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, and that means to learn how to philosophize” (PIK 25:1). Heidegger learned how to philosophize from Kant, some of his most sympathetic readers argue, rather too well.

Such a reading of Heidegger’s “lapses” in this period may be helpful in reminding us of the context in which his most systematic work must be read, but it cannot, I think, be the final word on the matter. On the contrary, Heidegger’s dalliance with a Kantian understanding of his own philosophy was no accident; his discovery of Kant at the end of 1925 was not something he merely blustered into.³⁹¹ In fact, the strongest evidence for this

³⁹¹ Cf. Schalow’s criticism of Kisiel’s position (Schalow [2000], 180-182). Engelland also rejects what he calls the “aberration” thesis, although my account has more in common with Schalow’s than Engelland’s (see Engelland [2010], 150-151, 165). That said, I think Schalow underplays the degree to which Kisiel succeeds in offering a compelling genesis story. Kisiel’s intention, as I understand it, at least, is not at all to *reduce* the questioning in *Being and Time* to that of his Freiburg lectures, but to show that one and the same topic undergoes a continuous development throughout. This much I can happily agree with. Of course, one does then wonder what exactly Kisiel’s claim about the incursion of Kantian transcendental discourse amounts to, and it seems to me that Schalow is on solid ground in resisting this move. More generally, this question is hard to separate from the current debate, prompted in part by Sheehan’s pointed plea for Heideggerians to abandon talk of the question of being altogether, over what the “real” topic of Heidegger’s thought was.

is precisely that which is so often cited against it: the success Heidegger had in transforming his thinking into something uncannily Kantian. Heidegger's Kant may be idiosyncratic, but in the course of his attempt at an interpretation we find Heidegger speaking from and for Kant's own position more convincingly than in his sustained interpretations of Aristotle (in the early 1920s) and Nietzsche (at the end of the 1930s). The proof, I think, is in the pudding: no thinker before or after Kant was able to enthrall Heidegger so thoroughly. And for just this reason, the notion of a Kantian spell insinuating itself into Heidegger's thought from without should be entertained only with deep suspicion. It is certainly not justifiable, in my opinion, to regard either Heidegger's careful engagement with Kant or the Kantian reinterpretation of his own thought with which he experimented as mere waystations along Heidegger's true path. Indeed, insofar as it was always essential to Heidegger to plant his thinking firmly—nearly seamlessly, in fact—in the tradition in which he stood, it could well be argued that precisely here, as nowhere else, did Heidegger most nearly attain what he had originally set out to do.

Taking Kant Back from the Neokantians

As he does elsewhere, in *Being and Time* Heidegger reserves some of his highest praise for Kant, whom he describes as “the first and only person who has traveled any stretch of the investigative path that leads in the direction of the dimension of temporality” (BT 23). But what he gives to Kant with one hand he just as quickly takes back with the other, insisting

Heidegger himself put little stake in such questions and was happy to change the terminology surrounding his thought, sometimes systematically and on short notice, as Kisiel's meticulous research into Heidegger's development in the 1920s has decisively demonstrated. Sheehan concludes, “In the current paradigm ‘being’ has become a ridiculous metaphysical caricature, so freighted with confusion and absurdity that it cannot serve as a marker for Heidegger's focal topic” (Sheehan [2001], 189; cf. Sheehan [2011], 42-52). If this is correct, and I think it probably is, it certainly would suffice for Heidegger himself to move on. And in this case Kisiel's recasting of the topic might not be a bad place to start reimagining what Heidegger's questioning is supposed to be all about.

that despite his efforts “insight into the problematic of temporality had to remain denied to Kant” (BT 24). Over the next several years, however, Heidegger continued to warm to Kant. How far he goes in this direction is a matter of some debate. Some have gone so far as to say that by 1929 Heidegger had retracted his chief criticisms of Kant from 1927: that Kant neglected the question of being and failed to offer a preliminary existential analytic.³⁹² This, I think, is too much: we are talking here about a matter of degree. At any rate, Heidegger’s chief and most famous claim—that Kant “shrank back” in the face of his near-discovery of the reliance of all being upon time—remains unchanged from 1927 to 1929.³⁹³ We can say only that the character of this “shrinking back” must have taken on an increasingly dramatic significance for Heidegger, for he found that Kant had approached *even closer* to the existential problematic than he had originally expected, and he came to find that Kant’s “mistakes” were considerably subtler than he had imagined in *Being and Time*.³⁹⁴

Despite his growing appreciation for Kant, Heidegger’s interpretation of him was never carried out with the aim of achieving a scholastically correct exhibition of Kantian doctrine. Indeed, Heidegger insists that we strive to understand Kant “better than he understood himself,” a nod to Schleiermacher and the hermeneutic tradition.³⁹⁵ This has nothing to do with Kant’s having been confused, or with the task of distinguishing and clarifying the different motives which were operative in his thought. Rather, it means that we must attempt to trace Kant’s questions back to the phenomena he was dealing with and on that basis retrieve the problematic with which he found himself faced. For Heidegger,

³⁹² See Engelland (2010), 157. Heidegger’s criticisms are from BT 24.

³⁹³ BT 23; KPM 3:160. But see the precedents for this claim even in 1926 at L 21:406.

³⁹⁴ That said, we should keep in mind that the destructive project announced in *Being and Time* was already designed to lead to precisely this sort of result: a gradual convergence of the existential problematic and the Kantian one.

³⁹⁵ See Gadamer (1960), 192-197.

we understand Kant not only when we grasp the tenets of his theory, but when we recover the basic questions to which his theories were supposed to provide answers.

As we have seen, however, we can only approach the phenomenal basis of Kant's problematic if we work within a guiding indication which will keep us on the path to the things themselves. Thus Heidegger's hermeneutics is really a moment of his existential phenomenology, and it is why, even if *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is not, strictly speaking, a destructive text, it still must be read with an eye to *Being and Time's* formal indication of existence. This is why Heidegger says that understanding Kant better than Kant did himself is equivalent to recognizing through the study of his thought a content into which we ourselves can grow (PIK 25:4). We grow into Kant's thought precisely because we recognize that even the attempt to indicate our own existence only implicates us in the history of philosophy, for which Kant is, for us, the key. In this way, the apparently dry, scholastic question of the interpretation of the first *Critique* provides us with the proximate historical content with which we can first begin to come to grips with ourselves. As Heidegger says, "It is of no use to **repeat** [*nachzusprechen*] Kantian concepts and propositions or to paraphrase them with others. We must come to the point where we speak them **with** him [*sie mit ihm zusprechen*], within and out of the same perspective" (PIK 25:5). To speak *with* Kant is not just to convince ourselves that, after all, he was right. It is to hear in Kant's doctrines what we had wanted to say from the start, only now more clearly and decisively.

In comparison with typical philological standards, then, Heidegger's reading of Kant is freely and openly a revisionist one. Interestingly, it bears many similarities to the best-known "revisionist" reading of Kant in twentieth-century Anglophone philosophy: that of

Henry Allison.³⁹⁶ Both argue that Kant has been systematically misunderstood within their traditions, and both locate the source of that misunderstanding in the kind of separation Kant's interpreters have claimed to find between appearances and things in themselves. In fact Heidegger actually anticipates Allison's turn away from the "two-object" view in several important respects,³⁹⁷ although there has been some confusion about this in the literature.³⁹⁸ This is all the more important to emphasize given that (1) Heidegger is generally known as an enemy of "epistemological" readings of Kant and (2) Allison's view is the one view contemporary Kant scholars will be most likely to associate with such a moniker.

For Heidegger, as for Allison, the expressions "appearance"³⁹⁹ and "thing in itself" refer not to different classes of objects, but to one and the same object, considered under two different aspects. As Heidegger says, "The being 'in the appearance' is the same being as the being in itself, indeed, precisely only this" (KPM 3:31). As Heidegger understands this point, it is that beings can only stand against us as objects because our cognition is finite: as objects, or *Gegenstände*, beings press against us, as it were, with a force of their own. But the conditions of our receptivity to this force necessarily conceal aspects of the

³⁹⁶ Obviously, Allison's reading is "revisionist" only in that it starts out from a totally different interpretive place than does the reading of Kant that had come to dominate twentieth-century Anglophone philosophy. In any substantive notion of "revisionist," however, it is clearly less so than the alternatives offered by Heidegger, on the one side, and the tradition following Strawson, on the other. The latter sort of revisionism is sharply defended by Jonathan Bennett: "I make no apology," he says at the very outset of his work, "for fighting Kant tooth and nail" (Bennett [1966], viii; see also Bennett [1968], 340).

³⁹⁷ This is noted in Han-Pile (2005), 85.

³⁹⁸ William Vallicella, for example, goes so far as to maintain that the phenomenological conception of the phenomenon has its closest counterpart in the idea of a thing in itself as an *ens rationis*. This is to stand the debate between Heidegger and the Neokantians completely on its head. See Vallicella (1983), 37-39.

³⁹⁹ Heidegger recognizes, correctly, I think, two senses of "appearance" operative in the first *Critique*: appearance as the "undetermined object of an empirical intuition" (CPR A20/B34) and as the phenomenon which finite cognition renders apparent. See KPM 3:31-32; also n. 57 above.

object, as well. Thus Heidegger offers the following interpretation of the Kantian expressions “behind the appearance” and “mere appearance”:

This “behind” cannot mean that the thing in itself would still stand in opposition to finite cognition as such or, likewise, that it would not be “fully” grasped, its essence floating around, yet sometimes becoming visible indirectly. Rather, the expression “behind the appearance” expresses the fact that finite cognition, as finite, necessarily conceals at the same time, indeed, conceals in advance in such a way that the “thing in itself” is not only imperfectly accessible, but essentially, and as such, inaccessible to cognition. . . . Accordingly, the “mere” in the phrase “mere appearance” is not a restriction and diminishment of the actuality of the thing, but only the negation of the being being cognized infinitely in human cognition. (KPM 3:33-34)⁴⁰⁰

Thus Kant’s recourse to the idea of a thing in itself is no relic of traditional metaphysics, nor does it establish an unknowable shadow world behind the veil of appearances. “The Copernican turn dissolves real beings into subjective representations so little that it rather clears up, for the first time, the possibility of access to objects themselves” (PIK 25:56). It does not divide objects into two groups and deny that we can cognize those that fall into one of these; instead, “the difference between the **thing in itself** and **appearance** always refers to things themselves” (PIK 25:98).⁴⁰¹ It is the thing itself that appears to us, and we cognize it precisely insofar as it does.

Now, it does not much serve our purpose here to venture into a deeper comparison of Heidegger’s and Allison’s readings or to chart out their many differences. Instead, we must turn our attention to the “epistemological” reading of Kant which Heidegger *does*

⁴⁰⁰ Thus Heidegger agrees with Allison, *pace* Guyer, that Kant need not *prove* that we can have no cognition of things in themselves: “It is therefore a misunderstanding of the meaning of the thing in itself if we believe we must prove the impossibility of a cognition of the thing in itself by means of positivistic critique. Such attempted proofs take the thing in itself to be something which is supposed to be an object within finite cognition in general, but whose actual inaccessibility can and must be proven” (KPM 3:34).

⁴⁰¹ Above all, Heidegger says, we must constantly resist the inclination “to turn **the transcendental ontological distinction between thing in itself and appearance into an empirical ontic distinction**” (PIK 25:159).

want to reject and try to understand what his own “metaphysical” reading then amounts to. Indeed, the epistemological reading rejected by Heidegger has nothing to do with the epistemological reading endorsed by Allison. “*Erkenntnistheorie*,” generally translated as “epistemology,” refers for Heidegger to the Neokantian program of the critique of cognition. To begin to get a sense of Heidegger’s stance towards Neokantian *Erkenntnistheorie*, consider the following from the fall of 1925:

When I see this lamp, I do not apprehend sense-impressions but the lamp itself and the light; even less do I apprehend sense-impressions of red and gold. No, I apprehend the grey wall itself. Nor am I related to concepts. Even less do I see something like an image in my consciousness—an image of the wall, which I then relate to the wall itself in order thereby to slip out of my consciousness, in which I am allegedly imprisoned. No, it is the wall itself that my looking intends. This does not seem to be a particularly deep insight, and in fact it is not. But it becomes a crucial insight in the face of the erroneous constructions of epistemology. Epistemology snaps to the ready, armed with a theory, and though blind to the phenomenon of cognition, goes ahead and explains cognition—instead of leaving its theory at home and for once starting by examining what underlies its “explanation.” (L 21:100-101)⁴⁰²

We need not worry, for the moment, whether Heidegger’s indictment of Neokantianism—Heidegger names Rickert here, which helps to explain his general dismissiveness⁴⁰³—holds any water. The root error that he identifies is the general blindness of *Erkenntnistheorie* to the things themselves; it assumes it already knows *what* cognition is and works backwards from that assumption to its conditions of possibility, i.e., to its “explanation” of cognition.

But what, Heidegger wants to know, *is* this cognition which Rickert and others are apparently in such a hurry to explain? Kant’s virtue, Heidegger thinks, is precisely his willingness to make this cognition itself into a *problem*, a problem which Heidegger identifies simply as the problem of *ontological* cognition, or, better yet, the problem of

⁴⁰² Sheehan follows Moser’s typescript in parts of the passage, so the correspondence to the *Gesamtausgabe* edition is not exact.

⁴⁰³ See n. 235 above.

metaphysics—hence the title of the Kantbook. But the opposition between metaphysics and epistemology implied by the title is not the opposition which is familiar to us today. Instead, Heidegger means to indicate, rightly or wrongly, that Kant, unlike the Neokantians, is willing to question in the direction of *problematizing* cognition through a phenomenological encounter with it, rather than merely explaining it—externally, as it were, from the mere fact of its existence.

Heidegger's concern is not just about Rickert here. In fact, the Marburg School is supposed to be implicated, as well. Here we approach a decisive array of historiographical questions: What, exactly, was Kant's relationship to the tradition which he apparently transformed so radically through his "Copernican turn"? And to what degree does the Marburg School's insistence, following Cohen, upon the "fact of science" represent an authentically "Kantian" development in idealist thought? In fact, the first question merely leads out onto the second.

At the bottom of Heidegger's disagreement with the Neokantians is the question of the extent to which we should see Kant as posing a basically new philosophical problem which would mark a decisive break with the metaphysical tradition. Certainly Kant's talk of a "Copernican revolution" in philosophy encourages the view that he is posing a new question altogether, or at least posing an old one in a light which is new enough to transform it irrevocably. Windelband⁴⁰⁴ and Rickert⁴⁰⁵ certainly present the project and lesson of the Kantian philosophy as novel and revisionist, respectively. And at the

⁴⁰⁴ Cf. Windelband's characterization of Kant's significance within the context of Enlightenment thought: "The preeminent position of the Königsberg philosopher rests upon the fact that he took up into himself the various motives of thought in the literature of the Enlightenment, and by their reciprocal supplementation matured a completely new conception of the problem and procedure of philosophy. . . . But it was in connection with the difficulties of the **problem of knowledge** that he wrought out from all these foundational elements the work which gave him his peculiar significance" (Windelband [1892], 532).

⁴⁰⁵ See p. 190 above.

beginning of his review of the Kantbook, Cassirer, keenly sensing what is at stake, frames his review in terms of the “new orientation” at which Kant had arrived in his 1772 letter to Herz: “Now it was no longer a matter of adding a further system of metaphysics to those already on hand—to find, that is, a new answer to questions which had long existed.” The path of metaphysics now

had to change because its goal had moved to another position—because the ‘object’ which it wants to know and to which it accords had shifted. . . . The shift contained a new view, not only of what is known and what is knowable, but of the nature, task, and basic function of knowledge itself.⁴⁰⁶

Heidegger, whose interest in Kant depends crucially, of course, on his occupying a definite place in the Western philosophical tradition, does not want to make this move.⁴⁰⁷ Kant, he insists, occupies a central place in the tradition of metaphysics stretching back to Plato and Aristotle (see KPM 3:6-8; PIK 23:13-15). He does not deny that Kant wants to *problematize* metaphysics, but he sees Kant as working through the positive possibilities inherent in that tradition (PIK 25:101), rather than overthrowing it entirely and assuming a new standpoint. As Heidegger puts it, Kant shows that metaphysics as an *ontic* science is impossible (PIK 25:61). Thus he consistently challenges what he takes to be the popular conception of the Copernican revolution to which Kant alludes, a conception encouraged by the Neokantians: shifting the question of philosophy away from real beings and onto our

⁴⁰⁶ Cassirer (1931), 131-132. He goes on to note that it is only at this point that “the battle of interpretations breaks out”; I suspect that Heidegger would already object to his framing of the problem, although he would not, of course, deny the importance of Kant’s having attained a new perspective from which he might address an old problem.

⁴⁰⁷ On this point, at least, Allison appears to stand closer to the Neokantians than he does to Heidegger. By casting Kant’s approach as an adoption of a new method, rather than as an (initially, at least) substantive attack on his predecessors, Allison seems to be encouraging the idea that Kant is posing a new kind of question altogether, rather than simply offering a new answer to an old one.

cognition of them, as if the “appearances” were again beings to which we could comport ourselves ontically.⁴⁰⁸

Symbolic Form and the Fact of Science

It is questionable, of course, whether Cassirer, or any of the Neokantians, for that matter, should be saddled with a bare acceptance of the fact of cognition. Cohen had already insisted, after all, that *Erkenntnistheorie* be understood in the first instance as *Erkenntniskritik*.⁴⁰⁹ From early on, the whole point of Marburg “epistemology” was to effect a deeper understanding of modern science by tracing the transcendental conditions for its very existence. And nothing essential changed on that score as the project broadened its scope in the hands of Natorp and Cassirer. Nobody familiar with Cassirer’s monumental work on symbolic forms, drawing from an astonishing array of historical sources,⁴¹⁰ would dare assert that he simply took the existence of cognition for granted.

Of course, Heidegger himself was deeply familiar with, and very much appreciative of, Cassirer’s work on cultural formation, having reviewed the second volume of the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* in 1928.⁴¹¹ In his review, Heidegger praises Cassirer’s functionalization of the basic concepts of mythology, going so far as to say that against naturalistic and sociological explanations of myth Cassirer’s critique is “thoroughly unambiguous and devastating” (RC 3:264). But Heidegger remains unconvinced of the philosophical foundations of Cassirer’s approach: “The orientation to the Neokantian problem of consciousness is of such little help that it actually keeps us from gaining a

⁴⁰⁸ See Cassirer & Heidegger (1929), 194.

⁴⁰⁹ Cohen (1883), 6.

⁴¹⁰ See n. 425 below.

⁴¹¹ This volume is also the subject of a footnote in *Being and Time* in which Heidegger attempts to register Cassirer’s acknowledgement—expressed, as Heidegger understood it, at least, at a 1923 lecture—of the necessity of an existential analytic (BT 51n). At Davos Cassirer would deny this necessity in no uncertain terms (Cassirer & Heidegger [1929], 205).

foothold in the center of the problem” (RC 3:266). Beginning with a chaos of sensations, and then showing how such sensations are given form through a basic mode of comportment to the world, is not sufficient unless the philosophical access to the starting point, i.e., the sensations themselves, is itself placed at the center of the problematic of symbolic forms (see RC 3:268).

We must suppose neither that Cassirer, despite some of his formulations, descends into crude sensationalism, nor that this is the true basis of Heidegger’s dissatisfaction. Indeed, Cassirer freely speaks of “objectivization” as the process by which “mere impressions are reworked into specific, formed representations.”⁴¹² But Cassirer’s talk of “impressions” or “sensations” is fully functionalized here: Cassirer is indicating the evanescent “given” which we symbolically transform just as soon as we would try to describe it. This is something Heidegger, in the wake of his engagement with Natorp, understood only all too well. In fact, Cassirer’s debt to Natorp is massive and meticulously acknowledged. In many ways the encounter between Heidegger and Cassirer at Davos would play out as a repetition of Heidegger’s encounter with Natorp a decade earlier, right down to the attempts by Natorp and Cassirer to pull phenomenology into the orbit of Neokantianism and Heidegger’s stubborn attempts, in each case, to resist them. But this time the stakes were historical right from the start: Who, the audience, would want to know, was the proper heir to Kant? Was it Cassirer, who had always worn his Kantianism on his sleeve, or Heidegger, who had only just lately staked out his claim here?

Neither Cassirer nor Heidegger harbored any illusions about the revisions to the letter of the Kantian philosophy that their interpretations would require. For each of them

⁴¹² Cassirer (1925), 29. Later on the same page, he speaks of “the ways in which the diversity of sensory impressions can be synthesized into spiritual unities.”

the basic question concerned the animating drive behind Kant's work as a whole. For Cassirer, Kant's decisive contribution to the history of philosophy lay in his identification of the principle of unity with the side of thought and his consequent location of multiplicity on the side of matter: through the active formation of matter we come to regard it as an expression of spontaneous thought. Cassirer's own philosophy of symbolic forms was designed to take this insight and apply it with a completely universal scope to the objective cultural world. To see the latter as a myriad collection of symbolic forms means to understand all the various aspects of reality as expressions of a unitary principle, but, at the same time, to keep in view the peculiarity of each of these formations. This sounds Hegelian at first blush (and indeed it has been claimed that the Neokantians were every bit as indebted to Hegel as they were to Kant), but Cassirer sees no reason to admit the actuality of the synthetic universals (though such representations may be given problematically to us) which would make possible the simplicity of such cognition.⁴¹³ Unlike the Hegelian view, then, the "critical" view, i.e., Cassirer's own, "raises the problem of a unity which from the outset makes no claim to simplicity."⁴¹⁴

The history of philosophy is in large part a dialectic between the opposed tendencies of the unitary principle of being, on the one hand, and the multiplicity of phenomena, on the other.⁴¹⁵ In other words, philosophy has always traced, throughout its development, the internal tension between the moments of form and matter of cognition. When Kant identified thought with form and intuition with matter, he was on the right

⁴¹³ Very roughly: while Hegel remains faithful to the early modern ideal of completely intuitive cognition as governing us, Cassirer follows Kant in grounding human cognition as a whole in discursivity. See Poma (1988), 77-78 on Cohen's original rejection of Hegelian thought on basically this same basis.

⁴¹⁴ Cassirer (1923), 95.

⁴¹⁵ See Cassirer (1929), 1.

track. But he himself was not able to see far enough here. By trying to isolate space and time as “forms of intuition” he tried to meet his own deepest insight halfway. To complete Kant’s revolution in philosophy, it remains only to thoroughly relativize the notions of form and matter in the case of cognition: what counts as form at one level can always be considered as matter at a higher one.⁴¹⁶

Cassirer’s point of departure is Natorp’s insight that the form-matter continuum might be fruitfully employed in deconstructing the mind-body problem that had preoccupied modern philosophy and which was positively torturing the emerging, still ill-defined field of psychology. According to Natorp, the investigation of psychic phenomena should not be taken to be an inquiry into a region of phenomena separate but ontologically equal to that of material objects, but should rather be seen as giving an inquiry into one selfsame manifold of phenomena a different, indeed reversed, direction.⁴¹⁷ The basic question of psychology should be not *What kinds of things are psychic processes?* but rather *What is the principle of construction which constitutes objects in the world while at the same time manifesting the basic principles of thought?* Properly conceived, then, the mind-body problem is not really about relating two separate entities, nor is it even about relating two distinct sets of phenomena which appear *prima facie* incommensurable; it is, rather, precisely the universal problem of the constitution of objectivity in general: what it is that allows objects to be objects for us. And this problem only attains its true form when we distinguish *two* possible directions of inquiry ranging over just a *single* set of constituting

⁴¹⁶ Cassirer (1929), 9-10; cf. Cassirer (1923), 98. The complete story here is considerably more complicated; to trace it out fully would effectively be to tell the story of Marburg Neokantianism. Suffice it for now to say that Cassirer is following Cohen and Natorp in considering the specific difference between forms of intuition and forms of thought to be inessential—in the final analysis, a precritical relic—for the deeper significance of the Kantian project. Heidegger, of course, will vehemently defend the prerogative of intuition to resist such relativization.

⁴¹⁷ See n. 268 above.

phenomena: forward, to the constituted objects; backward, to the psychic processes (which must not be conceived naturalistically, of course, in which case they would, once again, be constituted objects) by which they are constituted.

Thus we can think of Natorp as pointing out that the line running from the psychic to the objective can be traversed in both directions—and *must* be if the science of objective things is to be completed, or, better, complemented, by a scientific psychology. The line is infinite in both directions, however: the ultimate objective representation of reality remains a scientific ideal, on the one hand, while the basic principle of subjectivity remains forever unknown to us, on the other. Neither end of the line, despite the assumptions of the naturalists (who would take the objective as a simply given principle of explanation) and the phenomenologists (who claim an immediate access to subjectivity as such), can function as a starting point of inquiry.

Cassirer's gambit is to introduce a pluralist element into Natorp's schema. If Natorp's method can be represented by a single line extending infinitely in both directions, Cassirer's can be represented by a series of lines which are dispersed in one direction through a potentially infinite refraction and which asymptotically converge in the opposite direction towards an ever-receding point of unification. The fatal flaw in Natorp's method,⁴¹⁸ according to Cassirer, is that he takes just one avenue of cultural formation, namely, that of scientific cognition, to be the ultimate expression of the human spirit, instead of recognizing the irreducible "polydimensionality," as Cassirer puts it, of the

⁴¹⁸ This may be characterizing Cassirer's attitude too strongly. As Cassirer describes it, Natorp's own intellectual development was pushing him towards this very realization, and only his death prevented him from completing his project along the lines of a philosophy of symbolic forms (Cassirer [1929], 54).

latter.⁴¹⁹ The task of the philosophy of symbolic forms is to pursue *each* of these lines—again, following Natorp’s lead—in both directions, however far it is permitted us to be able to trace them. Philosophy must learn to acknowledge the irreducible complexity of the diversity of symbolic forms and restrain itself from the temptation to reduce this complex system to a single principle;⁴²⁰ instead, it must present the various spheres of cultural formations in accord with the principles they immanently manifest. Hence it deals, in sober Kantian fashion, in analytic universals, even though these universals are finally understood to be diverse expressions of the *one* human spirit which forms itself in all of them. It is not given to us to be able to conceive with intuitive clarity the transition to the many from the one; rather, the many gives itself to us precisely as an inconceivably achieved unification of the human spirit in a cultural world. This is what remains, in Cassirer’s thought, of the “fact of science” of the Marburg School. “I start from the objectivity of the symbolic form,” Cassirer says, “because here the inconceivable has been done.”⁴²¹

The inconceivable achievement of culture, in all its panoramic grandeur, falls back on us as an infinite task which we must take up one stone at a time. It is demanded that we project the convergence of the refracted lines of culture at a common origin. To be sure, this point of origin always recedes from us and forever eludes the critical grasp. Invoking Kleist, Cassirer calls it the “paradise of immediacy,”⁴²² and indeed it is nowhere to be found in this world. But only by retaining the reference to a singular, though refracted, formative force do we render the diversity of cultural formations intelligible to us as a single world of

⁴¹⁹ Cassirer (1929), 54. This is the source of Cassirer’s incessant warnings about pursuing the Marburg project in too theoretical a manner; see Cassirer (1923), 69, 77-78, 82, 111; Cassirer (1929), 13, 40, 48, 57. Still, he never gives up the idea that the mathematical natural sciences serve as a paradigm in this regard (Cassirer & Heidegger [1929], 194).

⁴²⁰ Cassirer (1923), 95.

⁴²¹ Cassirer & Heidegger (1929), 205.

⁴²² See Cassirer (1923), 113; Cassirer (1929), 40; Cassirer (1930-1931), 857-858.

which we are a part. This guarantees that we are ultimately dealing with one constellation of problems in philosophy, rather than discrete regions of beings that would be best left to localized sciences. And this is not all. The principles of the analysis of the world and of our participation in the world are in deep agreement, and indeed this is why the activity of the philosopher is itself, like any other part of culture, productive and reflective of a symbolic form. All cultural activity is determined by the need to appropriate what appears to be merely passively *received* and in doing so to stamp it with the seal of the human spirit. To be sure, we can only understand the “content” of our reference to a unified human spirit *by means of* its actual manifestations, but this is precisely why the philosophy of symbolic forms is an integral part of this spiritual process: the critical cultural philosopher gives transparency to the human spirit in its cultural formations.

Thus, with all their inner diversity, the various products of culture—language, scientific knowledge, myth, art, religion—become parts of a single great problem-complex: they become multiple efforts, all directed toward the one goal of transforming the passive world of mere **impressions**, in which the spirit seems at first imprisoned, into a world that is pure **expression** of the human spirit.⁴²³

Thus while the philosophy of symbolic forms can never reduce the rich panoply of culture to one spiritual principle, nor paint in a single picture the precise likeness of the human spirit made manifest on earth, its diverse analyses nevertheless gain their orientation from their infinitely distant grounding in the unity such a principle would provide.⁴²⁴

⁴²³ Cassirer (1923), 80-81. Cf. Cassirer (1923), 91: “The achievement of each [function of the human spirit] must be measured by itself, and not by the standards and aims of any other—and only at the end of this examination can we ask whether and how all these forms of conceiving the world and the I are compatible with one another—whether, though they are not copies of one and the same self-subsistent ‘thing,’ they do not complement one another to form a single totality and a unified system.”

⁴²⁴ As Andrea Poma beautifully puts the point with respect to Cohen’s thought, the task of the critical philosophy consists in “the defense of the finite, loyalty towards it, but also tension in the direction of infinity, which is still considered a limit and task of the finite” (Poma [1988], 53).

There are positive and negative conditions for succeeding in this project. Positively, we need both the access to the expressions of the human spirit, in all their diversity and richness,⁴²⁵ as well as the intellectual and practical curiosity to seriously engage with them. Negatively, we must cultivate the restraint that is necessary to overcome the alluring prospect of cracking the secrets of the human spirit all at one blow. Our curiosity in the face of cultural diversity must be balanced by a sober respect for that very diversity, and we must constantly keep in mind the always still infinite distance that stands between us and Kleist's inaccessible paradise. The desire to leap over this distance represents a genuine philosophical tendency, but giving into it is the supreme danger into which we could fall. We must content ourselves with less:

True, the question of what, apart from these spiritual functions, constitutes absolute reality, the question of what the "thing in itself" may be in **this** sense, remains unanswered, except that more and more we learn to recognize it as a fallacy in formulation, an intellectual phantasm.⁴²⁶

The mistake of life philosophy—and, by extension, the existentialism of Heidegger which represents its culmination—is precisely to press this question, to insist on recapturing this immediacy, where in fact there is nothing actually there to be recovered. The error of Bergson, Cassirer tells us, is to see cultural symbols as falsifications of the inner flux through which concrete life is constituted.⁴²⁷ But this is precisely the problem of all life philosophy: cultural *formation* would only be *falsification* if there were another standard, immanent to life itself, by which culture could be measured. This, however, is a fantasy. No sooner is life lived than it forms itself, and, crucially, this is no less true when we attempt to

⁴²⁵ For Cassirer himself, this access was made possible by his association with the Warburg Library in Hamburg, whose vast collection provided much of the empirical impetus for his work in the early 1920s. See Gordon (2010), 19-22.

⁴²⁶ Cassirer (1923), 111.

⁴²⁷ Cassirer (1929), 36-37.

meditatively direct our attention to life itself than it is when we casually give our attention entirely over to the objects of our experience. After all, “life cannot apprehend itself by **remaining** absolutely within itself. It must give itself form; for it is precisely by this ‘otherness’ of form that it gains its ‘visibility,’ if not its reality.”⁴²⁸ Rousseau’s nostalgia for a simple life to which we could return, prior to all culture, expresses the genuine inescapability of the reference to a unitary human spirit, but it does not provide a road upon which we could travel to learn the hidden truth of human existence.

Hence [philosophy] has no other solution than to reverse the **direction** of inquiry. Instead of taking the road back, it must attempt to continue forward. If all culture is manifested in the creation of specific image-worlds, of specific symbolic forms, the aim of philosophy is not to go behind all these creations, but rather to understand and elucidate their basic formative principle. It is solely through awareness of this principle that the content of life acquires its true form.⁴²⁹

If the life philosophers want to approach the facticity of life, even they have no choice but to look for it in the cultural formations into which it has poured itself out. *Pace* Rousseau, culture is not man’s chains but the expression of his innermost freedom.

Davos

The second Davos *Hochschulekurse* was held from mid March to early April 1929. It was the second installment in an annual conference series designed to foster intellectual exchange across international borders—especially the borders separating the belligerents of the Great War from one another. The 1928 conference had included Tillich and Einstein among its speakers, and the hope was that a discussion between Cassirer and Heidegger would headline an equally successful conference in 1929.⁴³⁰ It certainly succeeded in attracting

⁴²⁸ Cassirer (1929), 39. Again, we can see the decisive influence of Natorp. See p. 184 above.

⁴²⁹ Cassirer (1923), 113.

⁴³⁰ Gordon (2010), 91-94.

some of the brightest young philosophical minds of the time: Carnap, Fink, Bollnow, Lévinas, and Ritter were all in attendance.⁴³¹ The course would immediately bear fruit on Heidegger's side: after returning from Davos, he reports that in three intensive weeks of work he had written out the manuscript that would become the Kantbook.⁴³²

The discussion between Heidegger and Cassirer at Davos was recorded in summary fashion by Bollnow and Ritter. In the course of the discussion we find, as we would expect, anticipations of the main themes of the Kantbook and Cassirer's review of it. We also find on display the characteristic charity and patience of Cassirer, in contrast to the equally characteristic stubbornness of Heidegger. For all that, the discussion itself was basically amiable, not combative; it was marked by Cassirer's subtle and not-so-subtle⁴³³ attempts to reconcile their positions, in opposition to Heidegger's attempts to clarify their differences. To collapse these different strategies into the psychological idiosyncrasies of the respective thinkers would be to miss an important philosophical point: Cassirer was already committed to the view that both his own view and Heidegger's could be understood as different nodes in the cultural constellation of symbolic forms. This does not mean, strictly speaking, that there is available to us a universal standpoint under which both would be subsumable, but it does at least require that we see them in light of the unity such a standpoint would provide as a *focus imaginarius*. For Heidegger, by contrast, the decision between his way of thinking and Cassirer's must always come down to precisely that: a decision. In the clarification that leads up to the decisive moment, to be sure, we must see

⁴³¹ See Gordon (2010), 98-109. Michael Friedman, of course, spends quite a bit of time analyzing the significance of Davos for the young Carnap in Friedman (2000).

⁴³² See von Hermann (1990), 220. Heidegger's three lectures from Davos are themselves no longer extant, and his brief outline of them (DL 3:271-273) does little more than indicate the chief points familiar from his WS 1925-1926 and WS 1927-1928 lecture courses and the Kantbook.

⁴³³ Take, for example, Cassirer's (likely jesting) claim that Heidegger was, despite himself, a Neokantian (Cassirer & Heidegger [1929], 193).

ourselves as being on the brink of saying the same thing. But the appropriation of the other's viewpoint is always an existential one, which is to say that even in appropriating it we at the same time make it our own and assume responsibility for it.

Looking back on Davos, most interpreters have read the apparently academic debate about the interpretation of Kant as the undercard for the deeper clash of worldviews between Heidegger and Cassirer.⁴³⁴ Certainly, there is some truth to this, and throughout the disputation itself we find apparently scholastic concerns immediately overlaid with claims of broader methodological, philosophical, and even cultural significance, and undoubtedly this is how the audience experienced it at the time. But for the chief protagonists, the question of Kant himself was by no means subordinate to their other concerns. Obviously this was true for Cassirer, who, as a Neokantian, was fighting a losing battle against Europe's waywardness from its Enlightenment heritage. If Kant himself were to abandon Cassirer in this time of need, there would be precious little ground left for him to stand on. And although Cassirer must have felt as though he were on the defense, in reality Heidegger's situation was just as imperiled. After all, Heidegger's entire project in *Being and Time* depended on his now being able to demonstrate its Kantian provenance. If he were to fail on this point, as apparently he would soon enough decide that he had, he would have to begin to countenance an entirely new set of possibilities for his philosophy in the decade to come.

For all these reasons, it strikes me as inadvisable to allow the discussion of Davos to detach itself too quickly from the question of Kant. One tendency, which Peter Gordon has capably criticized, is to immediately transpose the intellectual debate into a clash of

⁴³⁴ See, e.g., Luft & Capeillères (2010), 61.

cultures.⁴³⁵ While the cultural and philosophical questions may well, of course, illuminate one another, Gordon is absolutely right to resist any facile reduction of the one to the other. Gordon's own framework for understanding the debate, however, suffers from another kind of reduction. Encouraged, I think, by Cassirer himself,⁴³⁶ Gordon extracts Kant himself from the main objective of the dispute. As he understands it, the encounter at Davos ultimately turns on the claims staked there to the human being's *spontaneity*, on the one hand (Cassirer), and her *thrownness*, on the other (Heidegger).⁴³⁷ This interpretation immediately runs into two problems. First, the opposition between spontaneity and thrownness does not really capture the contrast between Cassirer and Heidegger particularly well. It is true, of course, that Heidegger held that the freedom of the human being cannot consist in starting over from scratch, since she only comes into what is authentically her own by retrieving⁴³⁸ the possibilities which have been handed down by the tradition in which she stands.⁴³⁹ But the relation the human being has to this tradition is not that of being absorbed by it, the way Kierkegaard imagined the Hegelian professor dissolving himself into absolute knowing.⁴⁴⁰ Rather, we must reach the point at which we

⁴³⁵ See Gordon (2010), 3-4.

⁴³⁶ I have in mind Cassirer's retrospective indictment of the idea of thrownness (see Cassirer [1946], 292-293).

⁴³⁷ See Gordon (2010), 86, 214. Gordon concludes his work with the suggestion that the debate between Heidegger and Cassirer represents an irresolvable philosophical antinomy between ineradicable conceptions of the human being as receptive, on the one hand, and spontaneous, on the other: "To force its resolution," he says, "would be to deny what may very well be an essential tension of the human condition" (Gordon [2010], 364). Taylor Carman, too, sees thrownness, at least, as the key: it was the one Heideggerian concept for which Heidegger himself sought in vain for a precedent in the Kantian philosophy (Carman [2010], 139-142).

⁴³⁸ The German word here is "*Wiederholung*," "repeating" or "retrieving." To *repeat* a possibility, however, has nothing to do with a "rote" repetition, any more than "destroying" the ontological tradition is at bottom a negative, critical enterprise. In fact, *Destruktion* and *Wiederholung* are closely linked in Heidegger's thought. See Kisiel (1972), 196.

⁴³⁹ Above all, this means that one does not confront the tradition in which one stands as an external object which confronts one, but rather as containing one's *own* possibilities of existing. Gadamer constantly emphasizes this point. See Gadamer (1965), esp. 237-240; also Gadamer (1955), 45; Gadamer (1971), 288.

⁴⁴⁰ Heidegger himself privately joked with Jaspers about his Hegelian students. Having tried to express in a seminar just how paradoxical and question-worthy the Hegelian thesis of the identity-in-difference of being

can speak *with* the tradition, and this is only possible on the basis of a decision that invariably falls back upon us. The human being's retrieval of the tradition is inseparable from her decision to be herself or not,⁴⁴¹ and nothing external to herself can compel her to answer one way or another. If it is at all acceptable to characterize Heidegger's philosophy as one of "thrownness," it is not at all a thrownness which is a simple counter-concept to Neokantian "spontaneity."

Second, and relatedly, at Davos both Cassirer and Heidegger wanted to appropriate the tradition of the Enlightenment. In other words, it was a fight for Kant's legacy. Neglecting or downplaying this leads to a seriously distorted view of the stakes of the debate. Consider Gordon's description of Cassirer's predicament at Davos: "The great disadvantage for Cassirer was that his philosophy remained steeped in the language and the values of the German Idealist tradition. But by the middle of the 1920s the Idealist heritage was losing its power to inspire."⁴⁴² But if this was an advantage on Heidegger's side, it was not one that he ever turned to his favor, either at Davos or in the Kantbook. And the reason for this is simple: far from losing his relevancy, Kant was inspiring the phenomenological movement to a greater degree than ever before. In 1925 Husserl confirmed to Cassirer that he had come to see his own work as furthering Kant's own deepest intentions,⁴⁴³ and it was at the end of that same year, during his WS 1925-1926 phenomenological practicum (for "beginners"!) on Kant's first *Critique*,⁴⁴⁴ that Heidegger's rediscovery of Kant opened his eyes anew to the power of the idealist tradition (PIK

and nothing is, he reports his results with exasperation: "I have several Hegelians in the lessons from whom I unfortunately get no reaction. They are so Hegelianized that they don't know themselves where their heads are at, because they are completely Hegelianized without substance" (HJC 57).

⁴⁴¹ See p. 242 above.

⁴⁴² Gordon (2010), 86.

⁴⁴³ Luft (2011), 185-186.

⁴⁴⁴ Kisiel (1993), 409, 473.

25:431).⁴⁴⁵ The Davos debate was about many things, and in retrospect—at least after 1933—it appeared as though it were about everything that was about to befall Europe. But through all of this it was essentially about Kant.

Heidegger's Foregrounding of the Transcendental Power of Imagination

The centerpiece of the dispute about Kant, both at Davos and then in Heidegger's *Kantbook*, is Heidegger's placement of the transcendental power of imagination at the heart of his interpretation of the first *Critique*. Heidegger's famous, and notorious, claim is that Kant nearly identifies the transcendental power of the imagination with the "common root" of sensibility and understanding of which he speaks in the Introduction to the *Critique* (CPR A15/B29). *Nearly*, however: for in Heidegger's view Kant ultimately "shrank back" from what would have been his deepest and most radical insight (KPM 3:160). Even Kant, who had such a keen sense for cutting through the theoretical mist to uncover and acknowledge the phenomena underlying it, was ultimately unable to sustain this phenomenological rigor indefinitely. After holding out as long as he could, Kant, exhausted, finally relapsed into a more traditional conception of reason than the one to which his initially unflinching analysis was leading him. In his work on the A Deduction and in the Schematism, Kant had seen, or almost seen, the dependency of human reason upon the imagination, the common root from which it originally springs along with intuition. But this never really becomes Kant's "official" doctrine, and any doubt about this is laid to rest in the second edition of the *Critique*, where Kant refers to the imagination as merely "an effect of the understanding on sensibility" (CPR B152).

⁴⁴⁵ He wrote to Jaspers on December 10 that he was "beginning to actually love Kant" (HJC 57; quoted in Kisiel [1993], 409).

At the same time, it is not just that Kant's phenomenological stamina finally gave out, as it were. The dependence of reason on the imagination would have entailed an implication which Kant was simply unwilling to accept: pure reason itself would have been exposed as something inextricably entwined with the constitution of human beings in all their finitude. Kant's determination to ground morality in reason alone and distinguish it sharply from any science with empirical content ended up turning him away from his deepest insight just as he stood on the cusp of it. Strictly speaking, Kant did not need to make this move to protect the purity of his moral philosophy, for the investigation of the *finitude* of human beings has nothing whatsoever to do with *empirical* conditions of either willing or cognition. But Kant was not able to see this with complete clarity, in large part because he had failed to consistently distinguish between empirical anthropology and the "philosophical anthropology," if we want to speak of such a thing,⁴⁴⁶ which would deal with the question of the human being in a thoroughly nonempirical manner.⁴⁴⁷ At any rate, with the retreat from his near-insight into the role of the imagination, the damage to the critical philosophy was done, and when Kant sat down to rewrite the Transcendental Deduction for the second edition, it is no surprise that the imagination was assigned to the understanding as just one of its various functions.

This leads Heidegger on his quest, in the *Kantbook*, to try to recover the radicalness of the first-edition Deduction. Along with this, Heidegger's attention is drawn to the Schematism, "the hinge upon which the entire *Critique* turns" (PIK 25:168), where, even yet in the second edition, we find the power of imagination afforded its own distinctive

⁴⁴⁶ See below, p. 296.

⁴⁴⁷ On the difficulty Kant had in articulating a nonempirical analytic of finite cognition that nevertheless does not collapse into logic, see KPM 3:168-169; PIK 25:323-324.

analysis.⁴⁴⁸ Finally, the imagination leads Heidegger to emphasize the significance of the fourth question that Kant added to his canonical list of three in the *Jäsche Logic*.⁴⁴⁹ This question (*What is the human being?*), added late in Kant's career, finally indicates the project that should have been placed at the very beginning of Kant's inquiry, namely, the nonempirical, transcendental question of the identity and nature of the "us" in Kant's locution "at least for us human beings" (CPR B33). In this one little phrase, Heidegger tells us, "Kant's entire problematic is contained" (L 21:116). This is the Archimedean point around which the misguided architectonic of Kant's first *Critique*, which Heidegger regards as "unsuited to the originality of the insight at which Kant arrives in the most pivotal segment of the *Critique*" (PIK 25:213), must now be reoriented.

Heidegger's focus on the imagination in the Transcendental Deduction, his attempt to install the Schematism as the centerpiece of the *Critique*, and his insistence on the priority of Kant's fourth question are all aspects of one sustained interpretive endeavor. The pure concepts of the understanding turn out to be reflections of the activity of the imagination, and in the Schematism we find exhibited the dependence of the understanding, by way of the imagination, on the universal form of our inner sense, time. According to its category-constituting function, time cannot be investigated objectively; rather, it leads us back to the question of the subjectivity of the subject who, as finite, is

⁴⁴⁸ Friedman offers a perceptive account of the historical background for Heidegger's focus on the Schematism. Having excised Kant's pure forms of sensibility, Neokantianism was forced to proceed along two different routes: traveling along the first, the Marburg School thoroughly relativized the thought-sensibility relation; traveling along the second, the Southwest School was left with an object of intuition shorn of any spatiotemporal form. On the first approach, the Schematism disappears as a unique moment in the Kantian system; it is absorbed into the entirely general problem of form and matter (although it remains exemplary in a certain respect). On the second approach, the significance of the Schematism is markedly increased, even if its actual role becomes considerably murkier. Without forms of sensibility already *given* to the understanding, its schematism must now reach down to the deepest, unmediated recesses of our sensibility. Schematism loses, as it were, its guideposts, and the problem assumes a whole new, much more mysterious character. See Friedman (2000), 35-37.

⁴⁴⁹ See p. 146 above.

reliant on the form of its intuition if it is to be related to beings at all. Kant himself is not able to see all the way through to the finite basis for the comportment to beings; his analysis of time remains indebted to the analysis appropriate for the temporality of objects of scientific cognition, even though he allows his own analysis to draw him somewhat away from this paradigm. Precisely at this moment of his thought, when Kant allows himself to be drawn back to the question of the *subject*, leaving behind every assumption regarding the nature of the *object* (however generalized), Kant comes closest to posing the question of the human being in its full radicalness. The phenomenological interpretation of Kant is devoted to seeing Kant further along this path that his own thinking had already staked out.

In each of Heidegger's basic moves—the insistence upon the superiority of the A Deduction, the crowning of the Schematism as the decisive chapter, and the assertion of the priority of a question Kant did not even add to his thought until 1793⁴⁵⁰—we can see Heidegger's notorious “violence” on full display. As we have seen, Heidegger is well aware of his unfaithfulness to the letter of the Kantian text here. Kant, he acknowledges, went down this path only reluctantly. Even though his intention was to emphasize the nonreductiveness of his account of cognition (in contrast to the accounts of Locke and Leibniz), he nevertheless found himself *forced* in this entirely new direction (PIK 25:91-92). And Kant's willingness to follow the inner dynamic of his analysis, even when it began to run contrary to his original intention, deserves our respect. The mark of a truly radical philosopher is that precisely her greatest achievement is suffused throughout with her highest reluctance.

⁴⁵⁰ See n. 204 above.

The question, then, must concern whether Heidegger is really following an authentic Kantian tendency, or whether he is merely imposing the form of his own thought on Kant's text. Without a doubt, Heidegger's interpretation faces some steep obstacles on this front. With respect to his central claim about the transcendental power of imagination, we will want to insist, first and foremost, that Kant's questioning is distorted beyond all manner of recognition if his dualism of the faculties (of cognition) is abandoned. And we might point out that such dualism is hardly a matter of Kant blandly accepting what the tradition offered him; on the contrary, we have seen that part of Kant's achievement lies in his determination to resist the pronounced tendency of modern rationalism and empiricism to reduce the faculties of cognition to a single principle. In short, we could agree with Dieter Henrich that Heidegger's interpretation of the "common root" passage is baldly anachronistic: Kant's offhand conjecture about a common root does not anticipate Husserl or Heidegger, but refers us back to the eighteenth century.⁴⁵¹ If we wish to follow the path of the problem Kant himself alludes to here, we must follow Natorp,⁴⁵² and indeed follow Kant's own instructions in the first *Critique* (CPR A648-649/B676-677), in taking the idea that there may be a common root of sensibility and understanding as an expression of a *demand*, a demand to carry as far as possible the search for unity in matters subjective as well as objective.⁴⁵³

We would then respond thus to Heidegger: you are presupposing here exactly what Kant himself wanted to put into question, namely, that with the demand for the unconditioned the totality of the series of conditions, which would include the common

⁴⁵¹ Henrich (1955), 21. Keep in mind, however, that Heidegger acknowledges just this point at PIK 25:91 (a text to which Henrich would not have had access at the time of his 1955 lecture).

⁴⁵² Natorp (1917-1918), 238, 241-242.

⁴⁵³ Henrich (1955), 27-35.

root of all the soul's powers, is therewith given. What is *given*, rather, is precisely the demand, but only ever *as* a demand. From this perspective, Heidegger's mistake, however novel its motivation, merely repeats the old error of transcendental realism: to take the satisfaction of the demands of reason as inevitably given along with the demands themselves. In fact, as Kant painstakingly explains, the honest acknowledgement of our inability to reduce the faculties of the soul to a single faculty, either by collapsing understanding and sensibility with respect to cognition, or by collapsing cognition, feeling, and desire into a single fundamental faculty, is the decisive recognition by which we can attain to—and, what is even more difficult, remain within—the critical standpoint. Even the most critical of philosophers must always vigilantly maintain her discipline in the face of the ineliminable illusion that the demand for a more deeply unified account of ourselves always holds out in front of us.

Reading Heidegger this way is to place him squarely in the long tradition, beginning with Hamann,⁴⁵⁴ of trying to overcome or mitigate the residual dualism in Kant's thought. We will at least have good company if we choose to do so. Already in 1931 Cassirer had replied to Heidegger that "nowhere does Kant contend for such a monism of imagination. Rather, he insists upon a decided and radical dualism, the dualism of the sensuous and intelligible world."⁴⁵⁵ Plenty of recent interpreters have followed suit. Claude Piché concludes that, on both the role of the power of imagination and the significance of the schematism, "Heidegger's approach is similar to Cohen's, since both of them aim to surpass

⁴⁵⁴ See Hamann (1784), 157-158.

⁴⁵⁵ Cassirer (1931), 148.

Kantian dualism.”⁴⁵⁶ And Manfred Kühn describes Heidegger’s approach in the following manner:

It is not that Kant simply failed to bring to light, in an explicit way, the unity of the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Logic. It is rather that Kant thought sensibility and understanding to be radically different faculties that cannot be brought together. While he had mused at one point that there may perhaps exist a “common root” of these faculties, Kant never thought that this could be made out by us. Heidegger claimed that he could make out this common root.⁴⁵⁷

Now, if this really is the essence of Heidegger’s interpretive gambit, it must at least be acknowledged that it represents a somewhat surprising move on his part. After all, the implicit charge here is that Heidegger misunderstands Kant’s reference to the common root: what Kant took as a merely problematic point which could guide, but never determine, the content of our inquiry Heidegger now takes as an indication of a basic faculty which must *in fact* be operative. Now this, it is important to recognize, is precisely the point which Natorp had pressed tirelessly against Husserl in his review of *Ideas I* and to which Husserl had drawn his young assistant’s attention back in 1918: according to Natorp, Husserl persistently conflates the demand to exhibit subjectivity in its pure unity with the actual availability of the means by which alone such exhibition would be possible.⁴⁵⁸

In fact, Heidegger’s strategy here actually amounts to something quite different. To understand the force and limitations of Heidegger’s argument, it is important to distinguish as clearly as possible between Heidegger’s approach and those premised on the

⁴⁵⁶ Piché (2000), 201. Notice that since the Neokantians are themselves part of the tradition of trying to overcome the tension in Kantian dualism, such conclusions are just the natural result of lumping Heidegger in with this tradition. Doing so ultimately has the significance of blurring what, for Heidegger, at least, were some very clear lines separating their approaches.

⁴⁵⁷ Kühn (2010), 127. It should be noted that Henrich does not fall into this same trap—at least not in a naïve manner. He recognizes the peculiarity of Heidegger’s interpretive claim, even if (as I take to be the case) he lacks an adequate account of what the distinctiveness of this claim consists in. See Henrich (1955), 34.

⁴⁵⁸ See Natorp (1917-1918), 238, 240-242.

overcoming of a Kantian dualism. Since Cassirer's approach is actually closer to the latter than is Heidegger's, the stakes of the Davos debate are completely obscured if we fail to make the distinctiveness of Heidegger's position clear.

In the first place, note that Heidegger criticizes Hegel quite severely on just this count. Hegel, following Hamann, Herder, and others, was dissatisfied with the Schematism because in it we find Kant merely artificially linking up sensibility and understanding without really thinking the two thoughts together. As Hegel puts it, Kant ties them together "as a piece of wood and a leg might be tied together by a piece of rope."⁴⁵⁹ For Heidegger, however, this only confirms that "Hegel has absolutely no understanding of the real meaning, the central problematic, that Kant hit upon in the Schematism" (L 21:202). What is essential is not to mediate, in a dialectical fashion, sensibility and understanding with one another, but to follow Kant's inchoate indication of the common root from which they have sprung together. This, Heidegger claims, is a very different approach than the one taken by the idealists (KPM 3:137n). To see Heidegger's point, we must focus on the meaning which the reference to the common root as an "original unity" (see KPM 3:36) necessarily assumes within an existential context. Indeed, the kind of unity that Heidegger sees Kant as on his way to here is a very different sort of unity than that which Hegel, for instance, had supposed Kant lacked. The missing link in Kant's analysis cannot be filled in by identifying the synthetic universal from which sensibility and understanding would be differentiated as species—even if we then proceed to insist modestly that this universal remains unknown to us. Instead, as we might have expected, the original unity underlying sensibility and understanding can only be the subject of an indication. Kant's question,

⁴⁵⁹ See Hegel (1840), 441, cited by Heidegger at L 21:202.

rightly understood, will not benefit from a clarifying of the unknown root, but by letting this root stand forth in its full and unmitigated questionability. The reference to the imagination should indicate the problematic, but it should do so—to borrow an earlier phrase of Heidegger’s—“as if to warn” (IPR 60:64; see p. 199 above). In this way, Kant’s “grounding” of metaphysics “leads not to the crystal clear, absolute evidence of a first maxim and principle, but rather goes into and points consciously towards the unknown.” This leads Heidegger to pay Kant the highest compliment he could possibly offer: his thought is “a philosophizing groundwork for philosophy” (KPM 3:37; see also 41).

Whereas the idealists sought to provide an intelligible ground for the differences between sensibility and understanding, Heidegger’s goal is, rather, to indicate the limits of the intelligibility of this relation. Far from advocating a monism of the imagination, Heidegger is going out of his way to intensify the Kantian dualism. Thus Heidegger explicitly rejects the idea that the power of imagination could be thought of as a “basic power” underlying the others in the soul (KPM 3:139). Here is Heidegger’s description of his positive alternative:

The return to the transcendental power of the imagination as the root of sensibility and understanding just means to project anew, in light of the essential structure of the transcendental power of the imagination, which was achieved within the problematic of the groundwork, the constitution of transcendence upon the ground of its possibility. The return which lays the ground moves into the dimension of “possibilities,” of possible enablings [*möglichen Ermöglichungen*]. (KPM 3:140)

The reference to “possibility” is telling here, and it may be helpful to briefly remind ourselves here of Heidegger’s procedure in Division Two of *Being and Time*.⁴⁶⁰ In the latter work he had emphasized that the move to the analysis of authentic existence requires

⁴⁶⁰ See p. 239 above.

reference to a peculiar kind of unity, a form of unity which is isomorphic with the form of existence itself. Existence is not fundamentally a “thing” to be analyzed at all; instead, its proper analysis requires that we come to see it as pure possibility, a possibility into which we ourselves, as the erstwhile “external analysts,” are ultimately forced to step. Stepping into it, however, does not “give” this possibility as an objective possibility which might be realized; rather, it forces us to see it *as* a possibility which requires a decision on our part to actualize ourselves through it. In fact, as soon as the possibility is reduced to a kind of “content” offered up to us,⁴⁶¹ it no longer faces us *as* a possibility at all. So the “content” which at every moment appears to offer itself as the way to actualize ourselves—to really *be* ourselves, for once—inevitably slips back, in the very moment of the decision, into oblivion.

An analogous movement is governing Heidegger’s reading of Kant at this juncture. In fact, “the understanding of the possible,” he says, is that which “guides all retrieval” (KPM 3:204). Thus if we are to retrieve the Kantian problematic, we need to be able to experience it as a possibility into which we ourselves can step. The transcendental power of imagination indicates to us the central place at which we can fruitfully apply pressure to Kant’s text, but it is not as though the complete and thoroughgoing elucidation of the imagination would make it possible once and for all to crack open the secret of the Kantian philosophy. In fact, Heidegger’s own goal is to pursue the problem along the lines of this indication precisely to the point at which such an indication can be seen to be completely

⁴⁶¹ Regrettably, this is precisely the image suggested by some of Macquarrie and Robinson’s editorial notes in their (generally quite good) translation of *Being and Time*. See esp. their note to p. 438 of the English edition (i.e., to the crucial §74). This may be partly responsible for readings of Heidegger that would have authentic existence choosing freely from amongst an array of possibilities offered it by the tradition (e.g., Friedman [2000], 52n65, but my sense is that this reading is actually quite commonplace). This is to completely miss the sense of the problematic within which Heidegger is operating at this point in *Being and Time*.

misleading as a way of stating the problem with which Kant found himself faced. “In the end,” Heidegger says, “what has hitherto been known as the transcendental power of imagination is dissolved into more original ‘possibilities’ in such a way that by itself the designation ‘power of imagination’ becomes inadequate” (KPM 3:140). In this way, Heidegger says, “the apparently secure answer to the question concerning the essential unity of ontological cognition is gradually dissolved, upon a closer determination of this unity, into the problem of the possibility of such a unification” (KPM 3:69).

In other words, the consideration of the role of the imagination in the first *Critique* ought to lead us into an inquiry of an even more radical character.⁴⁶² This new inquiry, of course, would be the question of human finitude, and this is what Heidegger thinks Kant was on the way to grasping. Yet it was understandably unclear to Kant just what this new inquiry would look like or how it would fit into the critical system. In fact, Heidegger always recognized that Kant’s system was more or less closed to this line of questioning. “But into which transcendental discipline, then,” Heidegger asks, “does the consideration of the central problem of the possibility of ontology fall? This question remains foreign to Kant” (KPM 3:66).

On the other hand, though, as is typical of Heidegger’s reading of Kant, he claims to find some tentative indications in this direction, as well, and this is what leads him to place an unusual amount of emphasis on Kant’s addition of his fourth question: *What is the human being?* For Heidegger, this is an important indication that Kant at least intuitively recognized the need for some kind of treatment of the human being as such in his critical system. Once again, Heidegger stands in uncanny proximity to a venerable tradition of Kant

⁴⁶² Recall that Heidegger called the Kantbook a kind of “historical introduction” to *Being and Time* (KPM 3:xvi; see p. 256 above).

criticism. Complaints that Kant had broken up his treatment of the human being in such a way that a synoptic view of the whole human being is of necessity denied to him are just as old as worries about Kant's dualism. In many ways, Dilthey's famous complaint about the lack of "real blood"⁴⁶³ in Kant's subject is a repetition and development of Hamann's original worries. And it should be noted that Spengler had recently popularized this criticism in his massively influential *Decline of the West*. Even more directly than Dilthey, Spengler attests to the immediacy of the connection between Kant's failure to provide a foundation for historical cognition and his failure to treat the human being as a whole. According to Spengler, Kant "deals with the intuition-forms and categories of reason, but he never thinks of the wholly different mechanism by which historical impressions are apprehended." As Spengler puts it, Kant has failed to supplement the "logic of space" with a "logic of time"—i.e., "an organic necessity in life, that of destiny."⁴⁶⁴ Obviously, there is much in this claim with which Heidegger can enthusiastically agree.

As Heidegger sees it, Kant himself was not altogether clear about what his allusion to anthropology was really supposed to amount to. Kant's anthropology is not altogether a pure one, although it does, to be sure, countenance—at least when pursued pragmatically—certain nonempirical investigations. So Kant's question must really serve as a clue, rather than as a reference to some existing doctrine worked out elsewhere in the Kantian corpus. Kant himself, Heidegger says, "was never able to get clear on its singularity" (PIK 25:70). So while Kant's posing of the fourth question "unequivocally expresses the proper result of his groundwork of metaphysics" (KPM 3:208), the question

⁴⁶³ See p. 170 above.

⁴⁶⁴ Spengler (1922), 7.

nevertheless points to an anthropological inquiry which is of a fundamentally different character than those on hand to Kant in his own time.

Heidegger's solution is not, however, to celebrate the fact that now, in the early twentieth century, we have finally attained to the sort of anthropology that would make Kantian critique possible. Although nowadays—partly owing to the inchoate demands of *Lebensphilosophie*—seemingly everyone has a “philosophical anthropology” on offer, no extant anthropology, Heidegger thinks, can actually play the positive role called for by Kant's clue.⁴⁶⁵ Indeed, most such attempts merely borrow their methodological cues from the empirical sciences they would have to ground. Thus despite the explosion of research Heidegger concludes that “no time has known less about what man is than today” (KPM 3:209). In fact, however, it is at precisely this moment that phenomenology finds itself in a position to clarify the stakes of such an inquiry. This is the basis for Heidegger's apparently outlandish claim that Kant's method, properly clarified, is phenomenological (PIK 25:71). For the promise of phenomenology consists in its nonpsychological, nonanthropological investigation into the essence of human finitude, an investigation which—inquiring into human subjectivity with an eye towards freeing ourselves of all remaining assumptions about what subjectivity is—methodologically prevents itself from falling into the modes of assertion appropriate to any of the regional, or even general, sciences, and instead keeps to the strictest formal and indicative ways of posing and answering questions. Heidegger's conclusion, of course, is that Kant's question points towards precisely the analytic of existence that Heidegger had initiated in *Being and Time*.

⁴⁶⁵ Heidegger credits Scheler for at least finally appreciating the difficulties on this score and working diligently to overcome them. See KPM 3:210; MFL 26:63-64.

It is a classical move, of course, to claim that one's own philosophy first clarifies the methods and solves the leftover questions bequeathed to us by the previous generation of philosophers. No one was more successful than Kant himself at reshaping the way we see the inner dialectic of philosophy that led up to his own thought. It is worth noting, however, that Heidegger's interpretive move here is somewhat unique in this respect. Yes, he does think that, in an important sense, Kant's attempt to lay the ground for his critical philosophy should lead us to an appreciation for the necessity of existential phenomenology. (Needless to say, this claim has had far less impact on our understanding of the history of philosophy than did Kant's contraposition of Locke and Leibniz.) But at the end of the day Heidegger's claim is not that his own work really clarifies Kant's motives or results; if anything, *Being and Time* is an attempt to introduce an even further questionability into Kant's own questions. And we must keep in mind, of course, that the positive content of the existential analytic was finally designed to be exhausted in the directive for historical research which it would provide. Heidegger's appropriation of Kant, we might say, was ultimately designed to make possible his subsequent reappropriation by Kant.

The Failure and Legacy of Heidegger's Reading of Kant

As we have seen, Heidegger himself would later announce the failure of the Kantbook and the project it had promised. It must be admitted, I think, that the general thrust of his later self-criticism is correct: in spite of all the effort he had put into Kant over the prior three years, he was unable to devise a convincing link between Kant's thought and his own. The historical untenability of his major claims is really just the outward expression of this inner failure. I do not here want to insist on the details of the shortcomings of these claims.

Indeed, Cassirer himself already presented the most essential points in his original review of the Kantbook. “The service that the understanding does for intuition,” he insists, “takes nothing away from the freedom and spontaneity of the understanding. The understanding is service **for**, not **under**, intuition.”⁴⁶⁶ Indeed, the “change” in the second edition, so deplored by Heidegger, by which the imagination is assimilated to the understanding, is not an essential one at all. If, indeed, the schematizing of the understanding by means of the imagination is an art hidden in the depths of the human soul (CPR A141/B180), this is precisely because of the mutual *independence* of understanding and sensibility and the consequent absence of a faculty for comprehensively exhibiting their relationship. Thus the Schematism does not lead us down a rabbit hole in which we find a potentially infinite stock of food for thought;⁴⁶⁷ instead, we know *a priori* that there must be a point at which the stock runs out. We are welcome to reject this if we find such a conclusion uncomfortable, but we will no longer be following in Kant’s footsteps if we do.

Cassirer rightly presses Heidegger on the topic of practical reason, for here, he notes, Heidegger’s interpretation is stretched beyond its breaking point. Whatever semblance of plausibility the thesis of the dependency of understanding upon sensibility (via imagination) might retain in the theoretical realm, it completely vanishes when we turn our attention to Kant’s practical philosophy.⁴⁶⁸ Here, Cassirer insists, the separation of the sensible and intelligible worlds means that

all human existence and all human activities are to be measured by two completely different standards and are to be considered from two

⁴⁶⁶ Cassirer (1931), 141.

⁴⁶⁷ This is not to say that the Schematism exhausts what can be said about this matter. Cassirer rightly refers Heidegger to the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* where the project is carried further still.

⁴⁶⁸ Heidegger had devoted a section (§30) of the Kantbook, more suggestive than systematic, to practical reason, explaining, by way of an analysis of the feeling of respect, that even the apparently purest spontaneity in Kant’s thought really amounts to an equally pure receptivity (KPM 3:159-160).

standpoints that are in principle opposed to each other. . . . Here, in the domain of morality, there is in point of fact the miracle of a kind of creative knowledge. For here the ego is basically only what it makes itself.⁴⁶⁹

Heidegger had tried to hold out on this point at Davos, insisting on the ineliminable reference to finitude in the casting of the moral law in the form of an imperative.⁴⁷⁰ And of course he is justified, to a certain extent, in doing so. In fact, it may very well be that Cassirer's Neokantian orientation towards spontaneity precludes him from painting a picture of moral action with the kind of tension between higher and lower incentives that Kant himself was committed to. Against Heidegger's position, however, Cassirer's critique is decisive. The basis of the problem is that Heidegger comes to the question of our desiderative faculty with resources carried over uncritically from the investigation into our cognitive faculty. This is precisely the assumption Kant wanted to call into question when he sought to insulate practical reason from the disrepute into which speculative reason had fallen.⁴⁷¹ To be sure, human finitude is an ineliminable part of the picture when it comes to Kant's moral theory, but the manifestation of our finitude in the *categorical imperative* depends precisely on the disconnect between the principles governing our cognitive and desiderative faculties. In short, Heidegger would like to find the rabbit hole within the confines of Kant's critique of cognition, but if there even were such a thing in Kant's system, it would not be found here, but in the relation of the soul's faculties to one another.

Here it should be recognized, I think, that Heidegger's impatience with the Kantian corpus has deprived him of his best opportunity for establishing a genuine link between Kant's thought and his own. In fact, there are tantalizing hints that Heidegger was at least at

⁴⁶⁹ Cassirer (1931), 145.

⁴⁷⁰ See the exchange on practical philosophy in Cassirer & Heidegger (1929), 194-197.

⁴⁷¹ See p. 20 above.

one point on the brink of widening the scope of his interpretation of Kant considerably. Among the loose notes that Heidegger had enclosed in his copy of the Kantbook, we find one labeled, "Critique of Judgment—Aesthetics": "Only considered far enough to be able to see that it is not contradicted," he writes. Then he adds, "But now the highest corroboration of the interpretation," adding references to §59 and §57 of the third *Critique* (NK 3:250). We can now only guess at what Heidegger thought he caught sight of: the references (which are given by page number) are to Kant's distinction between symbolism and schematism⁴⁷² and his resolution of the antinomy of taste, respectively. Heidegger even recognized that for Kant the essential question would come down to that of the possible unity of the mind's fundamental faculties (see KPM 3:205). But despite the fact that it is the third *Critique* in which this question is given its clearest development, Heidegger never devoted himself to a systematic treatment of it.

Actually, it was Cassirer himself who first made the suggestion that Heidegger do so,⁴⁷³ although he would not have expected Heidegger to find many positive resources for his project there.⁴⁷⁴ Whatever Heidegger saw, or, maybe, just thought he saw, in the third *Critique*, it is in fact the idea of the power of judgment that would have served him as a better clue for his understanding of Kant. After all, it is within the scope of the critique of this faculty that Kant deals at last with the question of the unity of our fundamental faculties and is no longer willing or able to rest content with the dualism of practical and theoretical standpoints to which the results of the first two *Critiques* may seem to have led.

⁴⁷² This focus, at least, was probably prompted by Cassirer's remarks during their disputation at Davos (Cassirer & Heidegger [1929], 195).

⁴⁷³ Cassirer (1931), 149.

⁴⁷⁴ Cassirer claims that both the second and third *Critiques* consider man "under the idea of humanity" in such a way that "the 'intelligible substratum of humanity' and not the existence of man is the goal essential to it" (Cassirer [1931], 149). This, I think, circumscribes the goal of the third *Critique* much too tightly; see Ch. II above.

Again, however, we must keep in mind that it was never Kant's intention to abolish or sublimate the differences between the sciences of theory and practice, but only to make possible a kind of transition between them. In any case, though, *this* is the point to which worries about Kant's failure to treat the human being as a whole must finally be addressed. Heidegger's error was that he wanted Kant to respond to Heidegger's own demand—ultimately the demand of *Lebensphilosophie*—within the context of a critique of cognition, when the answer to such a demand cannot, as Heidegger himself would have agreed, be contained within such bounds.

This is not simply to say that Heidegger's reading of Kant would have succeeded, not failed, had he taken the power of judgment as his interpretive clue instead of the imagination. A certain sort of failure was probably inevitable anyway. Even if we took Heidegger up on his most radical suggestion and inflated the significance of Kant's fourth question to the gigantic proportions Heidegger requires of it, the question would, after all, still be only the *fourth*. Whatever its importance, it is the question that Kant wanted to raise only *after* we have hazarded our answers to the first three. It is very hard to see how we could hope to dislodge Kant from this position, and yet dislodge him from it we must if Heidegger's reading, which would require Kant to place the question *first*, is going to be able to find traction here.

Heidegger does, at least, understand that this is exactly what his reading requires. "This characterization of the essential unity of ontological cognition," he says, "cannot be the conclusion, but must instead be the rightful **beginning** of the groundwork of ontological cognition" (KPM 3:65). But did Kant himself have any mind, even a little bit, to rearrange his system this way? It is important to see that in asking this question, we have

in reality only returned to our first one. In doing so we take up the heart of the problem once again: was Kant an epistemologist? That is—as Heidegger understands the question—did Kant take the phenomenon of cognition for granted, and only subsequently attempt to place it within a more comprehensive manner of philosophical questioning, or did he investigate cognition first and foremost as a problem in its own right? Really what this asks is: could Kant have transposed his own questioning, on the basis of his findings in the first *Critique*, from the question of the objectivity of theoretical objects to the question of the being of beings, where the latter is conceived formally enough that nothing of the subject-object relationship is presupposed? This is what Heidegger’s claim of “shrinking back” finally amounts to: that Kant nearly moved from the first of these questions to the second, but did not.

Heidegger thought that the power of imagination, not the power of judgment, would be flexible enough to permit the transformation of Kant’s questioning here. When Heidegger turns his attention in the direction of the power of judgment in the first *Critique*, he sees it as a fixation that Kant let get in the way of the radical phenomenological analysis to which his description of the imagination was leading him. Kant’s decision to reorient the Transcendental Deduction around the definition of judgment, which leads to his consequent assimilation of imagination to understanding, is, in Heidegger’s view, the most disastrous step Kant could have taken in his research. In this context, Kant’s appeal to judgment as *another* force binding together sensibility and understanding can only appear as a threat to the self-transparency of Kant’s analysis, which depends on imagination serving as their common root. With its close connection to traditional logic, the activity of judging obscures this reliance of the understanding on the imagination and therefore

disallows the most radical tendency of Kant's analysis to come to fruition. It is no accident if, as Kant's attachment to the tradition intruded itself into his thought in the years between 1781 and 1787, the definition of judgment came to usurp the place afforded the imagination in the Transcendental Deduction. From Heidegger's perspective, this can only be lamented as a lost opportunity.

I am not about to speculate here on whether the power of judgment could have been stretched, in Heidegger's hands, to admit of an activity that is no longer simply cognitive.⁴⁷⁵ This would certainly require no small measure of "violence": judgment is an essentially cognitive faculty, on Kant's view. I will note, however, that the dual role the power of judgment plays in Kant's philosophy—first to ground the critique of cognition and then to provide the principle for the limited critical unification of theory and practice through feeling—would not have been without its usefulness for Heidegger's interpretive gambit of placing the final Kantian question in the first position.⁴⁷⁶

Now, given his place in the phenomenological tradition, Heidegger had plenty of reasons to want to privilege the power of the imagination over the power of judgment. Husserl, we will recall, had sought to entrench phenomenology as a science that could function within the suspension of the natural attitude. Thus first philosophy, for Husserl as for Descartes, is possible (and *only* possible) prior to the kind of existential commitment that the employment of the power of judgment (taken in Kant's sense) necessarily demands of us. Kant's position, by contrast, is that the justification of rational norms is only possible

⁴⁷⁵ But Lask would certainly be the proximate resource for Heidegger to draw upon here. See Crowell (1992).

⁴⁷⁶ At Davos Heidegger asked, "Does it lie in the essence of philosophy itself that it has a *terminus a quo* which must be made into a problem and that it has a *terminus ad quem* which stands in a correlation to the *terminus a quo*?" (Cassirer & Heidegger [1929], 202). If anything could play such a role in Kant's philosophy, it could only be the power of judgment.

consequent to an act of judgment that binds one to the actually existing natural world. This marks a deep divide in their respective approaches, but what is important here is this: on Husserl's view, it is only by suspending judgment, in Kant's sense, that we can describe and justify the norms of rational discourse, and we do so on the basis of the phenomenological field of intuition that such suspension first reveals in its purity. Thus the genuinely intuitive basis of the structure of human reason only appears so long as the power of judgment remains idle.

It may be Scheler, however, who puts the essential point most succinctly. Scheler separates judgment from intuition with exceptional clarity by distinguishing the sphere of mere "ethics" from the moral cognition through which willing must actually pass.⁴⁷⁷ The role of judgment in taking us *beyond* the phenomenological given indicates to Scheler the need to suspend the activity of judgment in order to really reach the things themselves. According to him,

In phenomenological experience nothing is **meant** that is not **given**, and nothing is given that is not meant. It is precisely **in** this **coincidence** of the "meant" and the "given" that the **content** of phenomenological experience alone becomes **manifest**. **In** this coincidence, in the very meeting **point** of fulfillment of what is meant and what is given, the phenomenon **appears**.⁴⁷⁸

Whereas, for Kant, the activity of judging is that by which we reach out from the pure play of our concepts and latch onto what is actually given in our experience, for Scheler its role is precisely the opposite: to introduce an element into the phenomena which is foreign to them and hence to preclude our unmitigated access to the things themselves.

⁴⁷⁷ "**Ethics** is only the judgmental formulation of what is given in the sphere of moral cognition" (Scheler [1913-1916], 69).

⁴⁷⁸ Scheler (1913-1916), 51.

I suspect the phenomenological prejudice against a Kantian faculty of judgment encroached even into Heidegger's thinking. It probably should not have: Heidegger, as we have seen, came to reject the classical phenomenological view, endorsed clearly here by Scheler, as well as by (at least the early) Husserl, of an untrammelled and immediate access to phenomena. For Heidegger, as we have seen, facticity was ultimately a *problem*, in fact, we could say, *the* problem of phenomenology. In theory, this could have left room for Heidegger to appreciate the distinctive role of judgment in the Kantian philosophy; moreover, it could have lent him the basis from which to interrogate this role phenomenologically. In practice, Heidegger was unable to see beyond his phenomenological predecessors here.

This being so, it is inevitable that in Heidegger's interpretation Kant's recourse to the forms of judgment can express nothing more than a symptom of Kant's inability to master the influence which traditional logic exerted on his ontology (see PIK 25:213). He is thus forced to conclude that the A68-69/B93-94 passage, the passage in which Kant identifies the understanding as a faculty for judging, "evades the real problem of the transcendental origin of concepts" (PIK 25:245). Thus Heidegger subtly—and ingeniously, in a way—reverses one of Kant's central claims: that it is the unity of an *action*, identified, for Kant, with an act of the power of judgment, that enables us to comport ourselves to an object. Any such a reference to an act of judgment would link us immediately to the table of judgments—the forms of unity by which each act of judging is characterized—and thus direct us towards traditional logic and away from the intuitive basis for object-relatedness for which phenomenology seeks and which throws cognition itself into question. The

solution, for Heidegger, is to transpose the character of this act of judgment onto an act of imagination.

The synthesis of the power of imagination has the function of the explicit bringing-to of what is intuitive [*des ausdrücklichen Zu-bringens des Anschaulichen*]. After what we have just said, however, this means that the **bringing-to of the manifold** is apparently the **basic act** which makes it possible for something—as that which is brought-to [*als Zu-gebrachtes*—to stand opposed to me. (PIK 25:335)

With this maneuver, Heidegger's own transposition of Kant's questioning is completed; the possibility of appreciating the role of the power of judgment for Kant fades away and, with it, any chance for rigorously relating Kant's first questions to his last.

Again, however, this is not to say that Heidegger could have succeeded with an alternative approach. Kant *is* interested in the sort of unity underlying his various analyses, but this is a question he is content to take up at the end of his critical system, not place at its very beginning. No un mutilated Kantian system could put the question of the human being anywhere but in the final position. And Kant certainly thought that without the conceptual clarity first achievable by means of the first two *Critiques*, the transitional project of the third would scarcely be conceivable. Kant himself, we know, did not conceive it until he had worked the first two out. And so Heidegger's elaborate attempt to save Kant from the epistemologists had to fail. For better or for worse, Kant *did* think he knew what cognition was, and he believed that no one can rigorously pose the question of the human being until *after* she has worked through the problem of cognition on its own terms.

Goethe's Room

Not all of Heidegger's rejection of the epistemologists' reading of Kant was in vain, however. If the idea of an existential starting point for Kant's system is absurd, the idea of an existential landing point for it is considerably less so. In any event, there is a case to be

made that Heidegger's characterization of Kant at Davos, whatever its essential defects, was in certain essential respects a truer likeness than Cassirer's. On this score, at least, it is markedly less clear whether Cassirer succeeded in defending the purity of the Enlightenment against the incursions Heidegger tried to make into it through Kant's thought.

Recall that in Kant's picture of human wisdom we find united *two* of the ideals of the Enlightenment: the *scholastic* notion of philosophy as a scientific endeavor and the *popular* notion of philosophy, exemplified, for Kant, in the ideal of the "practical philosopher." In this respect the idea of the human being's *return* from her excursion into science is essential to the Kantian position. What is more, for Kant the *Schulbegriff* of philosophy depends on its *Weltbegriff*; the idea of *philosophy* is ultimately dependent upon and refers to the ideal of the *philosopher*. This means that Kant's position can by no means be as separated from Rousseau's as Cassirer's Neokantianism might lead one to believe. The path to wisdom must travel through science, but wisdom itself can never be reduced, or, if you prefer, inflated, to science, for the fundamental *Weltbegriff* of philosophy always guarantees that even the most complete scientific treatment of the world only leads one back—more solidly than before, it is true—to one's own self. Nothing could be further from Kant's intentions than the setting-free of the individual into the manifold constellations of culture where she is supposed to recognize her spontaneity in the achievements of modern science. Rousseau, we know, would have balked at such an idea. But so would have Kant.

The difference between Rousseau and Kant is, as I have emphasized, very real. Wisdom cannot stay coiled up within itself and still be the "true philosophy" that Rousseau sought. For Kant, wisdom *needs* its scientific expression in order to come back to itself and

now for the first time be what it is. *Pace* Rousseau, to really be true to oneself requires relinquishing one's grip on the felt necessity to say always and only nothing more than the truth one feels firmly and losslessly inside oneself. Rousseau's final wish was to spin from himself a portrait of his life "exactly according to nature and in all its truth."⁴⁷⁹ But to do so he would first have had to take a decisive step outside of himself, and this, as his *Confessions* amply testify, is what he was never quite willing to do.

One wonders whether Kant would have leveled a similar indictment against the phenomenological movement. Indeed, from a Kantian perspective one may very well diagnose Heidegger's insistence on a philosophy of what precedes all objectivity as a sort of Rousseauian moment in his thought. For Kant, our cognitive faculty only comes into its own when an act of judgment—which always says more than what is clear and distinct for the subject herself—connects us up to an objective world. As Cassirer might put it, there is a kind of miracle here, something which, after the fact, we can only look back on as a kind of inconceivable accomplishment.⁴⁸⁰ This is the kernel of truth in the Marburg School's insistence on the fact of science. Whether we regard this fact as *cognition* or not is not really essential: it is that it lies on the other side of a judgment which, whatever its form, has taken us outside of ourselves and into the world of science.

On the other hand, this thought is not nearly as foreign to Heidegger's thought as Cassirer, for one, always assumed it had to be. That *facticity* is a problem means that existence is always in the first instance *not* itself; to *be* itself is only ever present to it in the

⁴⁷⁹ Rousseau (1782), 3.

⁴⁸⁰ On the other hand, in his posthumous work *The Myth of the State*, Cassirer finally makes explicit a criticism of Heidegger deeper than those he had hitherto permitted himself. Precisely here, however, Cassirer seems to me to move closer to Heidegger than ever before, regarding scientific cognition no longer as a given fact, but as an achievement whose existence is guaranteed by nothing objective, but only by our own vigilance in securing it ever anew against the forces of myth that can never be simply defeated once and for all (Cassirer [1946], 297-298).

form of a possibility, and indeed of a possibility purified of all actuality. To be sure, Heidegger hardly regards culture as the miracle of science; instead, it is the fallenness of existence. But it can hardly be said that existence has not *judged* and hence established its relationship to the scientific world. What is distinctive about Heidegger's position, with respect to Cassirer's, is that the scientific image in which existence beholds itself can never reflect its own spirit back to it. Or, better, it reflects it back in the form of an inadequacy: far from displaying to existence its own inner principle of activity in an ever more clarified fashion, the development of science only obscures it more and more exhaustively. And if we wish to turn a bit of Heidegger's violence back upon him, we could even put it this way: Heidegger saw that, precisely on account of something like judgment, there is a true disconnect, a rupture, between the orders of science and wisdom, a rupture, moreover, which inescapably necessitates the return from the former to the latter.

Cassirer, whose thinking on the matter of the Enlightenment is as deep and clear as anyone's, says in his review of the Kantbook that "Kant was and remained—in the most noble and beautiful sense of the word—a thinker of the Enlightenment. He strove for illumination even where he thought about the deepest and most hidden grounds of being."⁴⁸¹ Just a bit further on, he relates that Goethe once told Schopenhauer that he felt, when he read Kant, as though he were entering a bright room.⁴⁸² It is precisely this drive for illumination, Cassirer implies, which Heidegger's path of thinking imperils.

To be sure, Heidegger's desire for light is markedly less pure than Cassirer's own. Compare Heidegger's description of reading Kant to Goethe's remark above: "In the struggle with Kant," Heidegger tells his students, "it is important for us to strive to come to

⁴⁸¹ Cassirer (1931), 155.

⁴⁸² The source of the anecdote is Schopenhauer (1818), 144.

terms with the things themselves—or at least to bring the problems that Kant has illuminated into a new darkness” (PIK 25:75). Indeed, Kant’s great virtue, for Heidegger, was his willingness to drive even into those deepest recesses of the human soul where there is no light at hand and to which hardly any may be brought. But Heidegger’s relationship to Enlightenment thought by no means consists in the one-sided rejection that is implicitly attributed to him by Cassirer and on the basis of which he expels Heidegger to the tradition of Kierkegaard.⁴⁸³ Heidegger’s insistence, rather, is just that the clarity striven for by the Enlightenment cannot be finally separated from that darkness from which it had sought to extricate itself. When the questions of philosophy devolve back upon us, as they inevitably must if they were at all rigorously posed, we can no longer rely wholesale on the light of science to guide us. Kant himself knew this from his picture of moral action: however clearly we are able to see the right path, we cannot simply legislate away the sensible incentives which distract us from it. But questions in philosophy are like this, too: they require us to take up what has come to light, and the content of philosophy cannot finally be dissociated from this taking-up, for, as even Kant’s discussion of the worldly provenance of school philosophy goes to show, philosophy was always dependent upon it from the start. For all the illumination Kant succeeded in bringing about through his thought, his philosophy was never just about what happens in Goethe’s room; it is also about what happens when, if only for want of the sustained energy to continuously illuminate ourselves, we must inevitably retire from it. As Heidegger put it at Davos,

⁴⁸³ Cassirer (1931), 156. See p. 158 above.

philosophy, as philosophizing, is at the end of the day “not a matter of learned discussion,” but only “setting free the existence [*Dasein*] in the human being.”⁴⁸⁴

Epilogue

Heidegger would return to Kant later on, but his work would never assume anything like the urgency it had in 1929. It had lost it on several counts: not only had Kant retreated from his privileged ancestral position with respect to *Being and Time*, but the latter work had altogether shed its foundational methodological significance for the path of his thinking. To what degree these events represent a substantive shift in Heidegger’s thought is a question which necessarily transcends the scope of this essay. Incontestably, however, the political developments of the 1930s went on to cast all the events of the Davos days in a completely changed light, and after the Second World War there was simply no question of plodding, once again, along the same old prewar pathways. The collapse of Neokantianism and the quick descent of the fortunes of Cassirer after an initial wave of American enthusiasm robbed Heidegger’s Kant interpretation of all of its force, and most of its point, by the time the work of Strawson and Rawls had begun to rehabilitate the historical consideration of Kant’s work in the Anglophone tradition. The relationship of the phenomenological movement to Kant, and to Enlightenment thought more generally, remains very much fraught and undecided, a state of affairs that is at least in part a relic of the abortive attempt to settle the question philosophically at and after Davos.

Without a doubt, phenomenology remains indebted to Heidegger’s thought, although his sway over the tradition is perhaps something less than it once was. And from the point of view of phenomenology, at least, the enduring question is not whether, in the

⁴⁸⁴ Cassirer & Heidegger (1929), 200.

final analysis, Heidegger got Kant wrong, but rather whether, in the midst of doing so, he got himself—and phenomenology—wrong, as well. Heidegger himself appeared to believe so. Gadamer recalls that sometime before 1940 he misplaced his copy of the Kantbook, and Heidegger was kind enough to send him a replacement. Upon opening it, he found, scribbled in its margins, Heidegger's own self-indictment: "relapsed totally into the standpoint of the transcendental question."⁴⁸⁵ As we have seen, many interpreters have seen fit to agree with Heidegger's own retrospective assessment. The same thing, perhaps, might be said of the phenomenological movement as a whole, at least in its American setting: to go back to Kant immediately casts one under suspicion of falling into a particularly unfortunate sort of philosophical relapse. Perhaps the example of Heidegger has indicated the dangers one risks if one allows oneself to fly too near to Kant's supreme illumination.

No doubt, the cultural memory of Davos has by now far eclipsed the debates over Kant interpretation that took place there. In one of the most playful, if bizarre, episodes of the retreat, a young Lévinas portrayed Cassirer in a farcical skit the students had put on to commemorate, as well as mock, the somber intellectual events they had just witnessed. Lévinas, then an enthusiastic partisan of Heidegger's, played his part with relish, whitening his hair with flour and animatedly insisting that, despite the volley of stubborn obfuscations emanating from faux-Heidegger, the two of them did not really disagree. "I am a pacifist," he repeated over and over again. The real Cassirer and Heidegger looked on

⁴⁸⁵ Gadamer (1979), 87.

from the audience. No one knows any longer whether they were bemused or embarrassed.⁴⁸⁶

In just a few years, of course, all this would become almost unthinkable, and the remembrance of the Davos days took on in the minds of the various parties a more sinister and foreboding cast: it was the last chance for the liberal humanism represented by Cassirer to make a stand in the face of the insidious forces of totalitarianism by which it would, in the end, be completely overrun. In a sense, it marked Germany's final break from all that was brightest in its heritage and its surrender to the forces of darkness.

This break, of course, proved impossible to simply mend up again after the war. Heidegger himself, forced to turn inward not only by his disillusionment with the Nazi movement for which he had held such high hopes, but also by the inner force of his own thinking, had no real interest in reforging the bonds that had been broken. Even today it seems scarcely imaginable that Heidegger had been, at Davos, right on the brink of giving his own thought the ultimate imprimatur of the Enlightenment: the title of a *Kantian* philosophy. "As I had not expected to find it in him," Cassirer said at Davos, "I must confess that I have found a Neokantian here in Heidegger."⁴⁸⁷ But after Davos Heidegger shrank back from Kant, and he would never find another philosophical companion with whom he could travel quite so far. Heidegger's interpretation of Kant may have failed, but in the course of pursuing it he came nearer than ever to speaking with and out of the philosophical tradition, evidenced now by the fact that so many take him to have strayed, during those years, from the path that was most properly his own. In fact, we still today cannot rule out the opposite possibility: that it was precisely at Davos that Heidegger came

⁴⁸⁶ Gordon (2010), 326.

⁴⁸⁷ Cassirer & Heidegger (1929), 193.

as close as he ever would to understanding the contents of his own deepest philosophical insights.

References

For the general method of citation, see the “List of Abbreviations” and the “Note on Translations” at the beginning of this essay.

Works by Kant

The standard German edition of Kant’s works is *Kant’s gesammelte Schriften, herausgegeben von der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter [and predecessors], 1900-). The location of individual works within this edition is indicated by “Ak [volume]:[pages]” in the following references. The abbreviation in parentheses refers to the abbreviation of the work used in parenthetical citations. When available, the English translations in the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* are listed along with the entry, and, in a few cases, alternative translations I have also consulted have been listed.

Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht (**A** 1798). Ak 7:117-333. English: *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Robert B. Loudon, trans. In *Anthropology, History, and Education*: 227-429. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung? (**WE** 1784). Ak 8:33-42. English: *An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?* Mary J. Gregor, trans. In *Practical Philosophy*: 11-22. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Briefwechsel (**C**). Ak 10-12. English: *Selections in Correspondence*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis (**ID** 1770). Ak 2:385-419. English: *On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World*. In *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755-1770*: 373-416. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Erste Einleitung in die Kritik der Urteilskraft (**FI** 1790). Ak 20:193-251. English: “First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.” In *Critique of the Power of Judgment*: 1-51. Paul Guyer & Eric Matthews, trans. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten (**G** 1785). Ak 4:385-463. English: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Mary J. Gregor, trans. In *Practical Philosophy*: 37-108.

Kritik der praktischen Vernunft (**CPrR** 1788). Ak 5:1-163. English: *Critique of Practical Reason*. Mary J. Gregor, trans. In *Practical Philosophy*: 133-271.

Kritik der reinen Vernunft (**CPR** 1781/1787). Ak 3, 4:1-252. English: *Critique of Pure Reason*. Paul Guyer & Allen W. Wood, trans. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

- Kritik der Urteilkraft* (**CPJ** 1790). Ak 5:165-485. English: *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Paul Guyer & Eric Matthews, trans. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000. See also: *Critique of Judgment*. Werner Pluhar, trans. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1987. And also: Angelica Nuzzo. *Kant and the Unity of Reason*. Pt. II: "The Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*." West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2005.
- Logik* (**JL** 1800). Ak 9:1-150. English: *The Jäsche Logic*. In *Lectures on Logic*: 521-640. J. Michael Young, trans. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Logik Dohna-Wundlacken* (**DWL** early 1790s). Ak 24:687-784. English: *The Dohna-Wundlacken Logic*. In *Lectures on Logic*: 431-516.
- Logik Hechsel* (**HL** c. 1780). In Reinhard Brandt & Werner Stark, eds. *Logik-Vorlesung: Unveröffentlichte Nachschriften II*: 269-499. English: *The Hechsel Logic (in part)*. In *Lectures on Logic*: 381-423.
- Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* (**MFNS** 1786). Ak 4:465-565. English: *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. Michael Friedman, trans. In *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*: 171-270. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Metaphysik der Sitten* (**MM** 1797). Ak 6:203-493. English: *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Mary J. Gregor, trans. In *Practical Philosophy*: 353-603.
- Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius* (**MoV** 1793-1794). Ak 27:479-732. English: *Kant on the Metaphysics of Morals: Vigilantius's Lecture Notes*. In *Lectures on Ethics*: 249-452. Peter Heath, trans. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Metaphysik Mrongovius* (**MMr** 1782-1783). Ak 29:747-940. English: *Metaphysik Mrongovius*. In *Lectures on Metaphysics*: 109-286. Karl Ameriks & Steve Naragon, trans. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Metaphysik von Schön, Ontologie* (**MS** late 1780s) Ak 28: 461-524.
- Moralphilosophie Collins* (**MoC** c. 1780). Ak 27:237-473. English: *Moral Philosophy: Collins's Lecture Notes*. In *Lectures on Ethics*: 37-222.
- Moralphilosophie Mrongovius II* (**MoMr₂** 1784-1785). Ak 29:593-642. English: *Morality According to Prof. Kant: Mrongovius's Second Set of Lecture Notes (selections)*. In *Lectures on Ethics*: 223-248.
- Nachträge zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft (1. Auflage)* (**ACPR** 1781-1787). Ak 23: 15-50.
- Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können* (**P** 1783). Ak 4:253-383. English: *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science*. Gary Hatfield, trans. In *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*: 29-169.

- Recensionen von J.G. Herders Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (**RH** 1785). Ak 8:43-66. English: *Review of J.G. Herder's Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Humanity, Pts. 1 & 2*. Allen W. Wood, trans. In *Anthropology, History, and Education*: 121-142.
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- Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* (**Rel** 1793). Ak 6:1-202. English: *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. George di Giovanni, trans. In *Religion and Rational Theology*: 39-215. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik* (**DSS** 1766). Ak 2:315-373. English: *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics*. In *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755-1770*: 301-359.
- Über den Gebrauch teleologischer Principien in der Philosophie* (**UTP** 1788). Ak 8:157-184. English: *On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy*. Günter Zöllner, trans. In *Anthropology, History, and Education*: 192-218.
- Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis* (**TP** 1793). Ak 8:273-313. English: *On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory, But It Is of No Use in Practice*. Mary J. Gregor, trans. In *Practical Philosophy*: 273-309.
- Von dem ersten Grunde des Unterschiedes der Gegenden in Raume* (**GDS** 1768). Ak 2:375-383. English: *Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Directions in Space*. In *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755-1770*: 361-372.
- Was heißt: Sich im Denken orientieren?* (**OOT** 1786). Ak 8:131-147. English: *What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?* Allen W. Wood, trans. In *Religion and Rational Theology*: 1-18.
- Wiener-Logik* (**VL** c. 1780). Ak 24:785-940. English: *The Vienna Logic*. In *Lectures on Logic*: 251-377.
- Zum ewigen Frieden* (**TPP** 1795). Ak 8:341-386. English: *Toward Perpetual Peace*. Mary J. Gregor, trans. In *Practical Philosophy*: 311-351.

Works by Heidegger

The standard German edition of Heidegger's works is the *Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975-). The location of individual works within this edition is indicated by "GA [volume]:[pages]" in the following references. The abbreviation in parentheses refers to the abbreviation of the work used in parenthetical citations. Some works do not appear in this edition; in such cases, references are to the

German edition listed here. Afterwards are listed the primary English translations I have consulted, supplemented in a few cases with alternatives from which I have also benefited. See also, in the “Other Works” listed below, Cassirer & Heidegger (1929); Husserl & Heidegger (1927).

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Aufzeichnungen zum Kantbuch (**NK** 1930s-1940s). GA 3: 249-254. English: “Notes on the Kantbook.” In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 5th ed.: 175-179. Richard Taft, trans. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997.

Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis) (**C** 1936-1938). GA 65. English: *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*. Richard Rojcewicz & Daniela Vallega-Neu, trans. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012. See also: *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*. Parvis Emad & Kenneth Maly, trans. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999.

Brief an Karl Löwith. 20 Aug 1927 (**LL**). In “Drei Briefe Martin Heideggers an Karl Löwith”: 33-38. In Dietrich Papenfuss & Otto Pöggeler, eds. *Zur Philosophischen Aktualität Heideggers, v. 2: Im Gespräch der Zeit*: 27-39. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990. English: In “Letter Exchange with Karl Löwith on *Being and Time*”: 299-303. Gary Steiner, trans. (Theodore Kisiel, rev.). In *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of His Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*: 289-303. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007.

Ernst Cassirer: Philosophie der symbolischen Formen, 2. Teil: Das mythische Denken (**RC** 1928). GA 3:255-270. English: Review of Ernst Cassirer, *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, v. 2: Mythical Thought*. In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 5th ed.: 180-190.

Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie (**BPP** 1927). GA 24. English: *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, rev. ed. Albert Hofstadter, trans. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982.

Die Idee der Philosophie und das Weltanschauungsproblem (**KNS** 1919). GA 56/57:1-117. English: *The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview*. In *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*: 1-90. Ted Sadler, trans. London, UK: Continuum, 2000.

Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik (**KPM** 1929). GA 3:xii-xviii, 1-246. English: *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 5th ed.: xvii-xxi, 1-173. Richard Taft, trans. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997.

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- Martin Heidegger / Karl Jaspers Briefwechsel: 1920-1963* (**HJC**). Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990. English: *The Heidegger-Jaspers Correspondence (1920-1963)*. Gary E. Aylesworth, trans. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2003.
- Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz* (**MFL** 1928). GA 26. English: *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. Michael Heim, trans. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- Ontologie: Hermeneutik der Faktizität* (**O** 1923). GA 63. English: *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity*. John van Buren, trans. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999.
- Phänomenologische Interpretation von Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (**PIK** 1927-1928). GA 25. English: *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. Parvis Emad & Kenneth Maly, trans. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung* (**PIA** 1921-1922). GA 61. English: *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research*. Richard Rojcewicz, trans. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001.
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- Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität* (**RA** 1933). Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983. English: "The Self-Assertion of the German University." William S. Lewis, trans. In Richard Wolin, ed. *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*: 29-39. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1991.
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- Was ist Metaphysik?* (**WM** 1929). GA 9:103-122. English: "What is Metaphysics?" David Farrell Krell, trans. In *Basic Writings*: 89-110. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1977.
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and the Current Struggle for a Historical Worldview.” Theodore Kisiel, trans. In *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of His Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*: 238-274.

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