From Kant to Davidson

Philosophy and the idea
of the transcendental

Edited by Jeff Malpas

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Recent philosophy has seen the idea of the transcendental, first introduced in its modern form in the work of Kant, take on a new prominence.

Bringing together an international range of younger philosophers and established thinkers, this volume opens up the idea of the transcendental, examining it not merely as a mode of argument but as naming a particular problematic and a philosophical style.

From contemporary rethinkings of the Kantian project through to the holistic, externalist inquiries of Donald Davidson, transcendental styles of reasoning and the broader framework of transcendental inquiry have come to play an important role in the work of a number of philosophers. Beginning with Kant, the contributions in this volume explore the idea of the transcendental in its original historical context, as well as its more recent appearance in relation to Heidegger, Husserl, Apel, Derrida, Chomsky, McDowell and Davidson. As well as providing insight into the idea of the transcendental, the book also offers new approaches to the work of many of these thinkers.

With contributions engaging in both analytic and continental approaches, this book will be of essential interest to philosophers and philosophy students interested in the idea of the transcendental and the part that it plays in modern and contemporary philosophy.

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

The idea of the transcendental

Jeff Malpas

Of the ideas that make up the conceptual repertoire of philosophy, the idea of the transcendental, for all the history that attaches to it, has often been seen as having something particularly disreputable about it. Talk of the transcendental has come to be associated, in many contexts, with the speculative, the archly metaphysical and even the mystical; so-called 'transcendental argument' is viewed, in many circles, as either a fallacious mode of proof or else as inevitably dependent on verificationist or idealist premises. And suspicion of the transcendental is not restricted merely to those whose philosophical affinities are with the empiricist, anti-idealist traditions of twentieth century 'analytic' thought. For philosophers whose inclinations are towards a more pragmatist or historicist approach, the idea of the transcendental is often taken to be indicative of a universalist, ahistorical mode of philosophizing – one that strives to transcend the particularity of our factical situation.

In its original medieval usage, of course, the idea of the transcendental referred to concepts of being, unity, the good and so forth – the 'transcendentals' – that referred across the system of categories and so transcended any particular category. The way in which the idea has entered into philosophy over the last two hundred and fifty years is in a rather difference sense, however, one that, in its original form, was actually intended not to extend metaphysics, but rather properly to ground metaphysical inquiry and so also to limit it. It is this sense of the transcendental that we find elaborated in Kant. Indeed, in spite of the carelessness that is sometimes attributed to his use of the term, Kant is quite clear in distinguishing his 'transcendental' approach from that of speculative or dogmatic metaphysics, and explicitly characterizes the transcendental as referring to the structures that underpin the legitimate use of reason, and that therefore make possible 'knowledge of experience', as well as to that which concerns those structures, including the philosophical investigation of them. Thus, in the *Prolegomena*, Kant says of the term 'transcendental' that it 'never means a reference to our knowledge of things, but only to the cognitive faculty',[1] while in the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant famously characterizes the transcendental, in similar vein, as that which 'is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects in so far as this is to be possible *a priori*'.[2] And while Kant does sometimes appear to employ the term 'transcendental' in ways that suggest

a conflation between 'transcendental' and 'transcendent', he also tries to mark out the difference between the two terms. He responds, for instance, to an apparently unsympathetic reviewer by commenting that:

> [T]he word 'transcendental', the meaning of which is so often explained by me but not once grasped by my reviewer (so carelessly has he regarded everything), does not signify something passing beyond all experience but something that indeed precedes it *a priori*, but that is intended simply to make knowledge of experience possible. If these conceptions overstep experience, their employment is termed 'transcendent', which must be distinguished from the immanent use, that is, use restricted to experience.[3]

Moreover, if there is a tendency for apparent conflation to emerge, then it may be that this is partly due to the fact that Kant seems occasionally to designate something as '*transcendental*', even though it involves the positing of something '*transcendent*', in virtue of the fact that the positing is itself a requirement of the structure of the possibility of knowledge.

The Kantian origins of the transcendental provide an essential starting point for any discussion of the idea of the transcendental as it has developed over the last two hundred years or so, since not only is the rise of the transcendental in recent philosophy largely a function of Kant's appropriation of the term, but also because the Kantian origin of the term – and its Kantian transformation – is indeed so often ignored, overlooked or simply misunderstood. This is not to say that there is not plenty of room for divergence in reading Kant on the transcendental (and some of those divergences can be discerned in the essays gathered together here), but while it is commonplace to cite the Kantian characterization of the transcendental as that which concerns the *a priori* possibility of knowledge, only seldom is the inquiry into the nature of the transcendental taken much beyond this. In part, this seems to be due to a relative unreflectiveness, at least in much contemporary English-speaking philosophy, so far as issues of philosophical methodology are concerned. It may also be a result of the widespread tendency to view the transcendental, in fairly narrow terms, as primarily a mode of argument directed at the refutation of scepticism.[4]

As the essays contained in this volume ought to demonstrate, however, not only does the idea of the transcendental involve more than merely a style of argument, not only is it concerned with more than just the problem of scepticism, but it also brings questions concerning the very nature and possibility of philosophical inquiry to the fore. This is clearly the case with respect to Kant, and in the first chapter of this volume Camilla Serck-Hanssen explains the way in which the idea of the transcendental itself emerges in Kant's early thought out of a set of explicitly methodological concerns relating to the dispute over the nature of living forces within German eighteenth-century thought. Juliet Floyd continues the engagement with Kant in the essay that makes up the second chapter of the volume, but while Serck-Hanssen explores the idea of the transcendental in Kant's first published writing, Floyd looks at the way in which the

transcendental strategy is worked out in a later work, the *Critique of Judgment*, and with respect to a specific philosophical problem, the Humean attack on induction. An important feature of Floyd's discussion is the elaboration of a conception of the transcendental as a mode of philosophizing that aims not at finding some transcendental standpoint from which our epistemic and other practices can be legitimated, but rather at drawing attention to the concrete and contingent circumstances in which those practices arise and on which their possibility is based. Thus she suggests that the 'proper conception of the transcendental perspective is something more local, more parochial, more open-ended, and more contingent'.[5] In this way, the Kantian response to the 'Humean condition', as set out in the third *Critique*, seems to be echoed in the work of more recent philosophers, notably Austin and Wittgenstein, but also, notwithstanding his own Humean sympathies, in the work of Quine.

As Floyd's discussion shows, the idea of the transcendental, while it may have its modern origins with Kant, certainly does not end there. Indeed, while Kant remains an influential presence in many of the discussions contained below, he is only occasionally the main focus of attention. In this respect, the chapters that make up this volume can be seen as tracing out some of the main pathways (although certainly not all) through which the idea of the transcendental has developed over the last two centuries. Thus Dermot Moran introduces us (in Chapter 3) to the Husserlian appropriation of the idea of the transcendental in the form of transcendental phenomenology. In what sometimes appears as a radicalization of Descartes by Kantian (or neo-Kantian) means, Husserl provides us with an example of transcendental philosophy that stands in stark contrast to the more modest idea of the transcendental that is suggested by Floyd. Given its explicitly idealist and even foundationalist character, the Husserlian position seems to provide us with something closer to the traditional conception of the transcendental and of transcendental philosophy. The contrast between the ambitious and the more modest conceptions of the transcendental that appears in the opening chapters of the volume, and that is exemplified in the contrast between the idealist transcendentalism of Husserl and the more limited conception of the transcendental suggested by Floyd as well as by Serck-Hanssen, is played out in a particularly interesting form in the contributions by myself, Steve Crowell and Mark Okrent that make up chapters 4, 5 and 6. Here the focus is on the idea of the transcendental as it appears in the thought of Husserl's most famous student, Martin Heidegger, and a theme that runs through all three of these chapters is the possibility of a form of transcendental philosophy that is indeed in keeping with a more modest conception of the transcendental, one that is compatible with the factical and even, in Okrent's presentation, the pragmatic, and that will allow of a response to the question of being, and so also the question of ground, that does not seek to reduce being to something other than being. In large part, these three chapters argue for a repositioning of the idea of the transcendental (a repositioning that, in some ways, would bring it into closer alignment with Kant), as well as of the notions of ground, of unity and limit, of the factical, and of the pragmatic, as they themselves stand in relation to the

transcendental. Moreover, inasmuch as the transcendental can itself be seen as a project aimed at achieving a certain sort of grounding, the issue at stake in these three chapters may be put in terms of a question: how is it possible to answer the question of ground once the commitment to traditional foundationalism has been abandoned?

Another angle on this question is provided, in Chapter 7, by Karsten Harries' examination of transcendental themes in the philosophy of Karl-Otto Apel. In Apel's work we encounter the transcendental as it has been transformed under the influence of the 'linguistic turn' that has been characteristic of so much twentieth-century thought, but which was, of course, prefigured, in the German tradition, by philosophers such as Herder and Hamman. But the linguistic trans- formation of philosophy, and of the transcendental, brings into sharp relief the apparent tension between the desire of transcendental reflection, in whatever domain it operates, to arrive at an account of the *a priori* conditions in which that domain is grounded, and the need for any such grounding, if it is to be mean- ingful, to be related back to our own historical situation, to be articulated in our own parochial tongue. As Harries makes clear, this problem is evident in Apel's own work, but it also constitutes an inevitable limit to all transcendental reflec- tion. The limits, or perhaps the tensions, within the idea of the transcendental, and within the transcendental as a mode of philosophizing, are explored from a different perspective in Claire Colebrook's discussion, in Chapter 8, of the tran- scendental as it appears in the work of Jacques Derrida. Inasmuch as philosophy is essentially constituted by its 'transcendental' character, so the inquiry into the character of the transcendental is, for Derrida, also an exploration of the nature, limits and contradictions of philosophy as such, and to this end he introduces the notion of the 'quasi-transcendental' (a term that also appears in Harries' discus- sion of Apel, though in a different sense) to designate that on which the transcendental itself relies and which is determinative of it. Moreover, while Derrida is indeed concerned to explore the extent to which the transcendental is itself dependent on the 'quasi-transcendental', his own deconstructive approach can nevertheless been seen as a development out of, and so as continuous with, the transcendental mode of thought associated with phenomenology.

Discussion of the transcendental is not, of course, restricted just to philoso- phers working with German or French thought. Juliet Floyd, for instance, is quite explicit, as we saw above, in drawing parallels between the transcendental approach adopted by Kant in relation to Hume and the approaches to be found in more recent philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Quine. Harries, too, draws on a range of philosophers, including Wittgenstein,[6] while Okrent's pragmatist emphasis is suggestive of another line of connection. The final four chapters of the volume (chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12) focus more directly on transcendental themes in the work of philosophers from outside the Kantian, phenomenological or hermeneutic traditions. Thus, in Chapter 9, Bruce Fraser examines the tensions between Cartesian and naturalistic elements in Chomskyan linguistics, arguing that these tensions can only be avoided by looking to a more 'transcen- dental' model on which to base the Chomskyan programme. And although

Fraser does not do so himself, the arguments he presents regarding the possible superiority of a transcendental construal of the linguist's enterprise over a purely naturalistic reading are suggestive of a more general argument concerning the relation of the transcendental and the naturalistic. While he also returns us to Heidegger, Mark Wrathall takes as his main focus, in Chapter 10, John McDowell's treatment of a problem that is often taken as lying at the heart of the transcendental (and that is undoubtedly central to the Kantian problematic): the problem of transcendence, that is, the way in which the objects of perception (and, one might say, of mental states generally) transcend the mind. In McDowell this problem is essentially presented in terms of the relation between conceptual judgement and perceptual experience, and Wrathall contends that McDowell's treatment of this problem, according to which the 'gap' between concept and percept is overcome by making perception conceptual 'all the way down', is acceptable only by giving up on the demand that it be adequate to the actual phenomenology of perception. Wrathall argues, instead, for the superiority of an alternative approach derived from Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. The focus on McDowell continues in Anita Leirfall's discussion, in Chapter 11, of the apparently transcendental nature of McDowell's project, as initially characterized by McDowell himself, and the shift from such a transcendental orientation towards one that appears more 'epistemological'. The problem of the relation between mind and world that is taken up in the discussions of McDowell's work is also the focus of the concluding chapter in the volume. Donald Davidson has occasionally (and rather tentatively) characterized his own work in transcendental terms and a number of other philosophers, including myself, have argued for Kantian and transcendental elements as having an important role in Davidson's work. Focusing on the externalism that has become such a central feature of Davidson's more recent writings, Andrew Carpenter argues, in Chapter 12, for a reading of Davidson as employing a form of 'ambitious' transcendental argumentation based in the theory of radical interpretation and, in particular, in the Davidsonian idea of 'triangulation'. One of the interesting features of Carpenter's reading, however, is not merely that one might be able to find, in Davidson, a form of transcendental argumentation, but that Davidson's thought as a whole might be open to interpretation within a more Kantian transcendental frame. How might that change our understanding of the Davidsonian position, how might it change our understanding of externalism, how might it reflect on our reading of the transcendental in Kant's own work?

The idea that there might be a fruitful dialogue to be opened up through the exploration of a common transcendental orientation in thinkers such as Kant, Heidegger and even Davidson is one of the possibilities that is reinforced by the discussions in this volume. Indeed, it is notable the extent to which the transcendental so often provides a common frame within which otherwise quite disparate philosophers are brought together. Perhaps the idea of the transcendental, when given appropriate articulation, provides a philosophical and methodological framework that has the potential to bridge some of the divisions that have so bedevilled much recent philosophy. Of course, given the suspicion

of the transcendental referred to above, it may also be that it will only serve to mark out those divisions even more strongly. One of the main aims of this volume, however, is to encourage rethinking of the idea of the transcendental in ways that might enable us to retrieve the meaning and significance of that idea as it appears in Kant, as it is developed in a number of subsequent philosophers, and as it might apply across a range of philosophical styles and traditions. In some cases, this means paying closer attention to the idea of the transcendental as it is already acknowledged to be present in the work of thinkers such as Kant and Heidegger; in some cases, it involves showing how the idea of the transcendental remains alive, perhaps contrary to appearances, in the work of contemporary thinkers (of whom Davidson is perhaps the most obvious and important example). In these respects, the present volume can be seen as attempting a certain 'reclamation' of the idea of the transcendental from the misunderstanding, obscurity and hostility that seems so often to have surrounded it. Strictly speaking, however, such reclamation is not initiated with this volume, since it has already been under way in the work of many of the thinkers included or discussed in these pages. The aim of this volume is thus less one of reclamation than of drawing attention to the proper and distinctive character of the idea of the transcendental, and of a transcendental mode of philosophizing, as it is already present in the philosophizing of the last two centuries, and as it continues in the philosophizing of today – as it remains a theme in the work of philosophers from Kant to Davidson.

Notes

1   Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, trans. rev. Carus, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1950, p. 41 [Ak. 294].
2   Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, A11–12/B25.
3   Kant, *Prolegomena*, p. 122n [Ak. 373].
4   This is not to say that an engagement with scepticism is not an important element in the Kantian project, but only that the direct refutation of scepticism cannot be viewed as its primary aim. In this respect, it is important to distinguish Kant's anti-idealism, as expressed most notably in the 'Refutation of Idealism', from his anti-scepticism.
5   See Juliet Floyd, 'The Fact of Judgement', Chapter 2 below.
6   Unfortunately, I was not able to include Marcelo Stamm's projected discussion of transcendental elements in Wittgenstein ('Deduction and Dialectic: Transcendental Reasoning in Wittgenstein'). Clearly this is an issue deserving of much more consideration than is provided in this volume.

1   Kant's critical debut

The idea of the transcendental
in Kant's early thought

Camilla Serck-Hanssen

Introduction

It is well known that in the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant gave the word 'transcendental' a new meaning. For the Kant of 1781 'transcendental' is intimately linked to the idea of a special kind of justification that appeals to 'conditions of the possibility of experience'. He also contrasts 'transcendental' with 'transcendent', which refers to that which is beyond possible experience. Moreover, the notion of transcendental also set the agenda for a special kind of philosophy, namely transcendental philosophy. What in fact transcendental philosophy is, and even how to interpret Kant's understanding of it, is a controversial issue. The purpose of this discussion is not to engage in the current debate on what is meant by 'transcendental philosophy'. Rather, my aim is to approach the question of Kant's understanding of transcendental philosophy, but to do so in a somewhat indirect fashion. The reason for choosing this strategy is that in the light of recent trends to 'transcendentalize' philosophy and to attach 'Kantian' to many different views in the field, I find it all the more important to remind and inform the contemporary debate of the historical and philosophical premises of Kant's philosophy proper. An unargued premise of this chapter is that Kant's transcendental philosophy can only be understood from within the constraints of his critical agenda. It is the origins of this critical path that will concern us here. I argue that if one focuses on his diagnosis of philosophical problems and their solution, and if one is also aware of a triad of philosophical controversies towards which any philosophy student in mid-eighteenth century Königsberg would be geared, one will see that the germs of Kant's critical conception of philosophy are present already in his first published work, *Thoughts on the True Estimation of Living Forces* (*Living Forces*).[1] Before I embark upon this main project I will present in brief some historical and textual data concerning Kant's understanding of 'transcendental'.

The origins of 'transcendental' in Kant's writings

In the early eighteenth century, German writers used the term 'transcendental' in a number of different ways. Here I can only mention a few important figures and will concentrate on their understanding of 'transcendental philosophy'.

Franz Albert Aepinus (1673–1750), who taught in Rostock from 1712, identified transcendental philosophy with the whole of metaphysics or ontology.[2] In other words, transcendental philosophy is the complete and all-encompassing theory of being. Both Joachim Georg Darjes (1714–91) and Johann Nicolas Tetens (1736–1807) studied in Rostock under Aepinus and there is little doubt that their works made a direct impact on Kant's thinking. Even though we do not know if Kant ever studied Aepinus, his ideas must have been influential in the environment in which the young philosopher was trained.

Christian Wolff (1679–1754) explained his understanding of 'transcendental philosophy' as a special kind of cosmology that determined what the actual and every possible world have in common. In other words, it is a theory that presents necessary truths. It is also a theory of objects and relations *in general*. Why he restricts 'transcendental philosophy' to one domain within special metaphysics[3] is easier to grasp when we see that he also says that transcendental philosophy stands to physics just as ontology or first philosophy stands to philosophy as a whole.[4] Transcendental philosophy offers only a subset of necessary truths, the truths that ground physics. Hence, Wolff presents it as an answer to the heated debate of the time concerning the status of the first principles of natural philosophy. Kant was clearly familiar with Wolff's understanding of 'transcendental philosophy' and this was also the sense in which it was used by other writers who influenced Kant from early on: Georg Bernhard Bülfinger (1693–1750), Johan Peter Reusch (1691–1758) and Friedrich Christian Baumeister (1709–85).

Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714–62), however, employed 'transcendental' in the old scholastic sense of the transcendentals of ontology: *ens*, *unum*, *bonum*, *verum*, *perfectum*. Hence, for Baumgarten transcendental philosophy is the philosophy which has the transcendentals as its objects. We know that Kant read and wrote comments in two copies of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*. Unfortunately, the earliest one of these has been lost. The one preserved is the 1757 edition, and the marginalia that inform us about Kant's reactions to Baumgarten are believed to be from the late 1760s. From these notes, as well as from the *Critique of Pure Reason* itself, we can gather that at least from the 1770s and onwards Kant understood his own transcendental project as continuous with the old tradition.[5]

To summarize, the term 'transcendental philosophy' was used in a variety of ways by the German-speaking philosophers of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, they all seem to agree that transcendental philosophy belongs to metaphysics. Kant must have been familiar with these different meanings and formed his own concept partly in continuity; partly in opposition to them. It is, however, noteworthy that, apart from two findings in his Latin texts between 1756 and 1770, the term 'transcendental' appears relatively late in Kant's writings.[6] In the German texts it is used first in a letter to Marcus Herz in 1772,[7] and just after that it appears in several so-called *Reflexionen*, unpublished notes and drafts. Since Kant published nothing between the *Dissertatio* of 1770 and the *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1781, quite naturally the first published work in

German in which we find the word 'transcendental' is the first *Critique*. Its first appearance here is in the introduction, where it is annexed both to 'knowledge' and 'philosophy':

> I call all cognition *transcendental* that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects in so far as this is to be possible *a priori*. A system of such concepts would be called transcendental philosophy.[8]

The earliest explicit formulation of what constitutes one of the main projects of the *Critique of Pure Reason* stems from the beginning of 1772. In the already mentioned letter to Herz, Kant claims that apart from one single point he is content with his *Dissertatio*. The issue he finds inadequately treated is that of explaining how intellectual, i.e. *a priori*, representations can relate to objects.[9] Another way of formulating this problem is obviously: 'How are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible?'. Given the tradition of partly equating metaphysics and transcendental philosophy, since the *a priori* concepts of the intellect are fundamental metaphysical concepts such as substance, accidents and cause, Kant may be regarded as quite traditional when in the same letter he says that the answer to this problem is transcendental philosophy. From this point of view, he is also quite traditional when in some *Reflexionen* written between 1772 and 1774 he refers to these concepts as transcendental concepts.[10] However, the justification he gives of these concepts is innovative.[11] These concepts convey *a priori* knowledge of objects (and are thus metaphysical or transcendental in the traditional sense) because they are the conditions of the possibility of our knowledge of objects in general. Metaphysical concepts that are justified in this sense would, if they were fully analysed and arranged in a complete system, constitute transcendental philosophy.[12] Although Kant himself is hardly always consistent in his use of terminology, we can easily see that some of the apparent confusion with respect to his views on metaphysics is brought about simply because his critical project is seen as in dialogue with a tradition. He therefore employs 'metaphysical' as a predicate that covers both justified (in his own sense) and unjustified *a priori* concepts, judgements, inferences and sciences. The same is partly true about 'transcendental', although most of the time he uses this term to single out legitimate concepts and so forth.

In 1781 transcendental philosophy is only an idea, according to Kant; in other words, no such theory is yet within grasp. A critique is to result in the complete and systematic outline of transcendental philosophy. Sometimes Kant identifies the *Critique* with this achievement.[13] In this case the *Critique* is itself a part of transcendental philosophy: it is the framework of a theory that only needs to be filled out further through analysis and derivation. But in so far as the *Critique* is identified as a *propaedeutic* or discipline of the system entitled transcendental philosophy, 'critique' refers to the science of the examination of pure reason, of its sources and limits, rather than to the outcome of this examination.[14] In the latter sense a critique contains important elements that

would not themselves appear as a part of transcendental philosophy, but rather serve as conditions for establishing its scope and limits.

Although there are certain hints in early works which make Kant's way of justifying metaphysical concepts in the *Critique of Pure Reason* understandable,[15] the first recognizable versions of it stem from around 1772.[16] As late as 1770 he justifies metaphysical concepts by claiming, seemingly dogmatically, that they represent objects as they are as opposed to how they appear (to sensibility). So not only can there be no full transcendental philosophy, in Kant's specific sense, in the early works (although this is trivial given that in 1781 it is still a mere idea and, in fact, Kant never presented such a system), but since the concepts to be arranged in the complete systematic outline depend for their identification and ordering on Kant's specific way of justifying them – that is, by his arguing that they are conditions of the possibility of experience – so must that part of transcendental philosophy that he identifies with the *Critique* be absent in the early works also. However, as we shall now see, important features of the propaedeutic aspects of the *Critique* are in fact present already in Kant's first published work.

Living Forces and Königsberg 1746

In *Thoughts on the True Estimation of Living Forces* Kant takes on no less than the resolution of a conflict that began eighty years earlier and occupied some of the greatest thinkers of that time. The dispute concerned the estimation of force and began with Leibniz purporting to have found a mistake in Descartes' estimation of the force of a moving body. According to Descartes, the proper estimation of the force of a body is proportionate with its velocity. According to Leibniz, however, it is the square of the body's velocity. The respective positions reflect two different conceptions of force itself. Descartes and his followers recognized no other force than that which is given to a body from a source external to itself and which causes the body to move. Leibniz and his adherents, however, argued that, in addition to the kind of power that the Cartesians accepted, there is also a living force whose source lies within the body itself.

After a contribution by D'Alembert in 1743 which was taken to settle the matter in favour of the Cartesians, the debate had in fact ebbed away both in the European academies and in the literary circles of Madame de Châtelet and Voltaire, where it had had a vivid existence just a few years before. Only at the more provincial universities such as Königsberg was the debate still alive. Through his teacher Martin Knutzen, who had been a student of the Leibnizian philosopher Wolff, Kant thus came to believe that the conflict had not at all been settled.[17] In his mind both parties had found equally good support for their views and they both maintained that their opponents would have come to the same conclusions as themselves if only they were willing to abandon their preconceived views and assume a state of judgemental equilibrium.[18]

Since both parties cannot be right, or at least so it seems, the dispute is antinomial and can be presented in the following way:

Thesis	When a body is grasped in real movement its force is the square of its velocity.
Antithesis	When a body is grasped in real movement its force is proportionate to its velocity.

Kant boldly tells us that either this *Streit* is going to be solved shortly or never. The ground of this optimistic statement is that he believes that he has found a method that provides the only means for solving such a conflict.[19] The importance of this method can hardly be exaggerated. Kant himself says that the whole thesis on living forces is a creation of this method alone.

The first remark to be noticed is that a certain Herr Bülfinger has provided a rule that Kant hopes to have applied in a successful manner to the *Streit* on living forces. The rule says that when we have to do with a problem where men of good reason form contrary judgements, we should always focus our attention on some middle premise which in a certain way allows both parties to be correct.[20] This accords with the logic of probability, i.e. dialectics.[21] In other words, the origin of antinomies seems to be an inference in which the middle premise of the argument that leads the parties to their conclusion contains some kind of ambiguous term which the parties interpret differently. If this is the case both parties may in fact be right, although not, as they themselves thought, absolutely and unconditionally so. They can only both be right if the object about which they both purport to judge is taken in two different ways.[22]

From the short remark on Bülfinger, several important points concerning Kant's understanding of philosophy can be read off. First of all, since Kant claims that he always employs Bülfinger's rule in the investigation of truths and this search must be the hallmark of philosophy, it seems that for him all philosophical problems are antinomial or follow from antinomies. This suggestion is supported by the fact that in all of Kant's philosophical writings in this early period, *Universal Natural History*, *New Elucidation* and *Physical Monadology*, he is concerned with antinomial conflicts.[23] Further, philosophy is a critical and conceptual enterprise which aims at resolving misguided reasoning based on conceptual confusions. Moreover, since reason is the same in all men,[24] to philosophize successfully according to the agenda set by antinomies is really to resolve a conflict within reason itself. Add to this picture the following three questions which were heavily debated in Kant's philosophical environment:

(i) Are the foundational principles of natural philosophy mathematical or metaphysical?
(ii) What is the proper method of philosophy?
(iii) What is the status of the Aristotelian categories, do they belong to logic or metaphysics?

The first question is explicitly answered by Kant in *Living Forces*. The scope of mathematics is restricted to a certain limited conception of objects that the proper conception of natural objects transcends. Hence, mathematics needs a

metaphysical underpinning in order to inform us about nature. According to Kant, Leibniz, on the one hand, erred in extending mathematics beyond its proper domain. Descartes, on the other hand, erred in restricting his conception of 'object' to that of the mathematical/geometrical. Kant thus approaches (i) by seeking to establish the proper domain of the respective sciences via a disclosure of their respective sense of 'object' and other fundamental concepts. The human intellect, in Kant's mind, obviously has a natural tendency towards identifying a limited conception as a complete one. He also seems to hold that this is due to conflating our conception of the object with the object itself; a dispute concerning the *ratio cognoscendi* is mistaken for a dispute about matters of fact. Moreover, this hypostatizing tendency is expressed, upheld and concealed by language where the same word is used in quite different senses.[25]

This all implies that in addition to natural philosophy or metaphysics there must be some kind of critical metaphilosophy that operates at the level of concepts and investigates into the proper domain and limits of, on the one hand, the mathematical sciences and, on the other, natural philosophy, and also explains the relation between them.[26] With respect to the mathematical sciences, Kant seems to have accepted Newtonian physics and Euclidean geometry as providing true 'data'.[27] This meant that the claims of metaphysics had to accord with them, but also that the philosophical task of finding their correct interpretation was less difficult than the corresponding one in metaphysics. Since no fully true metaphysics had yet been established,[28] the question of the proper interpretation of its concepts runs parallel to, or even precedes, the question of what its basic principles are.

These considerations link us to questions (ii) and (iii) above. The last point relates Kant's inquiry to the question of the status of Aristotelian categories.[29] In Germany there had been a revival of the *universalia Streit* in the seventeenth century. Several treatises were written on the topic of the correct interpretation of Aristotelian categories. One figure of major importance is Christian Thomasius (1655–1728), a radical nominalist whose father, Jacob, had been the teacher of Leibniz. According to Thomasius, metaphysics belongs to logic as a theory of concepts. Moreover, ontology is nothing but a list of arbitrary definitions constructed by the human intellect. Thomasius had many important followers and the tradition continued into the eighteenth century. Johann Heinrich Lambert (1728–77), whose importance for Kant's development is beyond question, makes allusions to Thomasian ontology in his work *Architectonic* (1771). This shows that the Thomasian tradition was still alive in Kant's environment. Another important figure before Thomasius is Abraham Calov (1617–86), who for a period was a professor in Königsberg. He belonged to a group of philosophers, known as the Wittenberger School, who attempted to solve the problem of the categories by creating a new special science, gnostology, the science of the fundamentals of knowledge. Calov also created another science, 'noology', the science of the intellect, to which the question of the categories was assigned. Although both attempts failed and were not revived until after Kant's death, he clearly knew of this neo-scholastic discussion because of the strong

influence of Aristotelian teachers at his university. As late as 1704 Paul Rabe had published there a very detailed examination of the categories.

Another point about ontology should also be mentioned. Among the German philosophers of the eighteenth century the fundamental theme of ontology was the question of *things in general*. The title of the second chapter of Wolff's main work in German (1719), the chapter containing his ontology, reflects this understanding: 'Of the first grounds of our knowledge and all things in general'.[30] Kant must have been accustomed to thinking about ontology in this sense from early on. In a later *Reflexion* to Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* his debts to this discussion, as well as its relation to his own understanding of transcendental philosophy, become clear: '*A science of things in general* really abstracts from all differences and determinations of things as objects (*Gegenstände*) and concerns therefore only pure reason: *Transcendental philosophy*.'[31] So most likely Kant from the very beginning of his philosophical career understood metaphysics as the pretension to determine the essential character of objects qua objects, and he saw the challenge to metaphysics as being that of explaining how our fundamental concepts could accomplish this rather than merely exhibiting the structure of our thought.

The method of philosophy, i.e. (ii) above, was a much-debated theme in eighteenth-century Germany. The philosophical community recognized two main questions concerning method and metaphysics. The first (a) was whether metaphysics is an inductive or a deductive science. The second (b) was whether metaphysics proceeds analytically or synthetically. The latter question (b) is, however, muddled by the fact that it covers several distinct problems, some of which are indeed identical with the former question (a): it can refer to a question concerning the discovery of metaphysical truths, or, what need not be the same, their justification; it can also refer to a question concerning exposition or presentation of the theory. Moreover, although 'analysis' refers to some kind of regression, just what it is supposed to regress from and towards is a matter of confusion. It can be a regression from a compound to its components, a regression from a conclusion to its premises or from effect to cause. 'Synthesis' is likewise a vague concept although it always refers to some kind of progression. It can mean a progression from parts to a whole, from axioms or other premises to conclusions or from cause to effect.

It is remarkable that, although in *Living Forces* Kant is preoccupied with the question of method, he addresses neither of the standard questions. Admittedly, in the last part, in which Kant tries to argue for the metaphysical reality of living forces and for their estimation being that of MV^2, he touches upon them when comparing metaphysics and mathematics. Mathematics, according to Kant, proceeds deductively from axioms and definitions that are stipulative and autonomously established by mathematics itself.[32] Metaphysics too is a deductive science for Kant. However, its definitions are neither stipulative nor established by an autonomous metaphysical science. Metaphysics is based on the analysis of concepts that are not, at least in the scientific sense, exclusively metaphysical since they also make up our ordinary understanding of the world. To meet the

challenge from those who are sceptical towards any kind of metaphysics, one should eventually appeal to corresponding experience.[33] So metaphysics, according to the young Kant, must follow the hypothetico-deductive method. It also involves the analytic method in the sense of requiring analysis of compound concepts into their constituent parts and of regression from the known to the unknown.[34] It certainly involves synthesis too. Synthesis, in the sense of a progression from principles to conclusions, is of course nothing but deduction, and hence a method of metaphysics. Reasoning from cause to effect is also present in *Living Forces*. Analysis as well as synthesis is clearly primarily applied as a means of justification.

Kant's explicit remarks on the method of philosophy, however, concern a method that applies to the meta-level of metaphysics. This method, which we shall look into in the following section, is a method for finding and diagnosing fallacious reasoning. It is a critical and therapeutical method designed to clear the grounds for a true metaphysics, the science that Kant said it was his fate to fall in love with. Although he explicitly acknowledges that the method is taken from other thinkers, Kant's employment of it is, as far as I know, innovative.

Kant's meta-method

The rule adopted from Bülfinger can be formulated as the following imperative: *Find the middle premise that allows both parties to be correct*. In the following I will refer to this imperative as the B-rule. In §88 of *Living Forces* Kant claims that he had found a method in Herr Mairan's work that could liberate human understanding from the tyranny of errors.[35] Kant says that, through lack of this method, the tyranny of errors has held human understanding captive for whole centuries. Without it one would have to look for specific errors in the proofs. However, since human reason has the tendency to accept reasoning that appears correct, it tends not to take on itself the difficult task of finding mistakes in inferences which seem to be valid:

> One must have a method by means of which one in every case can decide, through a general estimation of the principles on which a certain opinion is built and through the comparison of those with the conclusion that is drawn from them, if also the nature of the premises includes everything which is required with respect to the doctrine [*Lehren*] which is inferred from them. This happens when one carefully attends to the determinations that attach to the nature of the conclusion and focuses on whether in the construction of the proof one has chosen such principles which are restricted to the same determinations as those which lie in the conclusion.[36]

The method can be formulated as a two-step rule that, in the following, I will refer to as the M-rule:

1   Find the determinations on which the conclusion depends.
2   Check whether in the construction of the proof such premises are chosen that are restricted by the same determination as that which lies in the conclusion.

Kant exemplifies his use of step 1 of the M-rule by telling us that at first he was fully convinced by Leibniz's proofs for his estimation of living force. However, by a general consideration of the conditions of the Leibnizian estimation of force he realized that the condition of this estimation was the reality of movement. Hence with 'determination' Kant means an assumption which specifies the condition under which the conclusion is taken to be true. The Leibnizian conclusion is of course that the proper measure of force is MV^2. The determination on which this conclusion hinges, according to Kant, is that we are considering objects in real movement. Kant then tells us that he came to see with great certainty that this could not yield the desired conclusion. The reason is that the proofs attempted are all mathematical but when we look into what is meant by the words 'real movement' we find that it cannot get any mathematical support. Indeed the assumption of real movement can be shown to be inconsistent given certain fundamental mathematical principles, in particular the law of continuity.[37] His argument goes as follows: By 'real movement' the Leibnizians mean a movement that has some temporal duration. At the starting point the movement is not real and the body has no living force but however small the time is that lapses there is real movement and living force. On the one hand, it is time as such that is the condition of living force, no minimal or determinate duration is required. On the other hand, if in thought you shorten the time span between the starting point A and a point B where the body has a living force, you realise that at some point of shortening B would reach A and the object would lose its living force. But this implies that the shortening of time both is and is not the condition that affects the living force.[38]

Now, since the mathematical interpretation of 'real movement' is shown to be inconsistent, we know *a priori* that the concept of real movement cannot have played a genuine role in the proofs. In other words, the restriction on the conclusion is found not to be satisfiable in the constructions of the proofs. So, as opposed to what one might think given Kant's formulations, step 2 of the M-rule is not carried out empirically by looking into the specific proofs but by examining whether the restriction of the conclusion *can* play a role in the kind of proofs that are presented. Another way of putting this is to say that step 2 tells one to investigate whether a certain concept has a legitimate use within a given domain. This point is more clearly expressed in §90 of *Living Forces*. Here Kant concludes that the reality of movement has no place in mathematics, that this concept is idle – a fifth wheel that does not accord with the mathematical way of looking at things. Hence, 'real movement' cannot function as a condition of the premises of the purported mathematical proofs and the discussion has been mixed up with philosophical reasoning.

Although Kant applies mathematics to check the truth value of metaphysics,[39] we must not forget that he does not himself restrict metaphysics to

mathematics. The reason why this method is applied in this case is that Leibniz himself purported to give his metaphysics mathematical support. So the mathematical demonstrations against Leibniz's position should be seen not only as expressions of Kant's firm belief in the truths of Cartesian mathematics but also as a step to salvage metaphysics.

> What is at stake here is only the estimation of forces that is cognized through mathematics. And it is no miracle if this does not make God's wisdom perfect enough. This is but one science drawn from the means of all knowledge. By itself it cannot provide the rules of decency and morality and it must be taken together with the doctrines of metaphysics if it is to be applied completely to nature. The harmony that holds between truths is like the harmony in a painting. If one separates a part of it, the decent, the beautiful and the purposive disappear; however one must see all of them together to perceive this. The Cartesian estimate is contrary to the purpose of nature; hence so is its true estimate. But this is no obstacle to its being the true and justified estimation of force in mathematics. The mathematical concepts of the properties of objects and their forces are widely different from the concepts that are met with in nature. It suffices that we have seen that the Cartesian estimate is not contrary to these. We must, however, connect the metaphysical laws with the rules of mathematics in order to determine the true estimation of force in nature. This will fill the gap and better satisfy the purpose of God's wisdom.[40]

Unfortunately, Kant says very little more about his philosophical method. But he explicitly acknowledges that more detailed considerations would have been in place, if the treatise had not been a treatise concerning the justifiability (*Gerichtsbarkeit*) of mathematics.[41] In other words, the method of meta-metaphysics can be an object of a special kind of inquiry. How to proceed with such a task, especially how to avoid an infinite regress of meta-philosophical worries, is left unanswered. What we do know, however, is that the M-rule is a means for disclosing that an apparently valid proof, or set of proofs, must be invalid. By following this rule, one can show that certain proofs must be formally invalid because they necessarily involve an ambiguous employment of terms. In other words, they are shown *a priori* to be paralogistic fallacies. Moreover, the method discloses the invalidity by seeking out its ground. But as we know, Kant does not only want to show that the Leibnizian proofs are fallacious. He also wants to argue that in one way both the Leibnizian and the Cartesian estimations of force are correct. To do so we are to follow the B-rule. Here is the relation between the B-rule and the M-rule: the M-rule enables you to carry out the B-rule. The condition of the premises, in this case the concept 'real movement', is precisely that ambiguous middle term of the middle premise that allows both parties to be in some sense correct.[42] In this sense the M-rule functions as a necessary condition of the B-rule and hence also as a necessary condition of resolving antinomies.

The seductive character of pre-judgements

One might object that if an antinomy is really based on different interpretations of an ambiguous middle term, this ought to be so obvious that it is hard to understand how any antinomy could survive debates over the centuries between the most splendid minds. Kant can hardly be said to have provided an adequate answer to this objection in *Living Forces*, but his main point is found already in the preface. Here he says that although the human mind is free to question all received opinions and apparent truths, it also has an unavoidable tendency to form hasty and uncritical judgements, so called pre-judgements (*Vorurteile*). A pre-judgement has the character of an illusion, since it is a subjective belief or opinion which appears as an objective truth. Since he takes the trust in the authority of famous men, a trust which conceals all other views and makes them appear as if they were perfectly alike, to be a result of being taken in by pre-judgements, the purpose of Kant's presenting this view in the preface is of course partly that he wants to defend his right to criticize great thinkers even though he himself is young and unknown. However, his reference to pre-judgements plays a much more significant role than this. When we turn to his criticisms of the different proofs of the Leibnizians, they more or less explicitly show that he takes their arguments to be grounded in different kinds of pre-judgements.

For instance, Kant contends that Leibniz was led to an error, i.e. his estimation of living force, by the misapplication of a Cartesian principle, to wit that 'the same force is needed to lift one pound four feet as four pounds one foot'.[43] This principle is not unconditionally true, it only holds if the lifting of each of the two bodies takes the same amount of time. Hence, time is a variable that has to be taken into consideration. Leibniz, however, did not recognize this restriction, and Kant believes that the reason why he did not is that he was led to this principle by Descartes' explanation of the nature of a lever. The nature of the lever, however, is such that the time span is necessarily equal; the two arms of the lever cannot but move and come to equilibrium during the same period of time. Since the temporal variable is kept constant when we have to do with levers, Leibniz was not aware of it as a variable and took the judgement to be unconditionally true. Hence the misapplication that Kant claims to be the source of Leibniz's mistaken estimation of force is the application of a principle beyond the constraints of its truth. In this case the misapplication is grounded in a pre-judgement which mistakes a judgement of the senses, namely that the lever uses the same force to lift one pound four feet as four pounds one foot,[44] for an unconditional principle about the force of objects in general.

Another example is found in Kant's criticism of Bülfinger. He says that although Bülfinger's inferences are in some sense perfectly true, his application of them is incorrect and has the mark of a hasty judgement.[45] As was the case with Leibniz, Bülfinger does not recognize the conditions on which his proofs hinge and he draws conclusions which are unrestricted. As it happens, the only reading of his proofs that would render them sound yields a conclusion which is totally irrelevant for the debate on the proper estimate of force. The pre-judgement at

work in Bülfinger's case is that he conflates the true but restricted principle that 'A body moving through the diagonal has *with respect to the two planes CD and BD* a force which is equivalent to the sum of the two forces of the sides' with the unrestricted principle that 'A body moving through the diagonal has a force which is equivalent to the sum of the two forces of the sides'.[46]

We find a third example of how pre-judgements ground fallacious inferences in §61 of *Living Forces*. The Leibnizians were often charged with the objection that their estimation of force could not explain the collision of inelastic bodies which, as the clearest case of force, also ought to be the test case for the existence of living forces. This objection was met by saying that, in the case of a collision of inelastic bodies, one part of the power was always spent to compress the parts of the body, an argument that seems simply ad hoc.

Kant says that the source of this error is the conflation of what belongs to the realm of experience and natural science on the one hand and purely mathematical considerations on the other. In nature hard, i.e. inelastic, objects are so constituted that their parts are conjoined in a way that allows them to compress when the body is hit. Although in fact the hardness of a body usually goes together with such a construction of its parts, we should not let that affect our mathematical understanding of inelastic bodies. The pre-judgement which plays the crucial role here is thus that of taking the empirical sense of 'inelastic body' to be the mathematical sense.[47]

As we see, in all of these cases the pre-judgement consists in taking a judgement whose truth is restricted by a certain set of conditions to be unconditionally true. The ground of this conflation seems to lie in a tendency to regard one's own point of view as representing the absolute one. This tendency is also described as the eagerness to extend knowledge beyond its justifiable grounds.[48]

The critical agenda of 1746: a summary

Our analysis of *Living Forces* has shown that several of the elements that we find in the *Critique of Pure Reason* are already present in the mind of the 22-year-old Immanuel Kant. Philosophy as a critique is a necessary *propaedeutic* to metaphysics because the intellect naturally falls into conflicts with itself. These conflicts are conceptual and first philosophy must therefore be concerned with concepts rather than objects. Further, the conflicts of the intellect are merely apparent since they are really the outcome of paralogistic reasoning. To solve them we need to apply a method that locates ambiguous middle terms. These ambiguities are concealed to us because of our general tendency to form pre-judgements where a subjective and conditioned point of view is mistaken for an objective and absolute one. This tendency can again be seen as stemming from an eagerness to extend knowledge beyond what can be justified.

When the locus of ambiguity is disclosed, another task is set for philosophy: find interpretations of the ambiguous term that allow both parties to be correct! In other words, find different justified ways of reading the terms so that the proofs turn out to be sound. Through such a procedure one sets the limits of

justified employment and subsumes the object of discussion under its appropriate domain. For instance, an object in the mathematical sense must be considered merely within the constraints of this science, an object in the metaphysical sense must be considered within the constraints of metaphysics. So already at this point Kant's interest lies in defining the limits of different domains of justified beliefs and not in a psychological project of describing the functioning of the intellect.[49] However, since no true metaphysics was yet available, the task presented to philosophy by the antinomy of living forces is a major one. The ground of metaphysics had to be established, its limits settled and its relation to the truths of the mathematical sciences would have to be explained. Now since our most fundamental concepts of objects, or our conception of things in general, are all metaphysical concepts, the project of defining and justifying metaphysics overlaps with the inquiry into our conception of objects. In other words, the required *propaedeutics* to metaphysics can be identified with the project of settling the proper limits of speculative reason.[50]

Although Kant might have come to frame his critical programme simply through his preoccupation with the antinomial conflict of living forces, as a matter of fact he was and took himself to be part of a tradition which tried to establish a firm basis for metaphysics. His philosophical upbringing took place in an environment where the old questions of the universals were still alive, where nominalism of different kinds had reigned shortly before his own time and where questions concerning the proper method of metaphysics were eagerly debated. But even if his general project of establishing a true metaphysics was not in any sense unique, his attempted solution to the task is. In this chapter I have argued that the beginning of this solution lies in his special way of identifying philosophy as a science of resolving antinomies.

Although much of the essentials of the later critical philosophy is found in its rudimentary form in the work of the 22-year-old Kant, many important steps are still missing. An account must be given of pre-judgement or illusion that grounds its necessity by reference to its systematic role in cognition rather than the more psychologistic approach we find in *Living Forces*.[51] The distinction between analytic and synthetic judgements is worked out in the mid-1760s. The distinction between intuition and concept can be traced back to 1766, and the arguments for space and time being forms of intuition appear in the *Dissertatio* of 1770. The question 'How are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible?' appears in its first form in a letter to Herz of February 21, 1772, and the distinction between reason and understanding stems from around 1775. To show the background of these steps and their connection to the points made about *Living Forces* would, however, take me beyond the scope of the present discussion.

Notes

1   Most commentators pay little or no attention to this work. Norbert Hinske is an exception here. In *Kants Weg zur Transzendentalphilosophie*, Berlin, W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1970, he refers to *Living Forces* several times in his effort to explain Kant's development towards the *Critique of Pure Reason*. I agree with Hinske's understanding

of the importance of antinomial conflicts for this development and also agree that *Living Forces* supports this view. However, my analysis goes far beyond Hinske's brief remarks on this work. All references to *Living Forces* are to the version in both in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin, Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter & Co. (Königlich Preußlischen Akademie der Wissenschaften), 1910ff, vol. 1.

2   See Hinske, *Kants Weg zur Transzendentalphilosophie*, p. 57.

3   In addition to cosmology, Wolff counted rational psychology and rational theology as belonging to special metaphysics.

4   See Hinske, *Kants Weg zur Transzendentalphilosophie*, p. 46.

5   Hinske, *Kants Weg zur Transzendentalphilosophie*, pp. 63–4.

6   The first appearance is in *Physical Monadology* (1756), the second in *Dissertatio* (1770), both in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.

8   Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, A11.

9   'Letter to Herz', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 10, pp. 130–31.

10   For example, *Reflexionen*, R 4473. *Reflexionen* are referred to by their number in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 17.

11   This line of justification is developed in the so-called silent decade, that is, in the period 1770–80. For an analysis of this development see C. Serck-Hanssen, 'Transcendental Apperception', unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, San Diego, University of California, 1996, Ch. 2.

12   Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A13/B27.

13   See, for example, Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A13/B27.

14   See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A11/B25.

15   See Serck-Hanssen, 'Transcendental Apperception', Ch. 1.

16   See, for example, *Reflexionen*, R 4276 and R 4629, in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 17.

17   The historical information in this paragraph is taken from Irving I. Polonoff, *Force, Cosmos and Monads and Other Themes of Kant's Early Thought*, Bonn, Bouvier Verlag, 1973, Ch. 1 and 2.

18   *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, pp. 16, 32.

19   *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, pp. 16, 32.

20   *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 32.

21   For the identification of 'dialectic' and 'logic of probability' see Giorgio Tonelli, *Kant's* Critique of Pure Reason *within the Tradition of Modern Logic*, New York, Georg Olms, 1994, p. 6.

22   For example, as a mathematical and a natural body, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, pp. 139–40.

23   See Hinske, *Kants Weg zur Transzendentalphilosophie*, pp. 89–93.

24   See 'It concerns the defence of the honour of human reason …', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 149.

25   Kant is often criticized for not having recognized the (allegedly) pivotal role of language in philosophy. It is true that Kant does not say very much about language. In his published writings there are only 115 tokens of the word *Sprache* and 162 of *Wort* or *Wörter*. Many of the places where they occur have little or no philosophical significance. However, most places where these words are used to make philosophical points are places where Kant discusses dialectical inferences and illusions. It is noteworthy that in his precritical writings, 19 tokens of these words appear in this connection.

26   See *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 98.

27   See also Michael Friedman, *Kant and the Exact Sciences*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1992, p. xiii.

28   *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 30.

29   For the following points see Tonelli, *Kant's* Critique of Pure Reason *within the Tradition of Modern Logic*, pp. 165ff.

30 Cf. Hinske, *Kants Weg zur Transzendentalphilosophie*, p. 31.
31 Kant, *Reflexionen*, R 5129, in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 17, also cited by Hinske, *Kants Weg zur Transzendentalphilosophie*.
32 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 139.
33 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 150.
34 See, for example, his argument in §126, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 149.
35 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 95.
36 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 93.
37 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 181.
38 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, pp. 36–7n.
39 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 30.
40 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 107.
41 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 97.
42 See *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 34: 'This word "real movement" was the reason for disagreement with the Cartesians, maybe it can also serve as the reason for a reunion.'
43 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 42.
44 Notice that Kant says [loc. cit.] that in the first place Herr Leibniz was led to this opinion by his *perception* of falling bodies, but that it was the illegitimate employment of Descartes' principle that led to the mistake. Here the perception plays the role of the illusion that seduces one's judgement.
45 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, pp. 79–80.
46 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, pp. 80–81.
47 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, pp. 69–70.
48 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 31.
49 See *Reflexionen*, R 4600, R 4601, in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 17, where he distances himself from Lambert's and Tetens' projects.
50 For Kant's first explicit statements concerning the relationship between the grounds of synthetic *a priori* judgement, a critique of pure reason, the limits of reason, the limits of metaphysics and transcendental philosophy, see 'Letter to Herz', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 10, pp. 129–32.
51 For an excellent discussion of Kant's views on illusion, see Michelle Grier, *Kant's Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

2 The fact of judgement
The Kantian response to the Humean condition

Juliet Floyd

In a previously published essay I have argued that the heart of Kant's response to Hume's 'problem' of induction does not lie in the 'Second Analogy of Experience' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as has traditionally been held.[1] Kant's most sophisticated response to Hume is laid out fully only later, in the Introductions (published and unpublished) to the *Critique of Judgment* – despite the fact that Hume is nowhere mentioned in these pages. This reading of Kant's reply to Hume on induction has, I am happy to say, recently been accepted by my colleague Henry Allison, a Kant scholar of the first rank.[2] Allison's 'weak' reading of the 'Second Analogy of Experience' was instrumental in helping me to understand that the first *Critique* could not be taken to provide a reply to Hume's criticisms that would meet Hume on anything like his home ground.[3] A fuller, more complex set of considerations – including an extension of Kant's very conception of a transcendental argument – needed to be brought to bear.

Although Allison and I agree that a proper reading of the third *Critique*'s Introductions should include Hume as at least one of Kant's principal targets,[4] I am not sure that we fully agree on the sense in which Kant may be said to have offered an *a priori* transcendental 'refutation' of Hume's 'problem' of induction. Clearly Kant aimed to reply to Hume in some way. Hume had expressed scepticism about philosophy's ability to ground the practice of induction *a priori*, and with it the content of our empirical knowledge. Hume argued that any *a priori* argument – whether appealing to the past success of the practice or to a general *a priori* principle concerning the uniformity of nature – would fail to justify induction as a legitimate, even if defeasible form of reasoning in a non-circular way. Kant worried that Hume's doubts would undermine our claims to possess at least some empirical knowledge of nature; indeed, his coming to appreciate the force of Hume's arguments was, by Kant's own profession, a most important stimulus in the development of the Critical philosophy.

Allison maintains that Kant's transcendental arguments concerning the systematicity of nature in the Introductions to the *Critique of Judgment* successfully settle the question of our right to claim *a priori* that it makes sense to engage in the inductive practice of empirical generalization (the *quid juris*). I also believe that the question of right is in some sense settled in these pages, but not at the expense of Hume's arguments. I regard Hume's 'problem' as unanswerable on

its own terms, and also believe Kant came to see this. In the third *Critique* I take Kant to be *conceding* the argument to Hume, but then fashioning a sophisticated response that shifts our attention away from the apparently sceptical force of Hume's critique. What we have, as I see it, is a complex shifting of the problem, rather than an attempted refutation of any of Hume's positive claims.

This suggests that, on one understanding of at least this particular Kantian 'transcendental' argument, what we have is perhaps best conceived of as an argument that shifts our entire conception or formulation of the 'problem' as a problem, rather than an argument offering a principled defence of particular beliefs about self or nature. Indeed, I believe that the third *Critique* shows that Kant's notion of a *transcendental argument* is extraordinarily subtle and malleable. As I see it, his 'transcendental' deduction of the *a priori* principle of reflective judgement in the third *Critique* does not depend essentially on any general doctrines about spontaneity or apperception; nor, to repeat, is it intended to *refute* the Humean sceptic. As I understand it, Kant's argument turns essentially on his conception of reflective judgement itself, the very activity whose defence is in question. The argument appeals to a notion of judgement Kant is concerned to isolate and characterize in the third *Critique*, and this notion turns, he argues, on a kind of special self-reflexiveness and circularity that he calls *heautonomy*, a notion I shall emphasize in what follows. With this notion, Kant comes to high-light a dimension of the art of judgement that was downplayed in the first two *Critiques*, a dimension I take to be crucial to understanding the sense in which he took himself to be responding to scepticism. The purpose of the following chapter is, first, to rehearse my reading of the Introductions to the *Critique of Judgment* – emphasizing the force and character of Kant's emphasis on his notion of *heautonomy* – and then, second, to draw some morals for contemporary philosophy about the aims, scope and character of 'transcendental' arguments, especially in application to the 'problems' of induction and of rule-following.

A word on translation. In both the First (unpublished) and the Second (published) Introductions to the *Critique of Judgment* Kant introduces a complex notion of *Zweckmässigkeit*. In order to capture the depth and subtlety of this notion I believe that it should at times be translated as 'purposiveness' (its usual translation), at times as 'suitability' and at times as 'amenability'. *Zweckmässigkeit* forms the unifying notion of the third *Critique*, for it underlies Kant's treatment of judgement in its empirical uses, and especially in aesthetics, biology, morality and theology – all domains where aspects of teleological reasoning traditionally reared their heads. Kant himself calls *Zweckmässigkeit* a concept of the 'harmony [*Zusammenstimmung*] of Nature with our cognitive power',[5] and also a concept of the 'technic of nature'.[6] The heart of Kant's critical, transcendental reconstruction of 'purposiveness' is his insistence that this notion arises from, and only from, the possibility of human judgement itself. Kant claims that by means of this concept our faculty of judgement (*Urteilskraft*) – rather than understanding or reason – exhibits its own distinctive principle of the systematicity of nature *a priori*. In what follows I shall examine in some detail Kant's discussion of the status, content and role of this *a priori* principle. For it is by means of it that Kant

achieves one of his overarching concerns in the third *Critique*, namely, to isolate and make explicit a conception of contingent, *a posteriori* judgement as a distinctive, fallible and ineliminable element of human experience, a conception that goes beyond the notions of judgement at work in the first two *Critiques*. In the Introductions to the *Critique of Judgment* Kant ties the notion of purposiveness to the nature and structure of human judgement in a theory of what he calls 'reflective' judgement. Kant's theory of judgement gains much of its force from a contrast with Hume, to whom it is both indebted and, in part, directed. In reaction to Hume, Kant clothes his concept of purposiveness in the guise of an *a priori* principle of the amenability of nature to our empirical investigations, and in this way he reinterprets the significance of Hume's sceptical arguments concerning the uniformity of nature, as well as Hume's doubts about our application of teleology to the universe as a whole. By rearranging elements of the traditional argument from design, Kant grants the validity of Hume's criticisms of this argument, while simultaneously fashioning a quite subtle response to Hume's scepticism, to his anti-teleological mechanism, and to his naturalism. In so doing, Kant enlarges his conception of judgement itself, though without thereby undermining any of the previous arguments he had offered in the first and the second *Critiques*.

1 The coherence of Humean scepticism: purposiveness as amenability

It has been objected to Kant that his theory of judgement suffers from an overly strong emphasis on the logic of *a priori* knowledge, at the expense of any discussion of *a posteriori* knowledge. Certainly the vast amount of literature on Kant's critical philosophy focuses, rightly, on the logic of the synthetic *a priori*. But the Introductions to the third *Critique* – and indeed the book as a whole, including the first part, on judgements of taste, and the second part, on teleological judgement – are devoted to the logic of judgement *a posteriori*. In the *Critique of Judgment* the judging subject is no longer viewed, as it was in the first and second *Critiques*, from a transcendental perspective which abstracts away from its particular empirical situation in the world of appearances. Rather, the subject in the third *Critique* is situated within a world of particular, empirically conditioned events that exhibit an ineliminable element of contingency. Contingency is as much a focus of Kant's interest here as is necessity.

In the First Introduction to the third *Critique* Kant goes so far as to frame – albeit in his own terms – Hume's problem of induction, thereby indicating that he does not take his earlier arguments to have fully settled the question of our empirical knowledge of nature:

> We saw in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the whole of nature, as the concept of all objects of experience, forms a system governed by transcendental laws which the Understanding itself gives *a priori* … But it does not follow from this that nature is, even in terms of [its] *empirical laws*, a system which the

human cognitive power *can grasp*, and that the thorough systematic coherence of its appearances in an experience, and hence experience itself as a system, is possible for human beings. For the empirical laws might be so diverse and heterogeneous that, though we might on occasion discover particular laws in terms of which we could connect some perceptions to [form] an experience, we could never bring these empirical laws themselves under a common principle [and so] to the relationship of unity. We would be unable to do this if – as is surely possible intrinsically (at least insofar as the understanding can tell a priori) – these laws, as well as the natural forms conforming to them, were infinitely diverse and heterogeneous and manifested themselves to us as a crude chaotic aggregate without the slightest trace of a system.[7]

Kant is arguing here that the *Critique of Pure Reason* leaves room for a certain form of scepticism, namely, the possibility that the system of empirical laws governing nature might be so complex or heterogeneous that our faculties of cognition could never place our particular, given experiences into any coherent system. In the limiting case of this sceptical possibility we would not even be able to form empirical concepts at all: nature would be, as Kant says, a 'crude chaotic aggregate'. We may know *a priori* that every event has some cause or other, as Kant argued in the 'Second Analogy of Experience' in the first *Critique*. But this law of appearances in no way guarantees that we shall be able to determine *particular* causes of *particular* events, or that we shall be able to find empirical regularities supporting appropriately predictive generalization and the explanation of causal relations in particular cases. In the third *Critique* Kant is conceding, more explicitly than he had before, the coherence of Hume's doubts about the status of our knowledge of the uniformity of nature and of our inductive practices. In so doing, he is preparing to formulate not merely a more complex conception of empirical regularity than he had in the first *Critique*, but with it a more sophisticated conception of human judgement itself.

Kant asserts that we cannot know by reason or by means of the categories of the understanding that our powers of cognition are suitably situated so as to uncover sufficiently systematic regularity. Must we then be sceptics about induction and side with Hume? In a tongue-in-cheek echoing of Leibniz, Hume himself had written in the *Enquiry*:

Here, then, is a kind of *pre-established harmony* between the course of nature and the succession of our ideas; and though the powers and forces, by which the former is governed, be wholly unknown to us; yet our thoughts and conceptions have still, we find, gone on in the same train with the other works of nature. Custom is that principle, by which this correspondence has been effected; so necessary to the subsistence of our species, and the regulation of our conduct, in every circumstance and occurrence of human life. Had not the presence of an object instantly excited the idea of those objects commonly conjoined with it, all our knowledge must have been limited to

the narrow sphere of our memory and sense; and we should never have been able to adjust means to ends, or employ our natural powers, either to the producing of good, or avoiding of evil. Those, who delight in the discovery and contemplation of final causes, have here ample subject to employ their wonder and admiration.

… As this operation of the mind, by which we infer like effects from like causes, and vice versa, is so essential to the subsistence of all human creatures, it is not probable, that it could be trusted to the fallacious deductions of our reason, which is slow in its operations; appears not, in any degree, during the first years of infancy; and at best is, in every age and period of human life, extremely liable to error and mistake. It is more conformable to the originary wisdom of nature to secure so necessary an act of the mind, by some instinct or mechanical tendency, which may be infallible in its operations, may discover itself at the first appearance of life and thought, and may be independent of all the laboured deductions of the understanding.[8]

Hume holds that it is not possible for us to frame a wholesale justification of our inductive practices and our beliefs about the unobserved. He therefore embraces scepticism – at least, about this *sort* of justification – and attempts in its wake to conduct a naturalistic project of describing what he calls here the 'infallible' mechanisms in terms of which human beliefs are actually formed. In the end, according to Hume, these mechanisms rest upon custom, instinct and the workings of the imagination. But there is no 'originary wisdom' of nature except in this purely mechanical sense, and there is no room for teleology or pre-established harmony in Leibniz's sense. So both of these passages are drenched with characteristic Humean irony.

Let us return to Kant. The contingency of the regularities we discern in our experience was said by Hume to cast doubt both on our ability to justify induction and on our ability to explain the order of nature as a whole in terms of final causes. Kant responds in the third *Critique* by *defining* 'purposiveness' to be a contingent lawfulness.[9] He secures this definition by showing how the notion of *purposiveness* may be read off from what he regards as essential features of human judgement itself, as it applies in contingent empirical circumstances. Kant insists in both Introductions to the third *Critique* that there is a need for an *a priori* principle of the suitability of nature to our powers of cognition. This is an *a priori* principle of the purposiveness of nature for us, and it thus functions simultaneously as a principle of the amenability of nature to our cognitive powers in the face of the conceivable heterogeneity of natural phenomena. As Kant writes:

How is the technic of nature to be perceived in its products? The concept of purposiveness [*Zweckmässigkeit*] is in no way a constitutive concept of experience, and does not determine an appearance so as to bring it under an empirical concept of the object, for it is not a category. Our faculty of judgment perceives purposiveness [only] insofar as it merely reflects upon a given object … Thus it is really the faculty of judgment which is technical;

nature is only represented as technical insofar as it conforms to this proce-dure of judgment and makes it necessary … [Handwritten marginal note: We say that we put final causes into the things, and not that we, so to speak, lift them out of our own perceptions.][10]

2 Kant's notion of (reflective) judgement

For Kant the faculty of judgement is the capacity of determining whether a particular case (an instance or an intuition) falls under a general rule (a concept or principle). For example, judgement determines whether or not a given piece of rock falls under the concept of *granite*. In the Introductions to the third *Critique* Kant canvasses two ways in which the faculty of judgement may be exercised:

> If the universal (the rule, principle, law) is given, then the faculty of judg-ment, which subsumes the particular under it, is *determinative* [*bestimmend*] … But if only the particular is given and the faculty of judgment has to find the universal for it, then this power is merely *reflective* [*reflektierend*].[11]

Kant's emphasis on this distinction is at least partly explained by his animus against Hume's mechanistic and psychologistic account of induction and of belief. His conception of reflection, while technically phrased in terms of tran-scendental faculty psychology, is in fact, I think, quite intuitive, and does not depend for its force upon Kant's particular version of Idealism. The intuitive distinction is this. In some cases an empirical concept is fixed ahead of time in such a way that it is more or less mechanically or automatically or unhesitatingly applied to objects of experience. However, equally often – perhaps even usually – the process of judgement is in no way so automatic and mechanical. For example, there may be a question about whether a given concept does or does not apply to a particular case, or it may be questioned whether a given concept is the appropriate or suitable one to apply in a given context. In such cases elements of contingency, deliberation and reflection enter into the application of concepts and, with them, the need for a subject to exercise (what we intuitively call) judgement. In fact, the very notion of good (or poor) judgement – what Kant is calling 'reflective judgement' – only makes sense given the fact that every empirically encountered object of experience falls under multiple concepts. For it is this that allows room in principle in any given case for a question to arise about which is the most appropriate or suitable concept to apply *in situ*. Judgements concerning particular empirical laws and/or objects and events are made in the course of a series of contingent experiences, and are themselves therefore framed only contingently. There is, in other words, always a question of appropriateness, of suitability to context, of relevance involved in our non-synthetic *a priori* judgements about nature (and works of art).

It is this picture that underlies Kant's conception of reflective judgement in the third *Critique*. What he calls 'reflection' or 'reflective judgement' is, as he sees it, required not only for the application of empirical concepts in particular cases,

but also for empirical concept formation. Indeed, if we follow Kant's train of thought through to its logical conclusion, reflective judgement is even required for us to make judgements about the identity and the existence of particular empirical objects.[12]

What then is the exercise of reflective judgement, according to Kant? There may, for example, be a question whether an unfamiliar piece of rock falls under the concept of *granite*. In this sort of case, empirical criteria may have to be developed or applied before a determination can be made as to the stone's real nature. This Kant calls reflection: 'To reflect [*reflektieren*] (or to consider [*überlegen*]) is to hold given representations up and to compare them, to either other representations or to one's cognitive power, with regard to a concept thereby made possible.'[13] We shall return to the notion of reflection 'comparing' a representation to our own cognitive power soon, for this form of comparison lies at the heart of Kant's theory of reflective judgement. Let us first note, however, that with Hume on his mind Kant goes out of his way to emphasize that our capacity for reflection is not mere instinct: 'Even animals reflect, but they do so only instinctively, that is, not in connection with the securing of a concept, but, rather, in determining an inclination.'[14] Though Hume occasionally avails himself of the notion of 'judgement', he does so in a much looser and more unsystematic way than does Kant. Indeed, Hume often conflates judgement with the (mechanical) workings of the imagination.[15] From Kant's point of view, Hume did not have a workable theory of judgement as a distinctive capacity at all, nor, having blurred the distinction between beliefs and sensations, did Hume have a workable theory of belief. For Kant, a distinctive notion of judgement is required as a component of thought. Reflective judgement answers to an especially important aspect of Kant's conception of judgement as a whole. He conceives of it as deliberative reflection on a particular case in light of one or more principles or concepts that apply to the case contingently, even if rightly. Kant's underlying model is a legal one, in which a judge renders a decision by justifying the application of law to a particular case. In any particular case, an empirical description of the facts must be settled on which fits the case to the law that is to be applied. Every legal verdict rendered therefore contains within it a claim to have made a more or less suitable (*purposive*) application of the law. For Kant the nature of human judgement always functions in this way in the empirical sphere. In general, intuitions are brought under concepts in judgements. But any particular manifold of intuition will fall under multiple empirical concepts.[16] So the choice of which concepts are most suitable or relevant in a given context must be left to the faculty of judgement to discern. Neither reason nor the understanding can dictate how best to conceptualize and order objects in nature by means of empirical concepts.

There is nothing in this that undercuts or contradicts Kant's earlier transcendental deductions of the categories of the understanding: Kant is not committed to revising the first *Critique*'s theory of the synthetic unity of experience.[17] It is merely to say that, in any given empirical judgement, reflective and determinative elements of judgement are simultaneously at work. Kant emphasizes

throughout the third *Critique* that the *a priori* categories of the understanding apply within experience determinatively, not reflectively. Because of the categories' universally valid application to all objects of possible experience, once their synthetic *a priori* validity is settled on in their deduction they are applied automatically, infallibly, necessarily, unhesitatingly and thus *without* the need for reflection or consideration.[18] If Kant is right, then we know *a priori* that every event has a cause. The point is, however, that this cannot suffice to ensure that we will be able to develop and employ empirical concepts with suitable discernment to give that general causal maxim some real use in everyday life. For Hume – or any like-minded empiricist – this observation impugns the relevance of Kant's arguments in the 'Second Analogy' of the first *Critique*. As an empiricist and a naturalist, Hume did not feel the need to stress the general causal maxim that 'every event has a cause'. He does argue that we have no demonstrable reason to believe this causal maxim *a priori*. And he also shows that any attempt to justify the maxim on the basis of previously perceived 'constant conjunctions' would run afoul of the same vicious circularity he insists plagues every attempt to find an *a posteriori* grounding for inductive inference in general. But Hume is primarily interested in accounting for our *particular* beliefs and expectations about *particular* objects and events, in our ability to identify the *specific* cause of this or that event. As he writes in the *Treatise*, he finds it best to 'sink' the question about the general causal maxim into the question: '*Why we conclude, that such particular causes must necessarily have such particular effects, and why we form an inference from one to another?*'[19]

The conclusion of Kant's famed 'Second Analogy of Experience' – that every event has a cause – will not answer this last question, as we have seen. For the general causal maxim does not tell me that or how I may discover, for example, the particular cause of death of a particular individual at a particular time and place. Nor can it guarantee that I have the capacity to practise forensic medicine, much less empirical science in general. Good or even ordinary judgement – even minimal 'common sense' – cannot be said to be derivable or applicable from this maxim, even if we admit that common sense cannot violate the maxim. Differently put: even Kant's transcendental logic cannot ensure that good judgement is possible. Hume's concerns lie in the realm of (what Kant calls in the third *Critique*) *ordinary*, as opposed to *transcendental*, judgement (*gemeinste Erfahrung*).[20]

We have seen that for Kant judgement in the widest sense is the human capacity to reflectively and discerningly apply concepts to particular cases encountered in nature. But this implies that for Kant, at least in the third *Critique*, the faculty of judgement includes not only a person's capacity to assert beliefs or claims objectively – to make claims carrying with them at least purportedly inter-subjective validity and intersubjectively communicable content – but, even more, the capacity to do so well or poorly, discerningly or undiscerningly, sagaciously or stupidly. Judgement is a minimal requirement for deliberation, it is what we call 'common sense'. And a person of judgement has more than common sense: he or she exhibits special sagacity and discernment, what Kant repeatedly calls

in the third *Critique* sound or healthy human understanding.[21] A fool can distinguish the sequence of his or her perceptions from solid bodies external to her mind. A fool may well be self-conscious (many fools are). A fool can call a dog a *dog*. But the distinction between the fool and the wise or sagacious person requires, conceptually speaking, something more than these abilities. This something more can never be (merely) theoretically taught, for it cannot be boiled down to a set of objective prescriptions. It has less to do with the *truth* of judgements and more to do with the comprehensibility of their employment *in situ*, with their *suitability* (*Zweckmässigkeit*). Like Aristotelian practical wisdom, judgement in Kant's more general sense can only be acquired by each individual through appropriate long experience in the exercise of judgement itself.

There is then an intrinsically normative aspect to Kant's conception of the workings of the faculty of judgement in all three *Critiques*, but the normativity is complex and multi-faceted. Judgement is spontaneous and makes an intersubjective claim to the truth about objects in the world or to the normative rightness of a particular course of moral action. It is something more than a merely passive psychological response to sensations, according to Kant. But in the third *Critique* a distinctive feature of this normativity is brought forth by means of the notion of *Zweckmässigkeit*. Judgement in the empirical world is good or bad, wise or foolish, more or less highly developed. Each of us who judges in a particular case expects and in fact *demands* that all human judges possess not only a basic degree of judgement, but as high a degree of excellence in judgement as possible. We demand a kind of harmony (*Übereinstimmung*) among us with regard to common sense. This is a constitutive feature of our notion of judgement itself, according to Kant in the third *Critique*. It is a feature indispensable in both the theoretical and the practical sphere, for the categories require reflective judgement for their specification and application in the context of genuine empirical laws, just as pure practical reason requires reflective judgement for its application of the moral law to particular cases.

Let us now see how Kant converts this intuitive, pre-theoretical conception of judgement into an *a priori* principle of the amenability of nature to our cognitive faculties.

3　The regress argument and its solution: heautonomy and the *a priori* principle of reflective judgement as a subjective principle

In the Preface to the third *Critique* Kant argues that there must be an *a priori* principle for the faculty of judgement. As usual, Kant holds that where there exists a standard of appraisal, something 'necessarily' and 'universally required', there must be an *a priori* concept involved. 'Ought' comes not from 'is'. In everyday life we engage in criticism of one another's judgements. In forwarding judgements of our own, we demand universal agreement, for in judging one is not simply predicting or expecting that others will agree. Every judgement carries with it a claim to intersubjective validity, but also to appropriateness. Judgements of

perception may be distinguished from judgements of experience: 'The tower looks round to me' is not the same claim at all as 'The tower is round'. But the latter may or may not offer up a useful predicate for the purposes of knowledge relevant to this particular case. Indeed, it may be irrelevant that the tower *is* round, and much more relevant that it looks round to me. In any particular case, then, there is always a specific question in place, and this question makes more or less suitable the application of particular empirical concepts.

Kant thus holds that there is an *a priori*, transcendental principle of suitability or purposiveness springing directly from the nature or concept of judgement itself. It not only belongs to the transcendental critique of the faculty of judgement, it simultaneously informs *a priori* all *a posteriori* judgements made by particular individuals on particular occasions which call for the exercise of 'sound human understanding' or, as Kant also calls it, 'the most ordinary critique': 'a principle [for the faculty of judgment] would have to be contained *a priori* in the faculty of judgment itself; otherwise, as a special cognitive faculty, it would not be subject to even the most ordinary critique …'.[22] Such a principle must spring from the faculty of judgement itself – it cannot arise either from reason or from the structure of the understanding, according to Kant. Yet Kant's emphasis on the distinctiveness of the capacity for judgement and the necessity and *a prioricity* of our demands for its exercise forces him to admit that the demand for an *a priori* standard of good or sound judgement involves a very special difficulty:

> … this principle peculiar to the faculty of judgment must not be derived from *a priori* concepts, for these belong to the understanding, and the faculty of judgment only applies them. The faculty of judgment itself must therefore provide a concept of its own, a concept through which no thing is actually cognized, but which only serves as a rule for the faculty of judgment itself – but not as an objective rule, which would allow the faculty to adapt itself to its own judgment, for then once again another faculty of judgment would be required in order to be able to distinguish whether or not this judgment is a case of that rule.[23]

This is a kind of regress argument.[24] Although Kant insists that there must be an *a priori* principle of (good) judgement, he is also arguing that this *a priori* principle cannot be objective, on penalty of a regress of rules for the application of rules, or of powers of judgement for the exercise of judgement. If judgement is the capacity to apply rules to particular cases, then that capacity cannot itself be constituted by a set of rules *a priori*. We have here a precursor of Wittgenstein's treatment of a misguided conception of what it is to follow a rule, a point to which we shall return below. We also have an argument indebted to Hume's criticisms exposing vicious regresses in the rationalists' treatment of the problem of induction.

Wittgenstein, unlike Kant, would locate the source of the regress in the very assumption Kant makes that language and thought and the applications of

concepts are everywhere bounded by rules.[25] But since Kant takes all judgement to be somehow rule-governed,[26] his only escape from the vicious regress of rules for the application of rules, or powers of judgement for the exercise of judgement, is to postulate a *self-applicable or self-interpreting rule*, which, like a self-caused cause, terminates the regress. In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant outlines a series of arguments designed to show that there is only one possible such self-applicable rule which may be said to spring from the very nature of judgement itself, 'subjectively'. As we shall see, Kant derives the *content* of the principle from its *status* as a self-applicable or 'subjective' *a priori* rule. However, in formulating this principle as a 'subjective' one, Kant is simultaneously developing a sophisticated response to Hume's scepticism and naturalism. Kant argues, in effect, that the circularity Hume saw in every attempt to justify induction is a circularity constitutive or reflective of the faculty of judgement itself. Thus Kant turns on its head the significance of Hume's scepticism about our empirically conditioned beliefs, while at the same time granting to Hume that induction cannot be turned into deduction. This is a remarkably good example of how one philosopher's problem is another philosopher's solution; how a great philosopher sometimes makes progress by giving up the attempt to argue for, or ground, a contested notion he sees must be taken as basic.

Because the *a priori* principle of judgement must be 'subjective', or 'self-applicable', Kant says that its legislation evinces not *autonomy* (as does the self-legislation of pure practical reason), but rather *heautonomy*.[27] In Greek 'heauto' is a necessarily reflexive form of the pronoun for self: unlike 'auto', 'heauto' cannot occur grammatically as an emphasizer (as in 'I myself think he is wrong'), but only reflexively (as in 'I see myself'). For Kant, judgement's legislation is heautonomous, that is, necessarily directed only towards itself. Judgement does not, as does the faculty of reason, legislate for all rational beings autonomously, legislating rules to all rational beings *a priori*. Judgement's legislation is only self-applicable, self-correcting, self-directed and therefore, in Kant's sense, 'subjective'. It does not express a self-conception of ourselves as free, so much as a self-conception of ourselves as capable of fitting in, with a certain degree of appropriateness and systemacity, to an empirical world in which, with other human beings, we forward empirical judgements about nature. It certainly makes no claim to exposing any necessities lodged in nature herself.

But what could the content of such an *a priori* principle be? I have so far, in effect, laid out conditions of material adequacy on our analysis of the intuitive notion of (good) judgement with which Kant begins his argument in the third *Critique*. There is no hope of a metaphysical deduction from pure reason or logic here, or even from the understanding and transcendental logic, for this principle cannot be conceived of in terms of a general rule or principle, on penalty of vicious regress. For the same reason there can be no hope of a deduction culled from pure practical reason, which legislates *a priori* in terms of universally applicable rules. Short of a divine guarantee of order in the sub-lunar world – a guarantee that by Kant's critical lights we are in no position to claim to know –

there appears to be no other human faculty able to give us the right to judge in the way we do than judgement itself.

The only way out is for Kant to derive the *content* of the *a priori* principle of judgement from its *status* as heautonomous. Indeed, he argues that there is only one *a priori* principle for reflective judgement that could be legislated in this kind of necessarily circular way. This is the principle that *good judgement is possible*, or, equivalently, that *judgement must be exercised in ordinary critique. Thus the content of the a priori principle of reflective judgement can only be a self-picturing of the action of reflective judgement itself.* Any other principle would fall prey to the vicious regress of rules for the application of rules. As Kant writes:

> Reflective judgment can only give a transcendental principle to and for itself as a law. It cannot derive it from any other quarter (as it would then be a determinant judgment).[28]

And:

> Judgment … has a principle *a priori* for the possibility of nature, but only in a subjective respect, by means of which it prescribes a law, not to nature (as autonomy), but to itself (as heautonomy).[29]

The *a priori* principle of reflective judgement is quite literally 'reflective' of the faculty of judgement. It is simply our holding that we *do* judge in the light of the possibility of judgement, sometimes well and sometimes poorly, in the face of contingent experiences. This expresses what we may call *the fact of judgement*.[30] Thus the *a prioricity* and necessity of the principle of reflective judgement are of a different, thinner, and more general and yet loose-fitting sort than the *a prioricity* and necessity of synthetic *a priori* knowledge. And Kant's 'transcendental deduction' of the principle is about as weak in its presuppositions as a deduction could be,[31] making no reference – at least on my reading of it – either to Kant's doctrine of transcendental subjectivity or to his doctrine of transcendental idealism. It certainly avoids reference or appeal to any special facts about human psychology or nature. And it is not framed – again as I interpret it – from anything like an essentially first-person point of view.

4 Systematicity and the specification of the principle of reflective judgement as the principle of amenability

So far I have emphasized the circularity, the generality and the near emptiness of Kant's heautonomous *a priori* principle of reflective judgement. To say in response to Hume that 'good judgement is possible' looks like nothing more than a redescription of precisely that which Hume aims to doubt. But the heautonomous status and content of the principle make it distinctive, differentiating it from the sort of conception of the uniformity of nature as a law-governed whole that Hume attempted to unmask as ungrounded in experience. Kant has

indicated that all that is needed to conceive of the practice of induction (and empirical judgement generally) as reasonable is the notion of a fitting or suitable generalization (that is, a notion of the power of judgement itself), and *not* the notion of a necessary, universal or constitutive law of nature – or even of a law-like generalization in accord with inductive logic – much less the notion of a creator who has purposively designed nature's laws with our cognitive powers in mind. He has, to repeat, *defined* 'purposiveness' or 'amenability' as a *contingent* lawfulness. That is to concede Hume's point, but also to turn it on its head.

I am not arguing that Hume and Kant agree on how to construe the content of a judgement of the form 'A causes B'. For Kant, there are different sorts of evidence and local justification available to bring to bear on any such judgement. His philosophy of science, especially his conception of the different kinds of law-likeness involved in different levels of empirical theorizing, is vastly more sophisticated than Hume's.[32] Nevertheless, at the limit all empirical generalizations about particular events are still empirical, and so subject to revision in the light of future experience, as Hume insisted. Kant's point against Hume is that unless Hume is to surrender the very notion of good (or of poor) judgement, he cannot take his criticisms of our habits of induction to have any independent sceptical force.

Kant proceeds to specify this self-picturing, subjective *a priori* concept so as to link it inextricably to the notion of the systematicity of (our judgements about) nature. For in the Introductions to the third *Critique* Kant annexes the account of systematicity he had already given in the 'Appendix to the Dialectic' of the first *Critique* to his new account of contingent lawfulness. He thereby reinterprets this account as one that can be read off from – and immediately applied to – the very notion of ordinary judgement, a specification of the principle that may now be seen to count as a subjective *a priori* principle that avoids the vicious regress problem.

In the first *Critique* Kant had ascribed to the faculty of reason the drive to unify our empirical knowledge in an overarching single system.[33] Reason's drive for the unconditioned leads, on this account, to the postulation of certain regulative ideals of systematicity and thoroughness in empirical knowledge. While Kant went so far as to claim that these ideas of reason secure for us a 'criterion of empirical truth',[34] he also treated them as idealized methodological rules for empirical inquiry which cannot be fully specified or realized in our human, conditioned experience. Regulative ideals of pure reason sanction idealization.[35] They also demand the continual search for ever more empirically adequate classificatory systems, that is, ever finer discrimination of the phenomena in terms of species and genera,[36] and ever more inclusive and systematically ordered empirical concepts.[37]

In the third *Critique's* Introductions these very same principles of systematicity are annexed to the faculty of reflective judgement and made part of the *a priori* picture of the amenability of nature to our power of judgement. Our attempts to realize these ideals within particular, contingently given experience, as well as any errors we make in their application, belong to reflective judgement alone.

What Kant argues is that the principles of systematicity simply enunciate how we do and how we must generalize from appropriate classes of particulars by induction and analogy.[38] That is, once they are severed from the ideals of totality and completeness given by reason's drive towards the Unconditioned, they simply reiterate, heautonomously, the fact of judgement. This reiteration may seem 'tautologous', as Kant admits when he formulates the principle of amenability as follows:

> The principle of reflection on given natural objects is: that for all things of nature empirically determinate concepts can be found*, which really means that one can always presuppose that nature's products have a form which is possible according to universal laws which we can cognize.[39]

> * NOTE, at first glance this principle in no way appears to be a synthetic and transcendental proposition, but, rather, it appears to be tautologous and to belong to mere logic. For logic teaches how one is to compare a given representation with others, and so make a concept by abstracting what is common among them as a mark [*Merkmal*] for general use. Only logic teaches nothing about whether nature can exhibit for each object still other objects sharing something common in form which allows them to serve us as objects of comparison; rather, this is itself a condition of the possibility of applying logic to nature, a principle of the representation of nature as a system for our capacity of judgement, which classifies the manifold into genera and species and so makes it possible to bring, through comparison, all natural forms we come across to concepts (whether of greater or of lesser generality).[40]

Kant here grants to Hume that we cannot be sure of finding 'empirically determinate' concepts for every object of experience unless we picture nature as governed by a set of appropriate uniformities. But Kant also maintains that this assumption of natural order constitutes 'the condition under which it is possible to apply logic' (both general and transcendental) to nature. Logic, a set of objective principles, cannot suffice to guarantee that we will be able to exercise judgement, on penalty of a vicious regress of rules for the application of rules. Hence a condition of the application of logic is required. This is the principle of amenability, seen by Kant to transparently reflect the very structure of judgement itself.

Thus Kant's *a priori* principle of reflective judgement already has its application built into it; it is one of its very criteria of application that it applies itself, more or less appropriately, within experience. Differently put, the principle of reflective judgement amounts to a second-order reflection on the very concept of judgement. The concept of amenability is not expressed by an ordinary predicate on a par with other empirical predicates. For it says that the only predicates

of possible judgements we can form are those that we can judge to reflect a certain interconnection among empirical concepts, interconnections of suitability and fittingness. What we know *a priori* is that any empirical concept we can form and apply to nature (that is, any possible judgement we can make about the empirical world) must be viewed by us as in some way fittingly related to the application of other empirically conditioned concepts, whether those involved in higher-level covering laws or those that play the role of criteria justifying the application of that concept itself in this particular case. This relatedness is such that in each particular case of judgement it gives purchase to a question about the appropriateness or suitability of that concept's application *here*, given the aims and purposes we have in making the judgement in this particular context. Judgement is not merely brute and instinctive, as Hume maintained, nor is it infallible or mechanistic. Nor, as Kant goes out of his way to emphasize, are the principles of systematicity built into reflective judgement *a priori* merely psychological principles:

> If one tried to account for the origin of these fundamental principles [of systematicity] by way of psychology one would utterly contradict their sense. For they do not state what happens, i.e., by what rule our cognitive powers actually play their role, and how we do judge; but, rather, they state how we ought to judge; and this logical objective necessity could not arise if the principles were merely empirical.[41]

In the First Introduction Kant added a handwritten note in the margin:

> Could Linnaeus have hoped to design a system of nature if he had had to worry that a stone which he found, and called *granite*, might differ in its inner character from any other stone even if it looked the same, so that all he could ever hope to encounter were individual things, isolated for the understanding, but never a class of them that could be brought under concepts of genera and species?[42]

As he classified natural forms, Linnaeus did not wonder whether any of his empirical criteria could in principle rightly classify objects according to their real constitution. If he had doubted this, not only would he have lost hope in classifying; that project itself would not have made sense. For then Linnaeus could only have regarded his own system of classification as an arbitrary grouping together of objects according to merely superficial or illusory characteristics. In this case we could not have seen him as forwarding judgements at all. This is Kant's basic argument for the amenability principle: we *do* hold Linnaeus to have made judgements which were sometimes correct and sometimes incorrect. We say he ought to have judged one way or the other. Hence we presuppose that it makes sense for him to have proceeded with discrimination. In other words, we presuppose that judgement is possible when we take Linnaeus to have been judging. This is the heautonomous principle of reflective judgement.

5 Teleology and the Kantian notion of purposiveness

Kant reads off from his construal of the faculty of judgement and its heautonomous *a priori* legislation a special notion of purposiveness. In describing how the concept of purposiveness arises, he maintains that:

> Purposiveness [*Zweckmässigkeit*] belongs to reflective judgement, not to reason [because] … the purpose [*Zweck*] is in no way posited in the object, but solely in the subject, that is, in the subject's mere capacity to reflect. – For we call something "purposive" when its existence seems to presuppose a representation of that very same thing; however, laws of nature which are so constituted and interrelated with one another that it is as if they had been drawn up by the faculty of judgement in accordance with its own need, have a similarity with cases where the possibility of a thing presupposes its own representation as a ground. Thus judgement itself thinks by means of its own principle a purposiveness of nature in the specification of its forms in terms of empirical laws.[43]

Armed with its own utterly circular *a priori* presupposition, reflective judgement proceeds as best it can in the light of its own exercise, using analogy and judgements of suitability as it marks out generalizations. As our inductive practices show, the faculty of judgement is itself purposive: it exhibits contingent lawfulness and, specifically, the prior representation of itself for its own exercise. In being heautonomous, its exercise is circular: as Hume – and, later, Nelson Goodman – pointed out, our empirical generalizations always presuppose the relevance of our own current stash of empirical concepts and generalizations for their relevance and their applicability.[44] Like Goodman, Kant's defence of induction is circular, though, unlike Goodman, it is not on its face purely pragmatic. The defence succeeds in so far as it connects the circularity of inductive inference to our very notion of judgement (of ordinary common or good sense) itself.

As for teleology, it is according to Kant through the exercise of analogy – that is, through the use of reflective judgement – that we are necessarily led to think of living organisms and ecosystems as 'purposive', that is, as teleological products in which each part is a means to the end of the whole, a whole whose existence is itself contingent upon a prior concept of its organized nature. Reflective judgement is in fact led to picture not merely individual organisms, collections of such organisms and the ecosystems they inhabit as 'purposive', but also the universe itself, filled with purposive products, as if it itself were the creation of an intelligent designer. The source of these analogies is the self-picturing, heautonomous character of reflective judgement itself, rather than either reason or the understanding. In the end, there can be no 'argument' from design that goes beyond the analogy. The important point for appreciating the complexity of Kant's response to Hume is to see that there is a *mutual* relationship of 'purposiveness' or 'amenability' between the structure of our faculties of cognition and the structure of nature. Nature is viewed as if it is designed with

our faculties in mind; yet our own faculty of judgement, by means of its *a priori* notion of nature's amenability, brings about through its exercise an ordering and grouping together of particular objects and experiences in judgement. For Kant, judgement can only proceed by presupposing *a priori* a concept of 'purposiveness'. And yet the only understanding we have of this concept of 'purposiveness' and its applicability is our reflection on the nature and exercise of judgement in ordinary critique. Hence the reflexivity and circularity Kant expresses with the term 'heautonomy', which summarizes both his debt, and his complex response, to Hume.

6 Implications for method

I have so far offered a *minimalist* reconstruction of Kant's 'transcendental' deduction of the *a priori* principle of reflective judgement. My interpretive strategy has been to pare Kant's transcendental argument against Hume down to its conceptual essentials, thereby relieving it of as much controversial metaphysical baggage as possible. This strategy is important, not only for a proper understanding of Kant's (or anyone else's) best reply to Hume, but also for an understanding of what we are to count as a viable 'transcendental' argument within contemporary philosophy.

Kant's main argument, as I read it, does not rely on any special doctrines of subjectivity, apperception or transcendental ideality, much less on an appeal to the existence of a self-constituting subject.[45] Nor does it turn on any serious use of the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgements, for the distinction between 'reflective' and 'determinative' judgement is, in application, lodged squarely within the domain of the *a posteriori*. As I have framed it, the *a prioricity* of the 'transcendental' principle of reflective judgement is not to be understood by way of a *relation* between concepts at all (it is neither strictly speaking analytic, nor strictly speaking synthetic, but instead its *a prioricity* lies in the self-picturing status of our notion of good judgement itself). I have, finally, avoided basing Kant's deduction of the principle of reflective judgement on an appeal to his treatment of aesthetic experience; though I believe that the notion of *heautonomy* is crucial for a proper understanding of Kant's analysis of the judgement of taste, I do not think, as some have claimed, that the only way for Kant (or anyone else) to solve the regress problem of rules for the application of rules is to base the possibility of judgement on a special sort of subjective, non-conceptual, spontaneous and immediate experience of meaningfulness or harmony of the kind that we might take to be modelled in our experience of a work of art.[46] Neither Kant, nor after him Wittgenstein, is best taken to be aestheticizing or making 'blind' and 'spontaneous' all of our knowledge at one stroke.

It is sometimes claimed that transcendental arguments – especially those designed to thwart scepticism of the Humean variety – typically involve an appeal to some or all of these aspects of Kant's philosophy, or at least to an ineradicably first-person perspective on our cognitive practices. But, as I hope I have shown, there is nothing peculiarly first-personal about the notion that good

judgement is possible and desired.[47] While it is true that inner reflection and self-consciousness become central in the history of philosophy after Kant, I think it cannot be right to insist that a transcendental argument specify necessary conditions for the exercise of a particular capacity – if by 'necessary' we mean conditions specifiable in terms of contentful principles, concepts or rules. For we have seen that Kant's principle of reflective judgement is not so specifiable.

For me what is most salient in Kant's reply to Hume (interpreted in the way I have interpreted it) is its unearthing for us of a new kind of dialectical sophistication – and dialectical difficulty – in responding to scepticism. Kant's 'deduction' of the principle of reflective judgement is self-professedly circular, self-professedly without ordinary deductive power in the logical sense. What it does, however, is to point towards the immanence and prevalence of certain notions within our practices: the *value-ladenness*, the *contingency*, the *open-endedness* and the *context-dependence* of our notion of good (or sound) judgement, of 'common sense'. This kind of 'transcendental' pointing may at some junctures succeed in reconciling us to the task of making judgements as best we can. But at other junctures it may fill us with sceptical doubts. As is notorious, what is most difficult to see clearly in each particular case is *why* we should take to be obvious that which we *do* take to be obvious or 'common sensical' – for what is a natural or obvious judgement in one context may be an unnatural or stupid judgement in another, or to another judging subject in the same context. This is one point of entry for the sceptic, who attacks common sense after unmasking these features of its use. And it must be said on behalf of the sceptic that 'common sense' is a frail reed on which to rely for an acontextual analysis of knowledge and judgement. It is too often wrong, partial, revisable.

In recent philosophy it is Austin and Wittgenstein who bring out most clearly, in their responses to scepticism, the importance of our retaining some hold on the notion of the *appropriateness* or *purposiveness* of particular claims. It is their particular emphasis on the contextual character of understanding, their insistence on scrutinizing the *suitability* or *naturalness* or *rightness* or *disharmony* of a particular judgement *in situ* – and not merely its truth or falsity – that makes their examinations of traditional epistemology so profound and so exciting. The beauty of bringing a notion like *purposiveness* to bear in the dialectic with the Humean sceptic is that, when we examine scepticism through the eyes of what we take to be relevant to a particular sort of case, we come to see that the sceptic is, over and over again, making our sense of relevance, of suitability, *irrelevant* because contingently shared, or contingently applicable. Our standards of relevance depend for their purchase not only upon a given set of purposes at hand, but also on these shared standards being treated as themselves relevant. Ultimately, as both Austin and Wittgenstein emphasize, acceptance of such standards comes along with our participation in a language. What the sceptic may be said to expose is that there is nothing *intrinsically* appropriate for us to say with regard to any particular experience or judgement: human judgement just doesn't happen in the sphere of the intrinsically (necessarily) meaningful. Our fund of common sense, or purposiveness, is contingently lawful, and at the limit, in

wildly 'abnormal' surroundings, it will run dry. Differently put, we can assign no *a priori* content or limit to the domain of what is suitable or appropriate judgement. But that is only to say that the notions of *suitability* and *purposiveness* are properly conceived of as notions with a contingently lawful application – just as Kant (and before him Hume) held. The genius of Austin and of Wittgenstein, different in spirit though these philosophers are, lies in their power to show us, albeit in very different ways, that our ability to make judgements is no worse off – and no better off – for its turning on a shared sense of attunement among ourselves, and with the world.

It is then Austin, Wittgenstein and in a more limited way Goodman – however contrasting in their methods – who are the direct heirs to Kant's reply to Hume in the *Critique of Judgment*. It is Quine, however, who stands as the greatest twentieth-century heir to Hume. And in closing I would like to emphasize that Quine is no more to be taken as *refuted* by Austin and Wittgenstein than Hume is to be taken as having been refuted by Kant. Quine, like Hume, has sought to keep the significance of scepticism and the appeal of empiricism alive. He has famously written that the human condition *is* the Humean condition: life is uncertain and we have no guarantee that nature will not suddenly change her course.[48] Quine goes so far as to hold that if dreams suddenly became better bases of prediction than waking thoughts, we would, in the very pursuit of science, jettison current theory in favour of dreams.[49] For Quine, there just is no internal incoherence in doubting the future regularity of nature. Science itself tells us that there are multiple possible systematizations of the evidence.[50] But this provides no firm foothold for the sceptic to claim victory. Quine is not, as is sometimes held, attacking common sense.[51] Instead, he robs scepticism of its intellectual sting. For the content of science is, of course, revisable. And science is nothing but a reflective, systematized extension of common sense, continuous with it and inextricably tied to it (so science was for both Kant and Hume). For Quine the possibility of knowledge, of good judgement, does not lie in a set of rules of logic or language that are *a priori* true. As he explicitly says, 'know' and 'certain' and 'believe' are like '*big*' or any other indexical: 'a matter of degree'.[52] Knowledge and certainty are, in particular cases, not badly off because of this vagueness and contextual quality. But the purported *science* of knowledge, a systematic *theory* of 'epistemology' in anything like its traditional sense, 'blushes for its name'.[53] For the vagueness of its root notions – *belief, knowledge, experience* and *certainty* – give every indication needed that this purported science, however fascinating as a study within linguistics and psychology, will not be a sufficiently systematic enterprise to figure in what Quine calls 'an enduring and impersonal formulation of a system of the world'.[54] Knowledge is no worse off for this. Epistemology is.

What remains then of empiricism, for Quine – or, as he prefers to call it, epistemology 'naturalized'? The answer lies in what Quine shares, oddly enough, with Austin, Wittgenstein and Goodman: the notion that our very standards of knowledge themselves emerge through our participation in the social art of language. As he writes:

> Transcendental argument, or what purports to be first philosophy, tends generally to take on rather [the] status of immanent epistemology insofar as I succeed in making sense of it. What evaporates is the transcendental question of the reality of the external world – the question whether or in how far our science measures up to the *Ding an sich*.[55]

This is perhaps made clearest in a 1996 paper, where Quine addressed two points of progress he felt he had made with the theory of evidence since *Word and Object*. The first concerns the problem of induction, the second the theory-ladenness of observations. In 1960 Quine had replaced the notion of an *observation* with its naturalistic *ersatz*, the notion of an *observation sentence*. The latter notion was analysed in terms of what Quine called the sentence's 'stimulus meaning', which he defined as the range of stimulations – that is, sets of firings of neuroceptors – any one of which would prompt an observer to assent to the sentence.[56] This keyed assent and dissent to observation sentences directly to the relatively unvarnished and direct impact of the environment upon the surface of the speaker: as close as Quine could come, behaviourally speaking, to Humean immediate impressions (or Kantian intuitions). 'Correct' or adequate translation of an observation sentence should preserve stimulus meaning, on this account, and thus could speakers be taken to share an entering wedge into their weighing of the observed evidence – indeed, an entering wedge into language – sufficiently 'objective' for the further development of legitimate scientific theory. Quine's notion of stimulus meaning could not, however, be narrowly construed, for two different subjects do not literally speaking share nerve endings. So Quine initially rested his characterization on the *homology* of different subjects' receptors. But was this plausible? As Quine came to see, such homology is not to be expected. Darwin pointed out in *On the Origin of Species* that the structure of nerve nets varies from individual to individual. Thus the sameness of our linguistic responses to stimuli does not in fact reside in the anatomic likenesses between us, as Quine had originally held.

　　As is well-known, over the course of many years Davidson urged Quine to surrender the project of epistemology naturalized. He asked (in a Kantian vein) why Quine should not simply take the relevant stimulus to be the distal object itself, thereby by-passing neurophysiology – and epistemology, with its threat of scepticism – altogether. Like Hume, however, Quine retained his interest in epistemology – in the theory of evidence – unswervingly. In 'Progress on Two Fronts', his 1996 essay, Quine officially retracted his reliance on the homology of nerve endings. But he defended in that same place his interest in epistemology by invoking the traditional problem of induction, and with it Leibniz, Hume and Darwin. The following remark should be compared with our earlier quoted (and equally ironical) quote from Hume, in section 1 of this chapter:

> What we have is a preestablished *harmony* of standards of perceptual similarity, independent of intersubjective likeness of receptors or sensations. Shades of G.W. Leibniz, thus, but without appeal to divine intervention.

The harmony is explained by a yet deeper, but more faltering preestablished harmony between perceptual similarity and the environment. This, in turn, is accounted for by natural selection as follows.

We have to begin with an *inductive* instinct: we tend to expect perceptually similar stimulations to have sequels that are similar to each other. This is the basis of expectation, habit formation, and learning. Successful expectation has always had survival value, notably in the elusion of predators and the capture of prey. Natural selection has accordingly favored innate standards of perceptual similarity which have tended to harmonize with trends in the environment. Hence the success, so much better than random, of our inductions and expectations. Derivatively, then, through our sharing of an ancestral gene pool, our innate standards of perceptual similarity harmonize also intersubjectively.

Natural selection is Darwin's solvent of metaphysics. It dissolved Aristotle's final cause, teleology, into efficient cause, and now Leibniz's preestablished harmony as well.[57]

Quine's neo-Humeanism finds room and relevance for the coherence of Hume's sceptical doubts about an *a priori* basis for our faith in induction, while resolving (that is dissolving) these doubts naturalistically, rather than metaphysically. His faith in Darwin's account of how order may be seen contingently (randomly) to arise from disorder places evolutionary biology at the basis of epistemology, at the expense of traditional teleology. There is an obvious circularity in Quine's answer: he takes the regularities characteristic of the practice of language and science to have emerged through natural selection – the very process that is itself the subject of a particular scientific theory based upon the practice of induction.[58] But, given his jettisoning of any aspiration to a First Philosophy, he takes this to be no fault in his account: for Quine, any well-brought-up person in our culture accepts Darwin as a matter of course. Science, we recall, is simply a reflective, systematized extension of common sense, according to Quine. The philosopher's job is to reflect, fitting common sense together as best he or she can with the outer reaches of current research, exploring how the whole may be seen to reflect 'broad features of reality', or a system of the world.[59]

With regard to the so-called 'problem' of induction, then, it would be a mistake to take Austin and Wittgenstein to be refuting anything that Quine says, just as it would be a mistake to take Kant to have been refuting Hume. All these philosophers share something important and deep: they do not attempt to *refute* the sceptic about induction by means of an appeal to an uncontrovertible belief or judgement. In a way, this retreat from a direct confrontation with scepticism represents a dissolution of the 'transcendental' standpoint – if we construe that standpoint as one that aims to recover an autonomous sphere for philosophical knowledge, a special role for philosophy as a discipline setting out *a priori* conditions for (or limits to) knowledge and certainty. Were there to be such a standpoint, or were such a standpoint to legitimately issue into propositions concerning conditions of human knowledge, scepticism would be refuted, shown

to be nonsensical or false. Austin, Quine and Wittgenstein – from within vastly different philosophical traditions, with vastly different philosophical spirits and methods – are giving up on this transcendental project and banking on a different kind of dialectical investigation, in which acquiescence in our mother tongue, and in our ordinary standards of good judgement, become the primary object of study for philosophy. The difficulty each of them faces – each in their differing ways – is how to examine and investigate this acquiescence critically without falling into the myth of a language-free, necessarily and generally applicable transcendental starting point. For the myth of that starting point, in pretending to surmount our ordinary standards of good judgement and relevance, invites scepticism. The proper conception of the transcendental perspective is something more local, more parochial, more open-ended and more contingent.

I hope to have explained why, in this chapter, I see Kant's reply to Hume as a paradigm of the most sophisticated form that a response to the 'problem' of induction can take. The proper response to general worries about inductive inference is not to try to refute these worries or unmask them as conceptually incoherent. The proper response is to grant them, and then show how their generalization into a sceptical stance depends upon a prior refusal to accept the humdrum, vexing contingency and indexicality that our most ordinary ways of judging and thinking exhibit. This response takes up the cause of good judgement, or common sense, without turning any particular claims of common sense into dogmas. I think we can do no better.[60]

Notes

1 Juliet Floyd, 'Heautonomy: Kant on Reflective Judgment and Systematicity', in Herman Parret (ed.), *Kants Ästhetik–Kant's Aesthetics–L'esthétique de Kant*, Berlin, New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1998, pp. 192–218.

2 See Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste: A Reading of the* Critique of Judgment, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, especially Chapters 1–2. Others have questioned, as I do, whether Kant actually provides – or intends to provide – a refutation of Hume, as opposed to a kind of redescription of our inductive practices. An instructive exchange on this question is that between Ralph C.S. Walker and Graham Bird in their contributions to *Transcendental Arguments: Problems and Prospects*, Robert Stern (ed.), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1999; see Ralph C.S. Walker, 'Induction and Transcendental Argument', pp. 13–30, and Graham Bird, 'Kant and the Problem of Induction: A Reply to Walker', pp. 31–46. My concern in this chapter is, like Allison, with the Introductions to Kant's third *Critique*.

3 See Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1983, ch. 10. See also Allison's 'Causality and Causal Law in Kant: A Critique of Michael Friedman', in *Idealism and Freedom*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 80–91.

4 In *Kant's Theory of Taste* Allison also stresses the importance of Leibniz as another target of Kant.

5 Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin, Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter & Co. (Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften), 1910ff, vol. 5, p. 185. All translations are my own.

6 Immanuel Kant, 'First Introduction', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 20, pp. 213–14.

7 Kant, 'First Introduction', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 20, p. 209; see Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 183.

8 David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, §5, part II, in Hume's *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, L.A. Selby-Bigge and P.H. Nidditch (eds), 3rd edn, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975, p. 55.

9 See Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 404.

10 Kant, 'First Introduction', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 20, pp. 219–20.

11 Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 179.

12 Kant does not sharply distinguish among the logical forms of judgement in the ways we automatically do since Frege. He treats predication, concept inclusion, identity and existential force under the single banner of judgement's activity of 'subsumption' of a particular under a universal or rule. This lack of sharpness affects Kant's discussion in the Introductions to the third *Critique*. But it also simplifies his presentation of what he conceives his central problem to be. Kant's conception of the activity of judgement as one of subsumption in general covers not merely particular empirical judgements, but also judgements about concept inclusion, reidentification, covering law generalization, and particular existence. This allows him to introduce a kind of holism into his theory of science, making his response to Hume far more creditable than it would have been had he relied solely or primarily upon a neo-Aristotelian view of empirical concept formation through psychological abstraction. We shall discuss the issue of holism below, when we consider Kant's specification of the principle of reflective judgement in terms of the ideal of systematicity.

13 Kant, 'First Introduction', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 20, p. 211.

14 Kant, 'First Introduction', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 20, p. 211.

15 Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, P.H. Nidditch (ed.), 2nd edn, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978, pp. 148–9, 175: book I, part III, §§xiii, xv.

16 Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, §77, esp. pp. 406–7.

17 This has sometimes been suggested. See, for example, Reinhard Brandt, 'The Deductions in the *Critique of Judgment*: Comments on Hampshire and Horstmann', in Eckart Förster (ed.), *Kant's Transcendental Deductions*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1989, pp. 177–192; Paul Guyer, 'Kant's Conception of Empirical Law', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1990, supp. vol., pp. 220–42; and especially Guyer's 'Reason and Reflective Judgment: Kant on the Significance of Systematicity', *Noûs*, 1990, vol. 24, pp. 17–43, and, for a response to such suggestions, Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, pp. 16ff.

18 I purposely use the terms 'reflection' and 'consideration' in an everyday, untutored sense, for I am arguing that Kant's notion of reflective judgement is best explained *via* this notion – and the notion that I intuitively link with it, that of good judgement – rather than *via* a transcendental notion of subjectivity or apperception. Obviously, there are several notions of (transcendental) 'reflection' at work in Kant's critical system, and a proper reading of the text would examine their relation to the kind of intuitive notions I work with here. But that sort of examination lies beyond – and would in fact be orthogonal to – the kind of treatment of Kant I am aiming for here. My aim is to sever Kant's response to Hume as much as possible from his doctrines of transcendental psychology.

19 Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I, Part III, §III, p. 82.

20 See Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, pp. 169, 292. In the latter passage Kant is contrasting aesthetic experience of the sublime with 'ordinary experience' so as to capture the heightened sense of reality the sublime brings with it. A proper extension of my reading of Kant's Introductions to the third *Critique* would have to explore the contrast between 'ordinary' and 'aesthetic' experience as voiced in the judgement of taste. I believe that the key to a proper understanding of Kant's aesthetics lies in the heautonomous status of the *a priori* principle of reflective judgement, a status he explicitly associates with aesthetic judgement

(Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, 'First Introduction', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 20), but I cannot argue that point fully here.

21 See Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, pp. 169, 238, 241, 275, 292–5, 354, 398, 442, 476 and 478. This notion is not, I think, to be confused with the notion of a community of feeling, the *sensus communis*, which underlies Kant's treatment of taste in especially §21 of the third *Critique*.

22 Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 169.

23 Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 169.

24 It should not be identified with Kant's regress argument in the first *Critique* at Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vols 3–4, A132/3/B171–2, as some authors have argued (for example, David Bell, 'The Art of Judgment', *Mind*, 1987, vol. 96, pp. 221–44). Although the form of this prior regress argument is similar to that we see in the Preface to the *Critique of Judgment*, its purpose differs. In the first *Critique* Kant intends to distinguish general logic from his new *transcendental* logic, the logic of our concept of an object in general. General logic is for Kant empty of synthetic content, it is a merely formal 'canon' for knowledge, providing a negative, limiting touchstone for thought. By contrast, according to Kant transcendental logic is synthetic and *a priori*, a productive logic we may use as an 'organon'. The problem of schematism in the first *Critique* – dealt with in the section immediately following this statement of the regress argument – concerns, as Kant explicitly says, the 'sensible condition' under which alone pure concepts of the understanding, the categories, can be employed. That is a problem of the schematism of *transcendental* judgement. But in the third *Critique* the question is framed differently, in terms of *ordinary* judgement. *Granted* that the categories may be said to apply determinatively and universally to all possible experiences, how then is *good* (that is, sufficiently sagacious) judgement possible? This latter question is the topic of the third *Critique*, an outstanding problem for Kant even after the first *Critique*'s chapter on schematism, for transcendental logic, even if it may be said to apply universally in the realm of experience, cannot play the role of supplying 'mother wit' any better than can general logic. Here I recapitulate the argument offered in my 'Heautonomy: Kant on Reflective Judgment and Systematicity', pp. 194ff.

25 See Kant's *Jäsche Logik*, in *Lectures on Logic*, trans. and ed. Michael J. Young, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 527: 'Everything in nature, both in the inanimate as well as the animate world, happens *according to rules*, although we do not always know these rules … The exercise of our own powers also takes place according to certain rules which we first follow *unconscious* of them at first, until we gradually arrive at cognition of them through experiments and lengthy use of our powers … Thus, for example, general grammar is the form of a language as such. One also speaks, however, without knowing grammar, and he who speaks without knowing it actually does have a grammar and speaks according to rules, even though he is not conscious of them.'

26 It is true that in a pure judgement of taste, Kant argues that no concept applies determinatively at all – hence the rule-governedness of such judgements is of a special sort. The special problems associated with the application of our concept of *beauty* cannot detain me here, however.

27 Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 185.

28 Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 180.

29 Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 185.

30 I draw here an analogy with Kant's notion of the *fact of reason* (see *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 31, §7). I hope it is clear that the status of what I call the fact of judgement – judgement in accordance with the principle of reflective judgement – does not purport to carry with it the same *a prioricity*, universality and necessity that Kant claims reason's legislation of the universal law carries with itself.

31 See Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, 182.
32 Compare Gerd Buchdahl, *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Science*, New York, University Press of America, 1988, and Michael Friedman, *Kant and the Exact Sciences*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1992.
33 Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vols 3–4, A643ff./B671ff.
34 Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vols 3–4, A644/B672.
35 Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vols 3–4, A646/B674.
36 Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vols 3–4, A654/B682; see Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, 185–6.
37 Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vols 3–4, A 654/B 682.
38 See Kant's *Jäsche Logik*, §§81–4.
39 Kant, 'First Introduction', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 20, pp. 211–12.
40 Kant, 'First Introduction', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 20, pp. 211–12n.
41 Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 182.
42 Kant, 'First Introduction', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 20, p. 216.
43 Kant, 'First Introduction', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 20, p. 216; compare Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, pp. 180–81.
44 Nelson Goodman, *Fact, Fiction and Forecast*, 3rd edn, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1973.
45 Here I agree with Malpas ('The Transcendental Circle', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 1997, vol. 75, p. 4) that the idea of transcendental subjectivity, or a transcendental subject, is not necessary to a transcendental argument. This is not of course to imply that certain paradigmatic arguments Kant actually forwards *do* turn on such an appeal to a self-constituting subject. For an emphasis on this idea, see Jaakko Hintikka, 'Transcendental Arguments: Genuine and Spurious', *Noûs*, 1972, vol. 6, pp. 274–81.
46 For this argument, applied simultaneously to Kant and to Wittgenstein, see Bell, 'The Art of Judgment', esp. p. 238.
47 Walker, 'Induction and Transcendental Argument', and Bird, 'Kant and the Problem of Induction: A Reply to Walker', discuss the idea of a 'second-personal', as opposed to a 'third-personal', character to Kant's treatment of induction.
48 See, for various indications, W.V. Quine, *Quiddities*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1987, entry on 'induction'; also 'Natural Kinds', in his *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1969, pp. 114–38.
49 Quine, *Theories and Things*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1981, p. 22.
50 From the beginning, and explicitly in *Word and Object*, Quine held that though scientific method, as a loose-knit body of canons, is *the* way to truth, it affords even in principle no unique *definition* of truth, for it is likelier than not that there are in principle countless alternative systematizations of the same body of total evidence. See Quine, *Word and Object*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1960, §6.
51 This is argued recently by Avrum Stroll in his *Moore and Wittgenstein on Certainty*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994. For Stroll, Quine is a sceptic who denies the possibility of certainty, whereas, in contrast, Moore and Wittgenstein are 'foundationalists' who bequeathed to us 'a powerful defence of the autonomy of philosophy as capable of giving us a true description of the world', namely, 'the common sense view of the world', 'a pre-technical, pre-scientific outlook … deeper, more primitive, conceptually prior to, and the basis for the refined and regimented descriptions of reality that science and mathematics provide. Accordingly, whatever science tells us about the world must be compatible with the common sense view' (p. 15). Stroll's sharp contrast between 'common sense' and 'scientific' knowledge strikes me as foreign both to Wittgenstein and to Quine, as I explain in my review of Stroll's book in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 1999, vol. 49, pp. 412–15. Similar doubts are expressed by Roger F. Gibson in his 'Quine, Wittgenstein and Holism', in Robert L. Arrington

and Hans-Johann Glock (eds), *Wittgenstein and Quine*, London, Routledge, 1996, pp. 80–96. See also my closing remarks in this chapter.

52 See Quine, *Quiddities*, pp. 108–9, and 'Relativism and Absolutism', *The Monist*, 1984, vol. 67, pp. 243–96. Compare Burton Dreben's discussion of these passages in his 'In Mediis Rebus', *Inquiry*, 1995, vol. 37, pp. 441–7.

53 Quine, 'Relativism and Absolutism', p. 295.

54 Quine, 'Reply to Jaakko Hintikka', in Lewis Edwin Hahn and P.A. Schilpp (eds), *The Philosophy of W.V. Quine*, Library of Living Philosophers vol. XVIII, expanded edn, Chicago, Open Court, 1998, p. 227.

55 Quine, *Theories and Things*, p. 22.

56 See *Word and Object*, §§7–10.

57 W.V. Quine, 'Progress on Two Fronts', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 1996, vol. XCIII, no. 4, pp. 160–61.

58 See, for an emphasis on the circularity, Quine, 'Natural Kinds'.

59 Quine, 'Reply to Jaakko Hintikka'.

60 I would like to thank for their very helpful feedback the audiences who heard earlier versions of this chapter at McGill University, the universities of Tromsø and Oslo in Norway, MIT, Vassar College, and the Boston Colloquium for the Philosophy of Science at Boston University. I owe a large debt of gratitude to Henry Allison, Burton Dreben, Akihiro Kanamori, W.V. Quine and Camilla Serck-Hanssen for conversations about the philosophical questions treated in this chapter.

3 Making sense

Husserl's phenomenology as transcendental idealism

Dermot Moran

Uncovering absolute consciousness

As is well known, Edmund Husserl's philosophy underwent a transcendental turning a few years after the publication of his 'ground-breaking' *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900–01),[1] according to which phenomenology – originally understood as descriptive psychology – was reconceptualized as a pure, *a priori*, transcendental discipline and eventually as the way into transcendental philosophy. The discovery of the *epoché* and the reduction (in his research manuscripts of 1905, but first treated publicly in his 1906–7 lectures *Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie*)[2] enabled him to bring a new clarity to a problematic that he originally conceived of as an *epistemological* problem, namely, the constitution of objectivity in, by and for subjectivity. This problematic had emerged first in modern philosophy but had hitherto been misconstrued; phenomenology would provide a new mode of access to this problematic. The reduction allowed Husserl to gain a clearer conception of the *object as perceived*, *thought*, or *consciously grasped*, which from around 1908 he termed *noema* and which is to be contrasted with the object that is thought.[3] It was a short step to consider consciousness in an entirely new light, no longer as a part (*Bestandstück*) of nature, but as a set of pure noetic acts with their own distinct essences. Transcendental phenomenology is a descriptive eidetic science,[4] reached through the *epoché* and in the performance of the reduction, 'the most fundamental of all methods' in philosophy.[5] It took Husserl somewhat longer to recognize the need to locate these noetic acts in the transcendental ego. In his mature philosophy Husserl is a fully fledged transcendental idealist: all meaning and being are conceived as productions or accomplishments of transcendental subjectivity, and transcendental subjectivity itself must be conceived not as some 'dead' identity pole but as living, communalized spirit, a notion Husserl never succeeded in articulating with clarity.

The absolute primacy of pure transcendental consciousness became central to Husserl's philosophy. His central insight is that transcendental philosophy is 'absolute', self-justifying knowledge, positioned to ask the most radical questions even about its own essential possibility and validity. Moreover, his attempt to found transcendental philosophy is one with his project of philosophy as a rigorous science. Transcendental phenomenology expressed both the essence of

phenomenology and the essence of all genuine *philosophy*. He himself understood transcendental phenomenology primarily as a reflective, descriptive philosophical approach, albeit one that requires a particular attitude, a specifically adopted stance. He came to the view that even *a priori* sciences such as mathematics were in a sense 'positive sciences', proceeding in 'transcendental naïveté', and suffering periodic *crises of foundation* from which only transcendental phenomenology could rescue them. True philosophy can never remain within what Husserl calls 'naïve' standpoints (within what Plato called *doxa*) and is inevitably committed to becoming true knowledge (*epistémê*), an insight requiring the *transcendental* turn.

Husserl first set out his new idealist position in print – although not named as such (he speaks of 'pure' or 'transcendental' consciousness) – in *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book* (1913), where it is introduced as a way of doing justice to Descartes' *Meditations*,[6] and thus as realizing the true essence of the modern philosophical tradition. He did not employ the term 'transcendental idealism' (*transzendentaler Idealismus*) until around 1915, but thereafter it is explicitly embraced, as in his *Fichte Lectures* of 1917–18.[7] Nevertheless, it is clear, in *Ideas* I, that phenomenology as an eidetic science radically distinct from all empirical sciences[8] must be reconceived in transcendental terms if it is not to be misunderstood in a naturalistic way. *Ideas* I introduces pure consciousness understood as '*a new region of being never before delimited in its own peculiarity*',[9] and 'the all of absolute being [*das All des absoluten Seins*]'.[10] Husserl asserts the absolute existence of consciousness as a self-delimited, self-contained sphere with a 'peculiar ownness' entirely distinct from all factual nature.

To complicate the picture somewhat, Husserl, after he moved to Göttingen, began intensively to engage with Kant in his lectures and seminars. Thus, for example, in his 1907 *Die Idee der Phänomenologie* (*The Idea of Phenomenology*) lectures,[11] he acknowledges the affinity between his own problematic and that discussed by Kant in his *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, namely, how objectivity comes into play in the difference between *judgements of perception* and *judgements of experience*. But Husserl distinguishes himself from Kant, who could not free himself from the grip of 'psychologism and anthropologism':

> Kant did not arrive at the ultimate intent of the distinction that must be made here. For us it is not a matter of merely subjectively valid judgements, the validity of which is limited to the empirical subject, and objectively valid judgements in the sense of being valid for every subject in general. For we have excluded the empirical subject: and transcendental apperception, consciousness as such, will soon acquire for us a wholly different sense, one that is not mysterious at all.[12]

Similarly, in his *Ding und Raum* lectures of 1907,[13] he denies that he is posing the problematic of the constitution of objectivity in terms of Kant's question (in his famous 'Letter to Markus Herz' of 1772), how subjective representations reach outside themselves to gain knowledge of the object.[14] To pose the question

in this way is already to surrender to representationalism. As Husserl says, such questions are 'perversely posed'.[15] It is not the existence of the perceived that is in question for Husserl but the *essence* of perception or cognition and the *essence* of the perceived thing or the cognized thing as such. As he will later say in the *Crisis*: 'The point is not to secure objectivity but to understand it'.[16]

In this sense, Husserl agrees with Kant that a 'transcendental' inquiry is one which seeks 'conditions of possibility'. In Husserl's case, this is to be understood as the conditions of the possibility of all formations of *sense* (*Sinn*), of *meaning* (*Bedeutung, Meinung*), and indeed how the world as such comes to be given as something senseful. Moreover, conditions of possibility refer to *essence*:

> Conditions of the possibility of experience signify … nothing else than all that resides immanently in the essence of experience, in its *essentia*, and thereby belongs to it irrevocably. The essence of experience, which is what is investigated in the phenomenological analysis of experience, is the same as the possibility of experience, and everything established about the essence, about the possibility of experience, is *eo ipso* a condition of the possibility of experience. To expect of experience something that contradicts its essence as experience of things … means to interpret experience and the objects of experience in a countersensical way. That is absurd.[17]

For Husserl, phenomenology must take up and purify Kant's initial beginnings by offering a clarified and scientifically grounded sense of the *a priori* understood as essence. What was not entirely clear to Husserl when these words were written in 1907 was that the analysis of the eidetic was merely the first step on the way to the transcendental. In his later years, and even as he reworked the *Investigations* for the Second Edition of 1913, Husserl would reinterpret the 'breakthrough' of the *Investigations* as a breakthrough into transcendental phenomenology, although he had not realized it at the time. As he would later write in *Crisis of European Sciences*:

> The first breakthrough of this universal a priori of correlation between experienced object and manners of givenness (which occurred during work on my *Logical Investigations* around 1898) affected me so deeply that my whole subsequent life-work has been dominated by the task of systematically elaborating on this a priori of correlation.[18]

At least as far as Husserl himself is concerned, he was always reaching towards transcendental philosophy, although specific problems concerning the nature of transcendental subjectivity (understood both as monadic egology and as intersubjective community of monads) emerged only after Husserl wrote *Ideas* I (he sketches his first account of the constitution of subjects and spirit in *Ideas* II),[19] and as he struggled with the issue of the relation between nature and spirit. Husserl's engagement with spirit (*Geist*) led him to a new accommodation with Dilthey and with the tradition of German critical and absolute Idealism.

Husserl's trenchant commitment to transcendental idealism was hugely problematic for his immediate disciples and protégés (Stein, Scheler, Heidegger, Ingarden), who saw it as an unresolved dogmatic element in his thinking, a metaphysical residue, a legacy of German philosophy (specifically Neo-Kantianism) in his day. In order to defend Husserl, some more recent commentators, invoking the presuppositionless starting point and bracketing procedures, claim that Husserl's idealism is actually a purely phenomenological stance without metaphysical commitment.[20] I do not agree. Although Husserl did not see himself as engaging in any arbitrary or speculative metaphysics, nevertheless his commitment to idealism is genuine, deep and more radical than that of Kant or Descartes. Husserl himself saw it as a necessary consequence of his attempt to get to the things themselves (*die Sachen selbst*). Moreover, as a deeply religious thinker, it was precisely this idealism that informs his religious sense. Transcendental idealism even provides the only basis for conceiving of God, given the absurdity of thinking of Him as an item in the factual world.[21] A quarter of a century later in *Crisis of European Sciences* he could still declare:

> As scientists, can we content ourselves with the view that God created the world and human beings within it … The enigma of the creation and that of God himself are essential component parts of positive religion. For the philosopher, however, this, and also the juxtaposition "subjectivity *in* the world as object" and at the same time "conscious subject *for* the world" contain a necessary theoretical question, that of understanding how this is possible.[22]

Thus, for Husserl, transcendental idealism expresses the inner sense of what religion presents naively.

Not only did Husserl never stop being a transcendental idealist, he actually felt that the transcendental standpoint itself required constant radicalization and purification to prevent falling back into the natural attitude. Thus, in *Erste Philosophie*,[23] he even speaks of 'transcendental *naïveté*',[24] that is, accepting that all knowledge has subjective origins but misinterpreting the nature of this originating. Similarly, one must be on guard against *transcendental psychologism*, which assumes the results of transcendental investigation of consciousness are *psychological* results.[25]

Through the 1920s and 1930s Husserl became increasingly wide-reaching, even baroque, in his conception of the transcendental. He speaks not only of the transcendental *ego* but of transcendental *experience*,[26] of transcendental *life*,[27] of transcendental *facts*, of a transcendental *past* and *future*, transcendental *rationality* and even transcendental *irrationality*, and so on. Thus Husserl writes in his draft *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article:

> The transcendental reduction opens up, in fact, a completely new kind of experience that can be systematically pursued: transcendental experience. Through the transcendental reduction, *absolute* subjectivity, which functions

everywhere in hiddenness, is brought to light along with its whole transcendental life, in whose intentional syntheses all real and ideal objects, with their positive existential validity, are constituted. The transcendental reduction yields the thematic field of an absolute phenomenological science, called the transcendental science because it encompasses within itself all transcendental or rational-theoretical inquiries.[28]

The transcendental domain is infinite, but also it is living, that is, it grows and accrues dimensions which become sedimented in it. Transcendental philosophy is not true just of this world but of all possible worlds. Ultimately, a full account of the essence of pure consciousness must extend into a complete *a priori* documentation of the possible forms of transcendental life, not just its actual forms but everything which can be 'predelineated' regarding its essence. These include, bizarrely, the transcendental life of plants, animals,[29] and all possible *a priori* forms of subjectivity and intersubjectivity.[30] In so doing, he was fully aware of extending the concept of the transcendental beyond anything envisaged in previous philosophy – not just charting the authentic essence of inexhaustible transcendental life, but also offering a *critique* of transcendental experience.[31] Thus, Husserl believes it is itself a transcendental problem whether something like a solipsistic transcendental ego is itself possible. For Husserl, moreover, transcendental subjectivity must be 'communicative' and hence intersubjective, though the precise manner of its relation to other possible or actual subjects was never settled by him, nor was the issue as to whether it can assume novel forms or whether it can merely instantiate elements predelineated in its essence. In other words, in what sense can transcendental subjectivity be genuinely living and historical?

The road to transcendental idealism

Already in his early Göttingen lecture courses of 1902–3, Husserl repudiated Brentanian *descriptive psychology*, understood as underpinning empirical psychology, as the correct model for exploring the newly discovered domain of the essential *a priori* correlations between subjectivity and objectivity. Specifically, he was dissatisfied with the inextricable *naturalism* of descriptive psychology, essentially of a piece with the scientific and naturalistic turn exemplified by the modern philosophical tradition. In the First Edition of the *Investigations* he had not understood that no naturalistic conceived psychology could ever appreciate the epistemic achievement of consciousness. In his 1910–11 essay *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*,[32] he explains that the rejection of psychologism in the *Investigations* needed to be followed by a rejection of the 'naturalisation of consciousness' itself.[33] The descriptive psychological approach inherited from Brentano and Stumpf and expressed in the First Edition of the *Investigations* had failed to recognize the domain of *pure* consciousness, which he now characterizes as a self-delimited, self-contained, 'absolute' sphere with a 'peculiar ownness' entirely distinct from all factual, empirical nature. Thenceforth he maintained

that consciousness cannot be understood beginning from a sensualism, whereby it is seen as containing a sensuous matter provided from without.[34] Rather, the essence of consciousness – and indeed of soul, spirit and reason – has to be understood as meaning production, making sense.[35] Already in *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*, Husserl was claiming that the domain of consciousness (understood as spirit) cannot be understood in terms of causation, time, space and other attributes of nature, but has an essence and form of its own.[36]

In his mature philosophy, phenomenology is explicated specifically as opposed to all forms of *naturalism*. Already in the *Investigations*, Husserl had lamented that his was an age obsessed by the natural sciences and by psychology. Psychologism and naturalism are two ever present – and even natural – orientations of the mind, which distort the true nature of consciousness and the realm of cognition. By the time of *Ideas* I Husserl is speaking of the 'philosophical poverty' of the worldview founded in natural science,[37] and emphasizing that transcendental research into consciousness is not a form of research into nature (*Naturforschung*). This anti-naturalism led him to see his affinity with Neo-Kantianism. Thus, in a letter dated 20 December 1915, addressed to the leading Neo-Kantian Heinrich Rickert, Husserl had commented that he found himself in alliance with German Idealism against the common enemy: 'the naturalism of our time'.[38]

Husserl's attempts to penetrate the complexities of time consciousness, and the recognition that consciousness cannot be treated simply as belonging to world time but has an immanent temporal organization in its own right, appear to have been the catalyst for his transcendental turn. But his increasing interest in the *history of philosophy* also played a significant if underappreciated role. Thus, in his 1906–7 lectures, he also began to recognize the role of *scepticism* in propelling the 'natural thinker'[39] into the transcendental mode and thereby opens up a new awareness of consciousness as a sphere of *cogitationes* having 'absolute givenness'.[40]

It is worth noting, however, that refuting scepticism is not the main motivation for Husserl's adopting the transcendental attitude; rather, his real motivation is to do justice to the essence of conscious experience in its objectifying, sense-constituting nature, and in terms of its own unique structure which no natural process comes close to having (leading Husserl to make the surprising claim in *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*, for instance, that consciousness has no real parts and is not in causal interaction with things of the world). Reflecting on these meaning-giving formations of consciousness, Husserl became convinced that consciousness has a kind of absolute existence not dependent on the existence of objects, whereas objects are always dependent on some consciousness. Consciousness is absolute; all other being is relative to consciousness. Recognizing the ineliminable role of consciousness in the constitution of all objecthood, however, does not turn objects into mere semblances, as he stresses in a text from 1908.[41] Being constituted does not mean not fully real. Transcendental idealism is also an empirical realism, and Husserl is not in any way attaching a doubtful or illusory status to the objects in the world. It is rather the *sense* (*Sinn*) of world that is forever altered by the transcendental approach. Moreover, Husserl endorses transcendental

philosophy's opposition to scepticism and especially to Hume's mitigated scepticism:

> The genuine transcendental philosophy … is not like the Humean and neither overtly nor covertly a sceptical decomposition of the world cognition and of the world itself into fictions, that is to say, in modern terms, a 'philosophy of As-If.' Least of all is it a 'dissolution' [*Auflösung*] of the world into 'merely subjective appearances,' which in some still senseful sense would have something to do with illusion. It does not occur to transcendental philosophy to dispute the world of experience in the least …[42]

It is worth bearing these claims in mind when we have to interpret his notorious thought experiment of the 'annihilation of the world' in *Ideas* I, and elsewhere (for example, *Erste Philosophie*), and to which we shall return.

Husserl's transcendental idealism became thematic, and indeed systematic, in his lecture courses of the 1920s in Freiburg, especially *Erste Philosophie*. Here, for the first time, he worked out his conception of transcendental philosophy through a 'critical history of ideas'. In *Cartesian Meditations*, originally delivered as lectures in Paris in 1929, he announces: 'phenomenology is eo ipso "transcendental idealism", though in a fundamentally and essentially new sense'.[43] Here he affirms that this idealism is not the product of arguments against realism, but emerges rather from close investigations of constituting consciousness in all its possible modalities. Thus he asserts: '*The proof of this idealism is therefore phenomenology itself*. Only someone who misunderstands either the deepest sense of intentional method, or that of transcendental reduction, or perhaps both, can attempt to separate phenomenology from transcendental idealism.'[44]

Despite a new emphasis on the life-world (*Lebenswelt*) and its *a priori* structures in the 1930s, Husserl continued to affirm his idealism up to his last writings, focusing explicitly on history and culture as manifestations of spirit.[45] Thus in his 1935 *Vienna Lecture* he writes:

> It is my conviction that intentional phenomenology has made of the spirit *qua* spirit for the first time a field of systematic experience and science and has thus brought about the total reorientation [*Umstellung*] of the task of knowledge. The universality of the absolute spirit surrounds everything that exists with an absolute historicity, to which nature as a spiritual structure is subordinated. Intentional phenomenology, and specifically transcendental phenomenology, was first to see the light through its point of departure and its methods. Only through it do we understand, and from the most profound reasons, what naturalistic objectivism is and understand in particular that psychology, because of its naturalism, has to miss entirely the accomplishment, the radical and genuine problem of the life of the spirit.[46]

Transcendental phenomenology is now the science that grasps in a fundamental way the meaning of the *accomplishment of spiritual life* in all its forms, that is, what

makes rational human intersubjective life possible as such. Moreover, as Husserl claims (in Hegelian manner but without invoking Hegel): 'The spirit, and indeed only the spirit, exists in itself and for itself, is self-sufficient [*eigenständig*]; and in its self-sufficiency, and only in this way, it can be treated truly rationally, truly and from the ground up scientifically.'[47]

Transcendental experience and transcendental life

Husserl's turn to the transcendental aimed precisely to open up this remarkable 'new sphere of being' (*eine neue Seinssphäre*),[48] which is also a sphere of 'pure subjective living' (*rein subjektives Leben*).[49] The transcendental domain is a domain of living spirit. As Husserl makes clear, the essence of this spirit is its free, teleological activity (what Kant misleadingly calls *spontaneity*) and the transcendental uncovering of this realm must recognize the operation of teleological reasonings and motivations. Moreover, the transcendental domain is also a domain of genetic constitution. Humans move from children to adults and gain new convictions, habits and attitudes. Others become sedimented and obscured. But all together belong to the transcendental genesis of the transcendental ego (and outwards to the community and to intersubjective life). Although he presents it first as an *egology*, he also shows it to be a realm of intersubjectivity, a realm of spirit. It is, for Husserl, borrowing from Leibniz, a community of monads. The sphere of the transcendental is the sphere of life itself, but not life construed in a biological or naturalistic way, but life as ego-centred consciousness with its emotional, practical and rational motivations, interconnections and achievements. It is for this reason that the domain of the transcendental is also a domain of *experience*.

Defining Husserl's transcendental idealism

Husserl's unwavering and indeed deepening commitment to transcendental philosophy has a number of distinguishing features. First of all, the transcendental domain must be uncovered by a specific method – either by the Cartesian way or some other way,[50] but in every case it is explored by intuition. The transcendental emerges only through adopting a new and 'unnatural' attitude. When we consider our consciousness in all its forms and interconnections, actual and possible, we are already living in the transcendental attitude,[51] we are considering pure consciousness 'as the *absolutely self-contained realm of purely subjective being* … with its purely immanent interconnections, abilities, sense-structures'.[52] We have consciousness 'taking charge' of itself intuitively.

Transcendental reflection must be distinguished from *natural reflection* (which itself has been misconstrued by philosophers such as Locke). As natural reflecting beings we discover our empirical subjectivity, as humans among humans. Transcendental reflection leading to the transcendental self has to break with the structures governing natural reflection. Reflection is characterized by 'ego-splitting' whereby one self is brought into view but the self viewing it retreats

into anonymity and indeed unconsciousness.[53] Each act of reflection can itself be reflected on, this belongs to the very essence of reflection. As usual, in considering complicated forms of self-reflection Husserl begins with the self-awareness in perception. All reflection is modelled on this self-perception – 'the original form of all reflection' – and self-recollection is the primary variant of this self-perception.[54] The key point is that natural reflection is still intertwined with the *Seinsglaube*, the belief in the world, whereas transcendental reflection neutralizes this belief.[55] Moreover, transcendental reflection is a practice that must be sustained against all temptations to relapse into the natural attitude. Transcendental philosophy, then, cuts the Gordian knot that ties our reflection to the world.

What transcendental reflection reveals is a new domain of meanings, senses, noemata, correlated to ideal conscious forms, according to *a priori* laws of essence. As Husserl's former student and close critic Roman Ingarden wrote: 'the fundamental thesis of "transcendental idealism" is obtained: what is real is nothing but a constituted noematic unity (individual) of a specific kind of sense which in its being and quality [*Sosein*] results from a set of experiences of a special kind and is quite impossible without them.'[56]

Every unity of meaning, every sense, depends essentially on its relation to consciousness. Husserl even concludes *Ideas* II by claiming that nature itself is always relative – relative to an absolute, namely, spirit.[57] As Roman Ingarden formulates Husserl's position:

> The existence of what is perceived (of the perceived as such) is nothing 'in itself' but only something 'for somebody,' for the experiencing ego. '*Streichen wir das reine Bewusstsein, so streichen wir die Welt*' ('If we exclude pure conscious-ness then we exclude the world') is the famous thesis of Husserlian transcendental idealism which he was already constantly repeating in lectures during his Göttingen period.[58]

Husserl himself would proclaim in 1924:

> With the *Ideas* the deepest sense of the Cartesian turn of modern philosophy is, I dare to say, revealed, and the necessity of an absolutely self-contained eidetic science of pure consciousness in general is cogently demonstrated – that is, however, in relation to all correlations grounded in the essence of consciousness, to its possible really immanent moments and to its noemata and objectivities intentionally-ideally determined therein.[59]

I shall have more to say about the meaning of the *a priori* correlation between *noesis* and *noema*, proper to the phenomenological and, as belonging to the ego, to the transcendental domain. I want first to analyse in more detail another feature of Husserl's transcendental idealism, namely, the manner in which he understood it to be the inevitable outcome of the progress of modern philosophy and also the essential core of all true philosophy (the true first philosophy – the 'philos-

ophy of the beginning'). In fact, Husserl, in a manner increasingly close to Hegel, believes that transcendental philosophy takes up and completes all previous philosophy; it embraces and redeems the entire philosophical tradition.[60]

Against Kant and Hegel, however, Husserl claims that transcendental philosophy is not the outcome of any speculative philosophical synthesis, but rather involves an uncovering of a realm of *direct experience*.[61] In that sense, it is not a philosophical position at all. Transcendental reflection opens up a new realm of *experience* – transcendental experience (*transzendentale Erfahrung*), in itself an *infinite* and *self-enclosed* realm of self-related consciousness. This sharply distinguishes his conception from that of Kant or indeed any of his predecessors. Husserl's is not a subjective or psychological idealism nor a Kantian idealism, 'which believes it can keep open, at least as a limiting concept, the possibility of a world of things in themselves'.[62] Rather, Husserl insists his is a new and radical idealism of a fundamentally different kind. It does not derive from speculative argumentation but from a consideration of the kinds of constitution involved in various entities – whether they be in nature, culture or world.

The historical discovery of transcendental philosophy

Transcendental philosophy is not a spontaneous acquisition but emerged historically, and had to be *discovered*.[63] Modern philosophy exhibits a 'steady direction of development towards transcendental philosophy'.[64] In the course of his *kritische Ideengeschichte*,[65] Husserl explicates his conception of the emergence of *transcendental* philosophy through original and bold readings not only of Descartes, but also of Leibniz, Berkeley and Hume. Up to Husserl's own time, however, it still had not achieved pure self-consciousness as to its nature and purpose, as the *Passive Syntheses* lectures attest.[66] Descartes is the 'epoch-making awakener of the transcendental problematic',[67] 'a precursor of transcendental philosophy',[68] in whom is first found the 'seed' (*die Keime*) of transcendental philosophy,[69] specifically in his application of the method of doubt,[70] which first made visible transcendental subjectivity as a unified self. Descartes – like Moses – saw the 'promised land', but did not set foot there. Husserl therefore must rethink Descartes' founding insights and recover their true meaning – a meaning to which Descartes himself had been blind, since he effectively restored a 'new dogmatism'.[71] For Husserl, the originally Platonic ideal of philosophical science, and the ideal of all genuine philosophy, is first put into action by Descartes. To rethink it radically is the essence of the 'new Cartesianism' Husserl speaks of in his *Paris Lectures*.[72]

Husserl characterizes his discovery of meaning-constituting consciousness at the heart of seemingly natural experience as an essential development of the *transcendental turn* of modern philosophy, in contrast with the *naturalism* of Locke.[73] Locke, who legitimately founded modern psychology, had a quest for origins that he completely misinterpreted and thus lost all possibility of transcendental viewing. Berkeley, on the other hand, though trapped in naturalism, at least recognized the possibility of a purely immanent theory and made the first

systematic attempt to provide a theory of the constitution of the world by the human knower.[74] As a committed sensualist, however, Berkeley could not grasp the distinction between the diverse modes of appearing and the identical object that appears in and through them.[75] Hume, too, is a transcendental philosopher for Husserl,[76] since he understands the objectivity of the world to be a product of subjective achievements. On the other hand, Hume's appeals to concepts like 'custom', 'human nature', 'sense organs', which imply transcendence of their own,[77] show the essential contradiction in Hume's own stance.

But more than any other philosopher, Husserl felt the need to return again and again to Descartes. The nature of the Cartesian project and Cartesian doubt have, of course, been a matter of complex debate among specialists. Husserl's view of Descartes is distinctive (though possibly influenced by Lotze's discussion of Descartes in his *Logic*, Bk III, ch. iii, par. 323),[78] and indeed also evolved considerably in the course of his career. Unfortunately, I do not have space here to elaborate Husserl's very interesting and provocative reading of Descartes, except to state that Husserl seems to take five items specifically from him: the idea of a radical reform of philosophy; the principle of presupposition-lessness; idea of putting into suspense all world-affirming judgements; evidence as the criterion for truth; and the idea of scientific knowledge as absolutely justi-fied knowledge,[79] whereby one accords validity only to that which is given with apodictic evidence.[80] But, finally, Husserl's interpretation radically transforms the Cartesian project, showing that the supposed results of the Cartesian founda-tion of objective knowledge burst apart at the seams.[81]

As early as the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl had been captivated by Descartes' project of securing science on the basis of evident cognitions, cognitions given 'clearly and distinctly' (*clare et distincte*), the project of founding all deductions in intuitions. Indeed, he often invokes Descartes' twin criteria of truth, namely, 'clarity and distinctness' (*Klarheit und Deutlichkeit*)[82] in our concepts. Central to the Cartesian way, then, will be the account of evidence, but we shall not discuss that problematic notion here. In his 1906–7 lectures *Introduction to Logic and the Theory of Knowledge*, Husserl expands on Descartes' sceptical method, and, while recog-nizing the similarity between Descartes' global doubts and his own method of putting everything into suspension, he recognizes the difference of intention between them.[83] Motivated both as a philosopher and as a scientist, Descartes wanted to identify a first principle upon which to build a demonstrative science *more geometrico*, whereas in the performance of Husserl's *epoché* the existing sciences are neither augmented nor diminished, but rather achieve clarification (*Aufklärung*) of sense. Moreover, Husserl sees it as the fundamental error of ratio-nalism that it took mathematics as the model of philosophy, whereas one must distinguish the scientific spirit from the spirit of philosophical critique.[84] For Husserl, Descartes enters the way of doubt or suspension of belief in a purely voluntary manner. Anyone can voluntarily direct his or her doubt at any belief whatsoever. Whereas there are certain texts in which Descartes emphasizes the need for cogent *reasons* for doubting (and indeed he supplies reasons for doubting in the 'First Meditation', for example), Husserl thinks a new beginning will not

even assume the binding character of reasoning and logic.[85] Descartes' purpose and procedures for the universal doubt are different from Husserl's.

Needless to say, Husserl offers many particular (and not always consistent) interpretations of Descartes' 'putting into question' (*In-Frage-Stellen*) of the external world over the course of his career. In his *Meditations* Descartes' 'hyperbolic doubt' takes the form of a worry about the *genius malignus*, which puts in question the very existence of the world and even the existence of the inquirer in the most radical way, such that it is entirely possible for the Cartesian inquirer that the world itself is an illusion and does not exist. Husserl distinguishes his phenomenological *epoché* from the Cartesian at precisely this point.[86] Descartes' is a dogmatic scepticism – the denial of the existence of the world – rather than a Pyrrhonian scepticism which remains uncommitted. Husserl always argues that it is countersensical to attempt to deny the world from within the world. Husserl himself wants a rather different conclusion to be drawn from the *epoché*. We should suspend belief in the world, and instead of naively accepting it we can give it the status of 'acceptance phenomenon'.[87] What must be effected is '*a certain annulment of positing*'.[88] The positing remains what it is, yet it is effectively corralled or put into brackets.

I now enter a world where the factual and contingent drops away and I experience the world and my own conscious acts as a set of correlations between intentions and their fulfilling senses. Descartes' key insight that all sciences gain their validity with reference to self-knowledge and the experience of the '*ego cogito, ego sum*' is interpreted by Husserl, in his later years at least (as he puts it in the *Amsterdam Lectures*) as:

> Every real thing, and ultimately the whole world as it exists for us in such and such a way, only exists as an actual or possible *cogitatum* of our own *cogitatio*, as a possible experiential content of our own experience; and in dealing with the content of our own life of thought and knowing, the best case being in myself, one may assume our own (intersubjective) operations for testing and proving as the pre-eminent form of evidentially grounded truth. Thus, for us, true being is a name for products of actual and possible cognitive operations, an accomplishment of cognition [*Erkenntnisleistung*].[89]

Husserl is clear that the bracketing of the existence-positing aspect of our conscious acts is one of the most effective ways of arriving at the domain of transcendental 'self experience' (*Selbsterfahrung*), but it must never be construed as bringing our naturally existing, psychological self (*sum*) into view.[90] While the domain of individual self is the 'phenomenological residuum'[91] left over, this must be understood as the pure or transcendental not the empirical, natural ego.

Despite Husserl's life-long engagement with the Cartesian way, he nevertheless recognized its inherent problems, especially the difficulty of moving from its fundamentally ego-centred stance to uncover the realm of transcendental *intersubjectivity*.[92] In the *Crisis* he would concede that the Cartesian way to transcendental subjectivity was too abrupt in that it brought one into the

transcendental realm too quickly, and in fact the reflection on the life-world is meant to remedy defects in the Cartesian way. In fact, it is puzzling how the Cartesian method of reduction leads one to *constituting subjectivity* at all. While it is clear that one arrives at noetic-noematic correlations with their thetic character inhibited, how does one progress to view these as *accomplishments*, and specifically of an *ego*, unless one has already succumbed to the Cartesian claim that the *epoché* leads one to the *ego cogito*? It seems Husserl requires the Cartesian way to gain sight of a constituting ego, and hence its prominence in his writings. But, even as he was developing the Cartesian way in the 1920s, he was also exploring another way, through a radical meditation on the achievement of Kant (but always aware of the limitations of his formal concept of the ego as an identity pole) and of German Idealism (specifically Fichte).

Radicalizing Kant's achievement and the encounter with Fichte

While Husserl grasped the importance of Descartes right from the beginning, it was some years before he recognized his affinity with Kant. Paul Natorp may be credited with awakening Husserl from the anti-Kantian suspicions earlier inculcated in him by Brentano, who portrayed Kant as the beginning of the demise of scientific philosophy and as opening the paths to scepticism, subjectivism and ultimate irrationality. But Natorp, himself following Hermann Cohen,[93] had shown Husserl a way of interpreting the Kantian *a priori* stripped of subjectivism and 'anthropologism', distancing the notion of the *a priori* from the more suspect naturalistic notion of the *innate*.

Husserl had wrestled with Kant since the beginning of his career, criticizing the latter's account of numbers in *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (1891). In the *Prolegomena* he acknowledged Kant's importance and endorses the latter's distinction between pure and applied logic, while rejecting Kant's restriction of logic to the Aristotelian syllogistic.[94] Already in the First Edition of the *Prolegomena*, he echoes Kant's characterization of his transcendental philosophy as the inquiry into the conditions that make objective knowledge possible: 'We are plainly concerned with a quite necessary generalization of the question as to the "conditions of the possibility of experience" [*Bedingungen der Möglichkeit einer Erfahrung*].'[95]

However, Husserl believes this search for ideal conditions of experience must be given a far stricter determination than Kant had done. He first of all jettisons all searching into psychological conditions of the real causal kind, conditions which determine how humans approach knowledge. He is interested in *ideal* conditions, which again he distinguishes into two kinds – the *noetic* and the *logical*. Noetic conditions concern the subjective elements that must be in place for any kind of 'thinking being' – truths must be grasped as truths, and as consequences of other truths, and so on. These are different from the logically objective conditions that concern the laws governing the truths themselves, which hold independently of our grasping them. But Husserl also wants a stricter determi-

nation of the meaning of possibility and of the kind of aprioricity involved. Even at this early stage in the First Edition of 1900, possibility is understood as 'essentiality' (*Wesenhaftigkeit*).[96] Husserl will never let go of this insight that what is at stake in the *a priori* is the notion of essence or *eidos* (see *Formal and Transcendental Logic* §97, where Husserl claims that the only sense the term 'a priori' has in his writings is that of *eidos*).[97] Similarly, in *Ideas* I Husserl announced that he was avoiding the term 'a priori' and instead introducing the term *eidos*.

In a certain sense, then, and especially with regard to the strict epistemological character, the roots of the transcendental turn are already present in the First Edition of the *Logical Investigations*. In his early elucidations of phenomenological method Husserl stresses his interest in the *how* of knowledge. For Kant, the very meaning of transcendental philosophy is that it is interested in the *how* of our knowledge in so far as this mode of knowledge is *a priori*: 'I call all cognition *transcendental* that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*.'[98]

To appreciate the extent of his mature transcendental idealism, I turn now to his Fichte lectures, where Husserl briefly sketches the progress of modern philosophy from Descartes to Kant, which revolutionized the approach to nature by overturning the natural naive belief in things out there and instead showed that space, time, causality are 'forms of a thinking which belong inseparably to our kind of mind',[99] leading to the view that 'subjectivity is world-creative'.[100] In the last year of the Great War, on several occasions in Freiburg, Husserl delivered a series of three lectures to serving soldiers on *Fichtes Menschheitsideal* (*Fichte's Ideal of Humanity*).[101] A proud German nationalist, Husserl here portrays Germany as a nation with a distinctive spirit now threatened from without. Germany is the land of Copernicus, Kepler, Leibniz, Lessing, Herder and Winckelmann, but in particular it produced German Idealism, 'indigenous to our people',[102] once fully understood but now fallen into neglect and misunderstanding. Nevertheless, it will return as the 'one-sided naturalistic mode of thinking and feeling loses its power'.[103]

It was Fichte who put Kant's philosophy on a secure footing by genuinely uniting theory and practice and ridding it of obscure 'things in themselves'. For Husserl, 'Kant's results are the points of departure for Fichte'.[104] Kant had maintained that the transcendent things in themselves affect our sensibility even if we cannot know anything about them. Fichte sweeps this away as a remnant of dogmatism, and also Kant's assumption that sensibility must be passively stimulated from without before it can be active. For Fichte, human subjectivity is itself the primal action that brings the experience of world into being: 'The Fichtean I … is the self-positing action (*sich selbst setzende Tathandlung*) out of which in infinite succession ever new actions originate'.[105] Moreover, these actions are teleological or goal-oriented, and thus 'to write the history of the I, of the absolute intelligence, is therefore to write the history of the necessary teleology in which the world as phenomenal comes to progressive creation, comes to creation in this intelligence'.[106] In humans, the absolute I splits itself, and philosophy consists in grasping the world as the product of this self-splitting ego. Fichte's

particular genius is to see the moral dimension of this idealism. The aim of the self-development of the ego is a moral world order, which is the guiding ideal of reason itself. Husserl himself, looking to a universal moral community beyond any narrow national self-interest, cites Fichte's hope for a 'total rebirth of humanity'.[107] Moreover, human self-understanding is the self-revelation of God.

Similar to his embrace of Fichte in 1917, in his address to Freiburg University in celebration of Kant on 1 May 1924 Husserl stressed the 'obvious essential relationship' between his phenomenology and the transcendental philosophy of Kant,[108] and the 'inexorable necessity' that led him to transcendental philosophy. Kant offered an entirely new vision and new approach in philosophy, even the idea of it had never previously been articulated. Kant thereby set a task that remains 'the most exuberant of all scientific tasks for mankind',[109] 'the greatest of all theoretical tasks that could be given to modern humanity'.[110] Husserl's unique and deeply original transcendental philosophy must attempt a radicalization of the truth hidden in Kant.[111] This involves a sharpened sense of the *a priori* (including the defence of the *material* a priori) and a recognition that Husserl assumed that the form of the world was more or less as given in Newton's physics, whereas Husserl himself recognized the crucial role of the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*). Nevertheless, Kant was only the 'preshaper of scientific transcendental philosophy', since he left it half submerged in mythical concepts (Husserl has no time for Kant's thing-in-itself, the doctrine of *intellectus archetypus*, the mythology of transcendental apperception, etc.).[112] Kant did have a genuinely profound sense of the fundamental nature of *synthesis* and was carrying out genuine intentional analyses.[113] Indeed, Brentano's failure was precisely his inability to connect intentionality with synthesis. Kant, then, offers Husserl a new way of entering into the nature of intentional life as a system of syntheses, either passively or actively carried out by the ego. Moreover, with Kant, Husserl held time to be the deepest form of synthesis.

So far in this chapter I have been charting the historical genesis of transcendental philosophy in Husserl's own development and in the modern philosophical tradition from Descartes to Kant and Fichte, as Husserl reads that tradition. I shall now turn to examine in more detail the manner in which the *transcendental attitude* emerges out of the normal 'natural' attitude. When Husserl simply presents the problematic of the emergence of the transcendental attitude, he begins with a discussion of our natural, practical or theoretical, worldview.

The natural attitude and the surrounding world (*Umwelt*)

Beginning with his 1910–11 lectures *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*[114] and, in print, his 1910–11 essay *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*, Husserl explicitly focused on the central doctrines of naturalism and its accompanying outlook, 'the natural attitude' (*die natürliche Einstellung*). As he writes in 1913, 'natural cognition begins with experience [*Erfahrung*] and remains within experience',[115] the whole horizon of possible investigations is termed 'the world'. All sciences are sciences

of the world. The 'correlate' of the natural attitude is the *world*,[116] which itself is a limit idea, an 'idea lying at infinity'.[117] It is the idea of a correlate of the sense-bestowing functions of conscious life.

All activities of consciousness, including all scientific activity, indeed all knowledge, initially take place within the natural attitude.[118] In *Erste Philosophie* Husserl writes:

> The natural attitude is the form in which the total life of humanity is realized in running its natural, practical course. It was the only form from millennium to millennium, until out of science and philosophy there developed unique motivations for a revolution.[119]

> Everything is originally a part of this natural world, including living things, animals, humans, communities and cultural items and establishments of every kind, including scientific theories themselves.[120]

We live naively in this world, swimming with the flow of its givens that have the character of being 'on hand' (*vorhanden*) and 'actual' (*wirklich*).[121] The natural attitude itself pervades all our consciousness but is not articulated; it is 'unthematic, unthought, unpredicated'. It is always 'on hand' and yet in a sense indeterminate.

Reflecting on the manner in which all natural activity operates with a general stance, Husserl becomes aware of the phenomenon of the connectedness (*Zusammenhang*) of all experience, the 'pre-given' experience of a 'world'.[122] Traditional philosophy and sciences have offered a description of this world, but to that extent they have remained philosophies and sciences of the natural attitude. The natural attitude through its world belief is a source of contingency and as such it can never provide the absolute ground of science.[123] A revolution in attitude is therefore necessary. I shall not attempt here to explore what motivates this change of attitude. This is a controversial topic among Husserl scholars. For the purposes of this essay, it is enough to realize that the natural attitude cannot comprehend itself while remaining within its own world, and that to understand the *how* of the natural attitude is precisely to adopt the transcendental attitude. Moreover, the change of attitude, once enacted, is not temporary but permanent.

The revolution or inversion (*Umwendung*)

In order to bring this normal natural epistemological attitude into focus, in order to bring it to self-understanding, a fundamental 'shift of attitude' (*Einstellungänderung*) or 'shift of regard' (*Blickänderung*)[124] must take place. Husserl frequently speaks of a 'revolution' or 'reversal' (*Umwendung*),[125] a 'transposition' (*Umstellung*),[126] a 'Cartesian overthrow' (*cartesianischer Umsturz*),[127] 'a total change' (*eine totale Änderung*)[128] of existing opinion, and indeed of normal human living. In *The Idea of Phenomenology* Husserl characterizes this shift as the move to the

philosophical attitude.[129] From 1906–7 onwards, he sees this shift as enabled by the *phenomenological reduction*.[130]

Husserl initially understands the reduction primarily as an *epistemological* move, which brings into focus the genuine epistemic structures and laws sharply distinguished from psychological accounts of the knowing process. Thus, in his 1906–7 lectures, he expressed frustration at the fact that Neo-Kantians had criticized his phenomenology as psychologistic, whereas the empiricists had misunderstood his supposed 'Platonism': 'the Kantians are blind to what is phenomenological; the empiricists to that which relates to the theory of knowledge'.[131] But, in line with his growing recognition of the different layers of the reduction, he realizes that the overthrow of the natural attitude provides access to transcendental experience and to the recognition that the whole sense of the world in itself and all its validities are cognitive accomplishments, productions or achievements (*Erkenntnisleistungen*) in and for human subjectivity.[132] The reduction is supposed to make transparent how consciousness constitutes within itself all worldly transcendencies, all objecthood. This is Kant's breakthrough: to have grasped the world as the outcome of syntheses and constitution. Its sense and its being are products of transcendental subjectivity. As Husserl says, 'there is phenomenological correlation-research, which explores the possible world and its ontic structures (as a world of possible experience) with regard to the possible bestowal of sense and the establishment of being, without which that world equally could not be thought'.[133]

Husserl's modes of reduction may be considered as different ways of bringing the transcendental into view and of allowing us to inhabit this domain, to really live in it. To retain the properly transcendental attitude, to stay within its space of reasons, as it were, one has to maintain vigilance against the relapse into naturalism, which is the sin of 'transcendental psychologism', against which Husserl regularly warned. Phenomenology carried out as a kind of pure psychology must be distinguished from a properly transcendental phenomenology.[134] The same insights occur in both sciences but their meaning changes in transcendental phenomenology. But no psychology – not even a pure psychology – can found transcendental philosophy as such. Nevertheless, in *Ideas* I §76 Husserl acknowledges that every discovery of transcendental phenomenology can be reinterpreted as an eidetic-psychological finding, and he continued to emphasize the *strict parallelism* between the natural and the transcendental. In other words, there is an essential parallelism between transcendental phenomenology and pure psychology (it is clear that the Cartesian regress to the *cogito* brings both the empirical ego and the transcendental ego into view, but the transcendental ego requires an additional change of attitude, one which puts in suspension the 'general thesis' of the world).

As Husserl says in *Erste Philosophie*, there can be only one method for transcendental philosophy: to 'study cognizing life itself in its own essence achievements [*das erkennende Leben selbst in seinen eigenen Wesenleistungen*]',[135] and this within a wider study of consciousness itself and how it constitutes objective senses and true senses. For Husserl, it is important to understand that the reduction does not

involve paring away of a portion of the real, but an *abstention* from reality understood as actuality, which leaves in place all conscious enactments and their products, but simply now presented to the theoretical onlooker.

It is in *Ideas* I that Husserl first declared in print that the phenomenological reduction may properly be characterized as *transcendental*:

> The characterization of the phenomenological reduction and, likewise, of the pure sphere of mental processes as 'transcendental' rests precisely on the fact that we discover in this reduction an absolute sphere of stuffs and noetic forms [*eine absolute Sphäre von Stoffen und noetischen Formen*] whose determinately structured combinations possess, according to immanent eidetic necessity, the marvellous consciousness of something determinate and determinable, given thus and so, which is something over and against consciousness itself, something fundamentally other, non-really inherent [*Irreelles*], transcendent; the characterization of mental processes as 'transcendental' further rests on the fact that this is the primal source [*die Urquelle*] in which is found the only conceivable solution of those deepest problems of cognition concerning the essence and possibility of an objectively valid knowledge of something transcendent.[136]

Husserl places the emphasis on explaining how the miracle of the appearance of objectivity within subjectivity is brought about. How can the forms of consciousness come together according to necessary laws to generate objectivity as something other, transcendent and non-immanent in consciousness?

In *Ideas* I the new transcendental appreciation of consciousness is marked by the self-evidence of the immanent perception or of one's consciousness of one's own stream of mental processes. He understands the Cartesian *cogito* as showing that every conscious experience contains the essential possibility of its being reflected on in a way that confirms its actual occurrence in an irrefragable manner. As Husserl puts it: 'To each stream of mental processes and to each Ego, as Ego, there belongs the essential possibility of acquiring this evidence; each bears in itself, as an essential possibility, the guarantee of its absolute existence [*seines absolutes Dasein*].'[137] As Husserl confirms further down in the same paragraph, any conscious process is 'originarily and absolutely given' not only in respect of its essence but also of its existence. Of course, Husserl emphasizes how limited is the evidence which is given by such 'immanent' seizing of one's own processes. One cannot, for example, infer from the existence of the processes themselves that they are components of a real human being (as Husserl himself noted in a marginal entry).

In *Erste Philosophie* Part Two, Husserl further recognizes the difference between recognizing the irremovability of the self and its experience from any thought of the world and, on the other hand, the kind of transcendental self-awareness which results precisely from the critique of this mundane self-experience and which is entirely incapable of being thought away.[138] This requires moving beyond the 'human I' (*das Menschen-Ich*)[139] to discover myself as subject for the

whole world. Even if I were to try to think away the existence of the world and of my mundane human self, I would still discover myself as there: 'I would be and would remain someone whose being is not touched by any nothingness affecting the world [*Weltnichtigkeit*], someone who can never be annihilated in a so-called epistemological annihilation [*erkenntniskritische Vernichtung*] of my body and of all the world.'[140] Husserl even says, allowing himself the use of religious language (inadmissible at this stage in strict science), one could think of this as a kind of survival like that of an angel or a pure soul. There is a sharp differentiation to be made between my mundane and transcendental self-experience.

In contrast to this apodictic self-givenness of immanent experiences, Husserl claims that it is an eidetic law that physical existence is never required as necessary by the givenness to consciousness of anything physical. The transcendent physical is by its essential nature always contingent.[141] The self-givenness of immanent conscious processes, on the other hand, is entirely different and is absolutely given. It belongs, Husserl says, to 'a sphere of absolute positing [*eine Sphäre absoluter Position*]'.[142] Against the backdrop of this contingent posited world is the positing ego that is *necessary* and *absolute*. There is what Husserl calls an 'essential detachableness [*prinzipielle Ablösbarkeit*] of the whole natural world from the domains of consciousness'.[143] Husserl presents the 'detachability' or one-sided separability of the world from consciousness as the discovery implicit in the Cartesian *cogito*. The essence of the transcendent world is such that it has meaning only in essential interconnection with consciousness – and not just possible consciousness but actual consciousness. It was this claim that led to his explicit adoption of transcendental idealism, especially in *Ideas* I §47, and which Husserl maintains for the rest of his life. In his *Fichte Lectures* he had criticized Kant for still retaining this mythical view of transcendent things in themselves affecting our sensibility, as if subjectivity needed a stimulus to waken it from its original passivity, whereas, for Husserl, as for Fichte, consciousness has an original activity. As Husserl explicitly confirms in the *Crisis*, he is against any 'absolutization' of the world which would treat it as a thing 'in itself' independent of our consciousness and knowledge of it.

One of Husserl's most notorious claims in *Ideas* I §49 is that we can think the very 'annihilation of the world' (*Weltvernichtung*) without thereby being able to think of the disappearance of consciousness. This claim is also repeated several times in *Ideas* II:

> If we think of monadic subjects and their streams of consciousness, or rather, if we think of the thinkable minimum of self-consciousness, then a monadic consciousness, one that would have no 'world' at all given to it, could indeed be thought, – and thus a monadic consciousness without regularities in the course of sensations, without motivated possibilities in the apprehensions of things.[144]

It is even conceivable that there might be no empirical consciousness at all, no world, but still absolute consciousness would be what it is.[145] Husserl says in *Erste*

Philosophie that even if God were to create an entirely illusory world (*Scheinwelt*) with us in it, we would still be true subjects of this world.[146]

This is a very clearly articulated transcendental idealism, which gives absolute priority to consciousness. Consciousness, and specifically *my* consciousness (all consciousness is characterized by *mineness* and thus is first person in an irreducible sense), cannot be thought away. But the consciousness referred to here is pure transcendental consciousness, not that of my natural self. Nevertheless, it is one of the mysteries of transcendental consciousness that it is only manifest in its mundane form. We shall now turn to this complicated but important aspect of Husserl's idealism.

The notion of world and of the mundanization of the ego

For Husserl, there is a world essentially connected with every possible act of consciousness.[147] The natural world has unlimited temporal and spatial horizons stretching in all directions. Furthermore, any actual experience points beyond itself to other possible experiences, which in turn point to other experiences and so on.[148] But the actual existence of this world is, for Husserl, an irrational, *contingent* fact.[149] There is no necessity governing the fact that the world is the way it is and not some other way. Yet, it is necessary that the transcendental ego be instantiated in some world, in some body, and so on. Although the ego is the source of all meaning in its absolute nature, it is also an eidetic necessity that the ego be individualized as this or that person and that the ego be included in a factual world – 'mundanized' in Husserl's terminology. Even the inquiry into the possibility of a purely solipsistic consciousness outside all community is itself one of the transcendental problems.[150]

Questions arise how consciousness is able to effect its singularization and also how it achieves its intersubjective and communicative aspects.[151] Part of the complexity of the problem is that the individual instantiated ego requires communalization through contact with other egos. From early in his Göttingen years, and expressed in *Ideas* I §53, for instance, Husserl recognizes that the world contains other conscious organisms, the domain of *psycho-physical nature* as he terms it. Who can deny that other animals and humans have conscious streams like us? The question is: how are such streams constituted? How can there be such streams as events within the world and yet the the domain of consciousness be a self-enclosed region? How can purely immanent consciousness relinquish its immanence and take on transcendence in the form of corporeality? Consciousness must first be inserted into the world through a concrete body. Only thus can it apprehend or understand other consciousnesses through their bodies. Husserl spent a great deal of his time asking these questions. He attempted to resolve them within the Cartesian mode (for example, in the 'Fifth Cartesian Meditation'), but also, as in the *Crisis*, by 'reducing' or distilling the essence of transcendental life by a transformed inspection of the communal life-world. Neither procedure of reduction was successfully carried through and, as

Husserl says, many times, here we stand before a great mystery. Husserl sums up this mystery or paradox, in *Crisis* §53, as the question how we can be both subjects for the world and objects in the world? Finally, in reflecting on the transcendental ego in its intersubjective pluralized life, are we not thinking of it naively as a set of human beings? But precisely this is excluded in the *epoché*. In the transcendental attitude, we must understand each human being from the reverse point of view – as a 'self-objectivation' (*Selbstobjektivation*) of the transcendental I,[152] the 'absolute ego'.[153]

Conclusion: from conditions of possibility to absolute idealism

To summarize, Husserl's idealism is primarily concerned with the inability to conceive of an object independent of a subject and to think of the object as constituted out of activities and structures of consciousness according to predetermined laws. As he says in *Ideas* I §§49–50, there is absolutely no sense to the notion of 'thing in itself'. What we think of as this first reality is in fact always second: 'The being which is first for us is second in itself; i.e., it is what it is only in "relation" to the first.'[154]

First reality is absolute consciousness. Nevertheless, Husserl, who was both familiar with and deeply impressed by Berkeley, as we know from the second of his *Logical Investigations*, always denied that he was advocating a subjective or Berkeleyan idealism,[155] since such idealism involves an 'absolutizing' of the world. Husserl believes he has determined *the correct sense* of world and consciousness and that subjective idealism is a distortion of these senses, actually turns the sense of world into a countersense (*Widersinn*). There is no question of the world being 'swallowed up' (*verschlingt*)[156] in the subject. The world only has the sense of something that has received its 'sense bestowal' (*Sinngebung*) from consciousness but it is objective nonetheless. Kant was the first to articulate this insight, but his version still requires purification. The next step is to grasp how the subject can both constitute itself and the world and also be a contingently occurring object within the world, among a plurality of other objectivations of transcendental egos. This, for Husserl, is the deepest problem of transcendental philosophy.

Husserl's final dream is a universal account of the pure possible forms of transcendental life itself, combining the discoveries of monadic and intersubjective transcendental life. This would include both possible and actual realizations of transcendental subjectivity, their truths and falsities, in all their structural interconnections. Moreover, there is not just the present of my transcendental life, but a transcendental past and future.[157] Transcendental philosophy becomes the systematic self-development (*Selbstentfaltung*) and self-theorizing (*Selbsttheoretisierung*) of transcendental subjectivity,[158] and the path to the realization of absolute, justified truth. It seems that Husserl has progressed to a kind of transcendental absolute idealism.

In this chapter I have tried to show that Husserl's concept of transcendental philosophy is extraordinarily radical, broad and original. Initially introduced

through the Cartesian suspension of the natural, it is also conceived by Husserl as a radicalizing of the Kantian attempt to specify the *a priori* conditions for the possibility of knowledge. Moreover, in a manner not dissimilar to Hegel, Husserl sees his own work as an *Aufhebung* of the essence of modern philosophy. Finally, transcendental phenomenology must document the possible essential forms of transcendental subjectivity and intersubjectivity, and the relation between absolute consciousness and the objectification of spirit in history. Of course, such a huge and complex set of tasks calls out for stringent criticism. The first step, and the one to which I have restricted myself here, is to understand the full range of Husserl's phenomenology as transcendental philosophy.

Notes

1 The critical edition of *Logische Untersuchungen* has appeared in the *Husserliana* series in two volumes: vol. XVIII, *Logische Untersuchungen I: Prolegomena zur reinen Logik*, Elmar Holenstein (ed.), The Hague, Nijhoff, 1975, and vol. XIX, *Logische Untersuchungen II: Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis*, Ursula Panzer (ed.), Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1984. The only English translation is *Logical Investigations*, 2 vols, trans. J.N. Findlay, edited with a New Introduction by Dermot Moran, London, Routledge, 2001. It should be noted that the English translation is bound in two volumes, the first of which contains vol. 1 of the German edition as well as part of vol. 2, while the second contains the remaining part of vol. 2 of the German.

2 E. Husserl, *Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie. Vorlesungen 1906/07*, Ullrich Melle (ed.), *Husserliana*, vol. XXIV, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1985.

3 Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. II, Investigation V, §17.

4 Edmund Husserl, *Wesenswissenschaft*, *Ideas* I, §75. The critical edition is published in *Husserliana*, vol. III/1 as *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie* 1, Karl Schuhmann (ed.), The Hague, Nijhoff, 1977, trans. F. Kersten as *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book*, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1983.

5 E. Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil: Kritische Ideengeschichte*, R. Boehm (ed.), *Husserliana*, vol. VII, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1965, p. 234.

6 Husserl, *Ideas* I, §46, p. 104; *Husserliana*, vol. III/1, 87.

7 I am grateful to Robin Rollinger, currently editing E. Husserl, *Texte zum transzendentalen Idealismus (1908–1915)*, forthcoming from Kluwer, for this information. Rollinger stresses that at this time (c. 1915) Husserl uses the term to refer to the thesis that real objects cannot exist without an actual (as opposed to possible) consciousness. In *Cartesian Meditations* (for bibliographic details see note 26 below) transcendental idealism is understood as the claim that all objects are correlated to consciousness.

8 Husserl, *Ideas* I, §8.

9 Husserl, *Ideas* I, §33, p. 63; *Husserliana*, vol. III/1, 58g.

10 Husserl, *Ideas* I, §51.

11 Edmund Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie. Fünf Vorlesungen*, W. Biemel (ed.), *Husserliana*, vol. II, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1973; trans. Lee Hardy, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, *Collected Works*, vol. VIII, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1999.

12 Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie. Fünf Vorlesungen*, pp. 36–7; *Husserliana*, vol. II, 48.

13 E. Husserl, *Ding und Raum. Vorlesungen 1907*, U. Claesges (ed.), *Husserliana*, vol. XVI, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1973; trans. R. Rojcewicz, *Thing and Space: Lectures of 1907*, *Collected Works*, vol. VII, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1997.

14 Husserl frequently comments on Kant's 'Letter to Herz'; see, for example, his 'Phänomenologie und Erkenntnistheorie' (1917), in E. Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge*

1911–1921, H.R. Sepp and Thomas Nenon (eds), *Husserliana*, vol. XXV, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1986, p. 143.

15 Husserl, *Ding und Raum*, §40, p. 117, *Husserliana*, vol. XVI, 140.

16 Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, W. Biemel (ed.), *Husserliana*, vol. VI, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1962, §55, p. 193; trans. David Carr, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1970, p. 189.

17 Husserl, *Ding und Raum*, §40, p. 119; *Husserliana*, vol. XVI, 141–2.

18 Husserl, *Crisis*, §48, p. 166n; *Husserliana*, vol. VI, 169n.

19 E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*, Marly Biemel (ed.), *Husserliana*, vol. IV, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1952; trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer as *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book, Collected Works*, vol. III, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1989.

20 An exception is Herman Philipse, 'Transcendental Idealism', in Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 239–322.

21 See Husserl, *Ideas* I, §51, note.

22 Husserl, *Crisis*, §53, pp. 180–81; *Husserliana*, vol. VI, 184.

23 Edmund Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Zweiter Teil: Theorie der phänomenologischen Reduktion*, R. Boehm (ed.), *Husserliana*, vol. VIII, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1965, p. 166.

24 Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Zweiter Teil*, *Husserliana*, vol. VIII, 38.

25 E. Husserl, *Kant und die Idee der Transzendentalphilosophie*, in *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil*, *Husserliana*, vol. VII, 255; trans. Ted E. Klein and William E. Pohl as 'Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy', *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, 1974, vol. 5, p. 29.

26 Edmund Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, Stephan Strasser (ed.), *Husserliana*, vol. I, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1950; trans. D. Cairns as *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1960, §12; The *Meditations* were first published as *Méditations cartésiennes: introduction à la phénoménologie*, trans. G. Peiffer and E. Levinas, Paris, Almand Colin, 1931.

27 Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, §12.

28 Husserl, *Phänomenologische Psychologie. Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1925*, W. Biemel (ed.), *Husserliana*, vol. IX, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1968, 250. The draft of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article and the Amsterdam Lectures are translated by T. Sheehan and R.E. Palmer as *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger (1927–31), The* Encyclopaedia Britannica *Article, The Amsterdam Lectures 'Phenomenology and Anthropology' and Husserl's Marginal Note in* Being and Time, *and Kant on the Problem of Metaphysics, Collected Works*, vol. VI, Dordrecht, 1997 (for this reference see p. 98).

29 Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, §13.

30 I owe this point to Nam-In Lee, 'Active and Passive Genesis', in Lester Embree, Samuel J. Julian and Steve Crowell (eds), *The Reach of Reflection: Issues for Phenomenology's Second Century*, 3 vols, West Harford, Electron Press, 2001.

31 Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, §13.

32 E. Husserl, 'Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft', *Logos* 1 (1911), pp. 289–341, now collected in Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge 1911–1921*, H.R. Sepp and Thomas Nenon (eds), *Husserliana*, vol. XXV, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1986, pp. 3–62; trans. as 'Philosophy as a Rigorous Science', in Quentin Lauer (ed.), *Edmund Husserl: Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, New York, Harper & Row, 1964, pp. 71–147.

33 Husserl, 'Philosophy as a Rigorous Science', pp. 83–4; *Husserliana*, vol. XXV, 11–12.

34 See Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, §16.

35 Husserl, *Ideas* I, §86, p. 207; *Husserliana*, vol. III/1, 176.

36 Husserl, 'Philosophy as a Rigorous Science', p. 108; *Husserliana*, vol. XXV, 30.

37 Husserl, *Ideas* I, §51.
38 See Iso Kern, *Husserl und Kant. Eine Untersuchung über Husserls Verhältnis zu Kant und zum Neukantianismus*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1964, p. 35.
39 Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie*, p. 33; *Husserliana*, vol. II, 43.
40 Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie*, p. 24; *Husserliana*, vol. II, 31.
41 Quoted in R. Bernet, I. Kern and E. Marbach, *An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1993, p. 57.
42 Husserl, 'Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy', p. 22; *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII, 246–7.
43 Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, §41, p. 86; *Husserliana*, vol. I, 118.
44 Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, §41, p. 86; *Husserliana*, vol. I, 119.
45 Indeed, the point of the life-world is that it cannot only be identified and understood as such from the transcendental perspective. It is precisely to free oneself of the presuppositions of the life-world that one embarks on the transcendental reduction.
46 Husserl, *Crisis*, p. 298–9; *Husserliana*, vol. VI, 346–7.
47 Husserl, *Crisis*, p. 297; *Husserliana*, vol. VI, 345.
48 Husserl, 'Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy', p. 42; *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII, 270.
49 Husserl, 'Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy', p. 43; *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII, 272.
50 Husserl, *Erste Philosophie(1923/24). Zweiter Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VIII, 312–13.
51 Husserl, 'Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy', p. 28; *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII, 254.
52 Husserl,'Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy', p. 29; *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII, 254.
53 Husserl, 'Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy', p. 35; *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII, 262.
54 Husserl, 'Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy', p. 37; *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII, 264.
55 Husserl, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology*, p. 222; *Husserliana*, vol. IX, 313.
56 Roman Ingarden, *On the Motives Which Led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Arnór Hannibalsson, *Phaenomenologica*, vol. 64, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1975, p. 21.
57 Husserl, *Ideas* II, §64, p. 311; *Husserliana*, vol. IV, 297.
58 Ingarden, *On the Motives Which Led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, p. 21.
59 Husserl, 'Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy', p. 12; *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII, 234.
60 Husserl, 'Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy', p. 30; *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII, 256.
61 Edmund Husserl, 'Author's Preface to the English Edition', in *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson, New York, Collier Books, 1962, p. 5.
62 Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, §41, p. 86; *Husserliana*, vol. I, 118.
63 Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Zweiter Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VIII, 78.
64 See Edmund Husserl, 'Phänomenologische Methode und phänomenologische Philosophie (Londoner Vorträge)', *Husserl Studies*, 1999, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 183–254, esp. p. 201.
65 Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII.
66 Edmund Husserl, *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis. Aus Vorlesungs- und Forschungsmanuskripten (1918–1926)*, M. Fleischer (ed.), *Husserliana*, vol. XI, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1988, p. 355; trans. Anthony J. Steinbok, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis. Lectures on Transcendental Logic, Collected Works*, vol. IX, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 2001, p. 6.
67 Husserl, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology*, p. 96; *Husserliana*, vol. IX, 248.
68 Husserl, 'Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy', p. 240; *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII, 240.
69 Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Zweiter Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VIII, 4.

70 Husserl, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology*, p. 237; *Husserliana*, vol. IX, 330.

71 Husserl, *Erste Philosophie, (1923/24). Erster Teil*, *Husserliana*, vol. VII, 144.

72 Edmund Husserl, *Pariser Vorträge*, in *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, Stephan Strasser (ed.), The Hague, Nijhoff, 1950, p. 3; trans. P. Koestenbaum, *The Paris Lectures*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1970, p. 3.

73 See the extended discussion in *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil*, *Husserliana*, vol. VII, 78–140; also *Crisis*, §22, where Locke is accused of being blind to intentionality. Husserl frequently accuses Locke of missing out entirely the nature of consciousness as consciousness-of. See the first draft of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article, 'Trans. Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology', p. 94, *Husserliana*, vol. IX, 246.

74 Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil*, *Husserliana*, vol. VII, 150.

75 Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil*, *Husserliana*, vol. VII, 151.

76 Husserl may have been influenced by Adolf Reinach's reading of Hume in his essay 'Kants Auffassung des humeschen Problems', *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, 1911, vol. 141, pp. 176–209; trans. J.N. Mohanty as 'Kant's Interpretation of Hume's Problem', *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, 1976, vol. 7, pp. 161–88.

77 Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie*, p. 17; *Husserliana*, vol. II, 20.

78 See Hermann Lotze, *Logic: Of Thought, of Investigation and of Knowledge in Three Books*, trans. Bernard Bosanquet, 2nd edn, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1888, vol. 2, pp. 226–9. The transcendental reading of Descartes was also promoted by Paul Natorp; see his Descartes' *Erkenntnistheorie. Eine Studie zur Vorgeschichte des Kriticismus*, Marburg, N.G. Elwert'sche Verlag, 1882, esp. pp. 36–45.

79 Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, §3.

80 Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Zweiter Teil*, *Husserliana*, vol. VIII, 76.

81 Husserl, *Crisis*, §16.

82 Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, *Prolegomena*, vol. I, §2, p. 168; *Husserliana*, vol. XIX/1, 10.

83 Husserl, *Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie*, *Husserliana*, vol. XXIV, 189.

84 Husserl, *Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie*, *Husserliana*, vol. XXIV, 192.

85 Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, §5, p. 13; *Husserliana*, vol. I, 53.

86 Husserl, *Ideas* I, §32.

87 Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, §7.

88 Husserl, *Ideas* I, §31, p. 58; *Husserliana*, vol. III/1, 54.

89 Husserl, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology*, p. 236; *Husserliana*, vol. IX, 329.

90 Husserl, *Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie*, *Husserliana*, vol. XXIV, 216.

91 Husserl, *Ideas* I, §33.

92 Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Zweiter Teil*, *Husserliana*, vol. VIII, 266.

93 P. Natorp, *Platos Ideenlehre. Eine Einführung in den Idealismus*, 1st edn, Leipzig, 1903, reprinted Hamburg, Meiner, 1994, p. vii. According to Iso Kern, *Husserl und Kant*, p. 433, Husserl had read almost the whole of this work.

94 Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. II. *Prolegomena*, §58.

95 Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. II. *Prolegomena*, §65, 149; *Husserliana*, vol. XVIII, 239.

96 Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. II. *Prolegomena*, §66.

97 E. Husserl, *Formale und transzendentale Logik. Versuch einer Kritik der logischen Vernunft. Mit ergänzenden Texten*, Paul Janssen (ed.), *Husserliana*, vol. XVII, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1974, p. 255n1; trans. D. Cairns, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1969, p. 248n1.

98 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allan W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, B25; emphasis added.

99 Husserl, *Husserliana*, vol. XXV, 272.

100 Husserl, *Husserliana*, vol. XXV, 273.

101 See Edmund Husserl, 'Fichtes Menschheitsideal. Drei Vorlesungen', *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1911–1921)*, *Husserliana*, vol. XXV, 267–93, trans. James G. Hart as 'Fichte's Ideal of Humanity [Three Lectures]', *Husserl Studies*, 1995, vol. 12, pp. 111–33. The

lecture series was delivered on 8–17 November 1917, and repeated on 14–16 January 1918 and 6–9 November 1918, just before the armistice.

102 Husserl, *Husserliana*, vol. XXV, 268.
103 Husserl, *Husserliana*, vol. XXV, 269.
104 Husserl, *Husserliana*, vol. XXV, 274.
105 Husserl, *Husserliana*, vol. XXV, 275.
106 Husserl, *Husserliana*, vol. XXV, 276.
107 Husserl, *Husserliana*, vol. XXV, 279.
108 Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII, 230.
109 Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII, 236.
110 Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Erster Teil, Husserliana*, vol. VII, 242.
111 Husserl, *Crisis*, §32.
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123 I owe this point to Marcus Brainard.
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4   From the transcendental to the 'topological'

Heidegger on ground, unity and limit

Jeff Malpas

1

'[P]hilosophy has always and constantly asked about the ground of beings. With this question it had its inception, in this question it will find its end, provided that it comes to an end in greatness and not in a powerless decline.'[1] With Heidegger, philosophy seems to have remained in greatness, for although the manner in which Heidegger presents this question, and the character of his response, undergo important shifts in the course of his philosophical career, still the question of ground remains always near the centre of his thinking.[2] However, while Heidegger saw the question of ground as the determining question of philosophy – and in this respect the question of ground is one with the question of being[3] – he also saw philosophy as persistently misunderstanding and covering over the true nature of this question or, at least, of what this question contains within it. In this respect, the 'forgetfulness of being' – *Seinsvergessenheit* – that, according to Heidegger, characterizes the history of philosophy cannot be separated from philosophy's misunderstanding of the question of ground.

One particularly important form in which the question of ground appears within the philosophical tradition is in terms of the transcendental project concerning the ground of knowledge or experience that first sees clear formulation in the work of Kant. Of Kant himself, Heidegger declares that he was 'the first one since the philosophy of the Greeks to again pose the question of the being of beings as a question to be developed'[4] – in which case, Kant was also, perhaps, the first since the Greeks to pose the question of ground as a question to be developed. Certainly, Kant's transcendental approach to the question of ground marks a striking new development in the history of philosophy – a development taken further in the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl, and that is also reappropriated and reinterpreted by Heidegger in relation to his own project, especially in the terms in which that project is set out in *Being and Time*. Indeed, the idea of the transcendental provides us with perhaps the clearest expression of the concern with ground in modern thinking, especially in the terms in which it is presented by Kant, that is, as a concern with 'conditions of possibility', in particular the conditions for the possibility of 'knowledge of experience', or, to use the idea of which Heidegger makes much in his *Kantbuch*,

explicitly in terms of a 'laying of the ground' for metaphysics.[5] What is especially important about the Kantian approach, from a Heideggerian perspective, is precisely the way in which it reopens the question of being and the question of ground with it. Kant provides a new framework for the thinking of the question of being and the question of ground – one that does not depend on traditional notions of substance or God – and it is that framework that we can call the 'transcendental'.[6]

Reflection on the question of ground is crucial for an understanding of the idea of the transcendental, as well as for what Heidegger calls 'the question of being' (it is thereby also crucial for an understanding of Heidegger's relation to Kant), but it is significant too in that such reflection directs attention explicitly to issues of philosophical methodology and approach that might otherwise be taken for granted. Such issues are especially important in the Heideggerian context, and yet, perhaps surprisingly, the question of ground receives relatively little explicit discussion in the Heideggerian literature or, even, in the literature that deals with questions concerning the nature of the transcendental. In the discussion that follows, I aim to explore the question of ground, and the nature of ground itself, as it arises in Heidegger with particular reference to the transition in Heidegger's thinking from the transcendental character of his early thought to the 'topological' orientation that is characteristic of his later thinking. The matter I intend to pursue concerns the way in which both the transcendental and the topological entail a similar conception of what it is to ground – a conception in which notions of unity and limit play central roles – and so the exploration in the pages that follow can be taken as an elucidation of both the transcendental and topological, as well as of the transition from the one to the other.

2

Notwithstanding Heidegger's insistence on its centrality, exactly what is involved in the question of ground may seem, from the outset, quite obscure. Certainly talk of 'ground' is not a common term in the contemporary philosophical vocabulary. In *The Principle of Reason* Heidegger provides an exploration and elucidation of the question of ground by reference to Leibniz's statement of the principle of sufficient reason: the principle that nothing is without reason, without 'why'. Leaving aside, for the moment, Heidegger's own account of what is at issue in this principle, we may explicate the idea at stake here by saying that it amounts to the idea that it ought to be possible, with respect to any and every feature of the universe, with respect to any and every thing that 'is', to provide a reason for the being of that feature or thing. And when asked philosophically, the question of ground moves us in the direction of a reason not merely for this or that, nor a reason that refers us to something else about which the question of ground could be asked once more, but a reason for all and everything beyond which nothing more could be asked.

Heidegger's discussion in *The Principle of Reason* specifically takes up the role of reason as both that which demands grounding (inasmuch as it is reason that

makes the demand for ground) and which also provides such grounding (both inasmuch as it is through reason that any ground comes to light, as the giving of ground is a giving of reason, and as reason may itself function as a ground). In contemporary thinking, the emphasis on reason is evident in the demand for explanation – often explanation takes the form of derivability from mathematically formulated laws or generalizations. Moreover, inasmuch as contemporary metaphysics tends to assume a physicalist or materialist ontology, so it can also be viewed as tending to treat the question of ground as answerable in ultimately physicalist or materialist terms. The explanation of the existence of any particular thing is thus to be given by looking to its physical causes or perhaps its material constitution. The question of ground has thus not disappeared from contemporary thought, even if some of the language of ground as such has. Indeed, so long as philosophy concerns itself with the inquiry into the first principles of things – with questions concerning the fundamental explanation of what is – so long will it remain concerned with the question of ground.

The question of ground asks after the ground of what is, that is, after the ground of beings. It is thus that the question of ground always implicates, and is implicated with, the question of being – one might say, in fact, that the question of being is one with the question of the ground of beings. It is significant, however, that it is *beings*, and not *being*, for which a ground is sought; it is beings, rather than being, that call for grounding. '[B]eing qua being grounds,' says Heidegger. 'Consequently, only beings ever have their grounds.'[7] Here Heidegger presents what he elsewhere terms the 'ontological difference' in terms of the distinction between that which grounds and that which is grounded. To speak of being is already to speak of ground and, as a consequence, it would be mistaken to suppose that one could ask after the ground of being, as if one could ask after the ground of ground.[8] Moreover, this is not because being is somehow its *own* ground. The question of ground asks after the ground or reason for *what is*, but strictly speaking 'what is' is not being. As Heidegger comments: 'Only a being "is"; the "is" itself – being – "is" not.'[9] The point here is a simple one: being is not a being, and it is only of beings that one can ask after their ground, because only beings can be questioned as to their being. Being cannot be so questioned, but is itself that to which we turn when we attempt to answer such a question. 'Insofar as being "is" what grounds, and only insofar as it is so, it has no ground/reason'.[10]

It is, however, characteristic of the history of metaphysics (and, more generally, of philosophy),[11] as Heidegger describes it, for being to be understood in terms that identify it either with something common to all beings or with some particular being – in terms that run exactly counter to the 'ontological difference' as expressed above. Being is thereby treated as that which supposedly functions as ground – as the one 'thing' that grounds the rest – and yet, in being treated as a 'being', being is itself opened up to the question of its own ground. Here not only is being misunderstood, but so too is the idea of ground. Ground is seen as identical with some particular aspect of beings, or some particular being or mode of being, and in being so understood the question of ground is

able to be turned back on to ground itself, with the result that the role of ground as ground is itself brought into question. The difficulty that is apparent here may explain the disappearance of talk of ground in much contemporary philosophy, but the difficulty only arises, of course, out of a way of understanding being and ground that is deeply problematic and, rather than having disappeared, that way of understanding is itself perpetuated within contemporary thought.

Metaphysical inquiry continues, in fact, to exemplify the tendency that Heidegger identifies as characteristic of the history of philosophy: contemporary thought takes a particular mode of the being of things, most often their physicality or materiality, and turns that mode into the touchstone for the understanding of being as such. The being of things becomes, on this account, nothing more than being physical or material. And for Heidegger, of course, this physicalist or materialist understanding is closely tied to the disclosure of things as 'resource' or 'raw material' (*Bestand*) that lies at the heart of technological modernity.[12] Thus, while contemporary metaphysics stands at one extreme in the history of philosophy, it nevertheless exemplifies a general metaphysical tendency – a tendency that Heidegger characterizes as 'onto-theological' – to understand being always and only in terms of beings and so to obliterate the ontological difference between being and beings.[13] Moreover, it should also be noted that as this 'onto-theological' tendency characterizes the history of metaphysics, so it also characterizes the interpretation of that history. Always the tendency is to read past philosophers in a way that is itself governed by such an 'onto-theological' understanding. The forgetting of being is, in this respect, a double forgetting: the forgetting of being occurs in both the thinking of being and in philosophizing about such thinking. This makes the task of a retrieval of the question of being a task that must be pursued not only in relation to the question as such, but also in relation to the way that question appears within the history of its forgetting.

Although the details concerning Heidegger's own understanding of the question of ground change with the turnings in Heidegger's *Denkweg*,[14] still there are certain important continuities in the way in which the question of ground appears in his thinking and it is the exploration of those continuities – continuities that also extend to the Kantian transcendental project – that is a large part of the aim of this discussion. A number of concepts stand out as especially important in that understanding, in particular concepts of unity and limit. The aim of this chapter will be to explore the way in which unity and limit figure as central concepts in relation to the question of ground, and so to the question of being, and along with this to explore the nature of the ideas of unity and limit that might be at issue here. The latter task is especially important, since the understanding of these concepts is as much at issue here as is the idea of ground that stands in proximity to them. Indeed, in each case there is a 'metaphysical' understanding of these concepts that is more or less influential within the philosophical tradition and that mirrors the metaphysical tendency to understand being in terms of beings, to understand presence in terms of what is present. Yet the meaning of the concepts at issue here is not exhausted by such metaphysical understanding. Heidegger's

own thought can be seen as essentially concerned with retrieving the meanings of terms in cases where those meanings are otherwise obscured by, and yet are still evident in, their metaphysical uses. Understanding the question of ground thus involves a retrieval of a 'pre-metaphysical', or equally 'post-metaphysical', understanding of ideas of unity and limit, along with the idea of ground itself, and of their interconnection. Together such ideas provide an elucidation of the question concerning the ground of what is, while they also lead towards an understanding of the way in which any adequate response to that question must take the form of a topology of being – indeed, as we move, in Heidegger's thought, from the transcendental to the topological, so the way in which the Kantian transcendental project must itself be understood in topological terms should also become evident.

3

The question of ground originally emerges in Heidegger, at least according to Heidegger's account of his genesis as a thinker, specifically in relation to the problem of the unity of being as it arises out of Aristotle. Heidegger famously claimed that it was Brentano's dissertation, *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*,[15] that first awakened philosophical stirrings within him. Indeed, he writes that the 'quest for the unity in the multiplicity of being, then only obscurely, unsteadily and helplessly stirring within me, *remained*, through many upsets, wanderings and perplexities, *the* ceaseless impetus for the treatise *Being and Time* which appeared two decades later'.[16] In Aristotle, of course, the question of ground, which in Aristotelian terms can be seen to arise in terms of an inquiry into the fundamental *archai* or principles of being, leads Aristotle to insist both on the irreducible multiplicity of being, as well as on the ontological primacy of substance (*ousia*) and ultimately of essence (*to ti en einai*) or substantial form. Indeed, being turns out to be articulated through a complex, but nevertheless unitary, structure – a structure whose unity is not the unity of a single genus or class, but rather of what might be termed a differentiated 'teleology' (inasmuch as the notion of essence is itself understood in relation not only to the idea of form, but also to notions of *telos*, *ergon*, *energeia* and *entelecheia*).[17] So the question of ground is seen, from this perspective, as a question that requires an articulation of the multiple meanings of being in their unitary inter-relation. The grounding of beings is thus achieved through a demonstration of the unity of being, that is, through a demonstration of the unity that on the basis of which any being can be the being that it is (the demonstration of the unity of being thus amounts to a demonstration of the unity of any and every being *qua* being).

Even Aristotle, however, is not immune to what Heidegger views as the inherent tendency of metaphysics towards onto-theology – towards the identification of being, and of ground, with some being or aspect of beings. And this is so not only because one might view Aristotle's ontology to be based in a certain theology, but also because of the way in which the Aristotelian question of being is ultimately seen as a question concerning being as substance or *ousia*, while

substance is itself understood in terms of that which is most fully present, namely, the intelligible determination of the thing that is its essence. The problem here, however, is not so much that there is a prioritizing of the senses of being in Aristotle's account (to unify the various senses of being is precisely a matter of establishing the proper ordering that obtains among those senses), but rather that the horizon within which that account operates already gives precedence to a particular mode of being and so determines a particular orientation. According to Heidegger, being is already understood, in Aristotle and for the Greeks in general, in terms of the present intelligibility of things, and it is this that determines the way in which the unity of being is then articulated. Nevertheless, this should not blind us to the fact that, for Aristotle, the question concerning the ground of beings cannot be divorced from the problem of understanding being in the complex unity of its multiple senses.

The Aristotelian problem of the unity of being, understood as a problem concerning the unity of the many senses of being, is thus not a problem that directs us towards finding a single univocal meaning for being. Any approach that took the unity of being to consist solely in the unity of a single sense of being – a single being or class of beings – would fail to address the unity of being *as a whole*. The question of the ground of 'what is' addresses itself, from the very start, to the whole of what is (or better to the whole of the being of what is), and only through exhibiting its own entire unity can that question be adequately answered. So although Aristotle does maintain that the primary sense of being is being as substance (and ultimately as essence), in doing so he nevertheless also maintains the idea of being as having an irreducible multiplicity of senses that is unified precisely through its relation to that primary sense.

While essential to the understanding of ground within an Aristotelian frame, the focus on unity is also a determining feature of the way in which the problem of ground emerges in Kant and in the Kantian idea of the transcendental. Kant's self-appointed task in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to find a secure footing for knowledge – which means establishing the conditions that make possible not only natural scientific knowledge, but also metaphysical knowledge ('laying the ground for metaphysics'). The way in which Kant approaches this task is through a question concerning the possibility of *a priori* synthetic judgements. As he puts it in the Introduction to the First Edition, what must be done is:

> To uncover the ground of the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments with appropriate generality, to gain insight into the conditions that make every kind of them possible, and not merely to designate this entire cognition (which comprises its own species) in a cursory outline, but to determine it completely and adequately for every use in a system in accordance with its primary sources, divisions, domain and boundaries.[18]

To present the problem of knowledge in terms of the problem of *a priori* synthetic judgement is already to indicate the way in which the problem of knowledge is essentially a problem of unity, but of unity understood in terms of

the *a priori synthesis* of the elements that are constitutive of knowledge.[19] The Kantian concern with unity appears, however, in a number of forms that run throughout the *Critique*. It can also be put, for instance, in terms of a concern with the unity of *experience*, and, in this form, the problem of unity emerges as a problem concerning the unity of the experienced object, of the unity of the experiencing subject, and the relation between the two.

The Kantian focus on the being of the object, and the correlative turn to the subject, is what marks Kant, at least in Heidegger's eyes, as a specifically modern thinker – it is the concern with objectivity, and with the foundation of objectivity in subjectivity, that is the mark of the modern.[20] Nevertheless, the focus on the problem of ground and unity that lies at the heart of the idea of the transcendental represents an important point of continuity with pre-modern thinking: the idea of the transcendental can be viewed as a modern appropriation of the concern, already evident in Aristotle, with that which transcends, and so also unifies, the multiple 'meanings' of being as articulated through the Categories. The question of the unity of being across the Categories is just the question of the unity of the being of things, which, in the 'Copernican' turn undertaken by Kant, is transformed into the question of the 'transcendental' unity of the object as it stands in relation to the subject in the structure of experience (that is, to reason) and as it is prior to experience.[21] And while there is, in Kant, no explicit statement of anything like the equivocity of being that we find in Aristotle, the Kantian transcendental structure is nevertheless exhibited as a complex unity of elements in which, even though some elements may take priority, no single element can be singled out as that from which all else can be simply derived.[22] Thus Kant gives a special emphasis to ideas of system, writing, for instance of the pure understanding, that it is:

> a unity that subsists on its own, which is sufficient by itself, and which is not to be supplemented by any external additions. Hence the sum total of its 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.[23]

It is thus only through the systematic unity of a number of elements – sensibility *and* understanding, experience *and* reason, subjectivity *and* objectivity – that knowledge is even possible and only through exhibiting that system that the ground of its possibility can be established.

Kant's use of the term 'transcendental' as a way of describing his project, and the manner of his approach, is intended to indicate a concern 'not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*'.[24] The aim of the *Critique* is to provide knowledge that is transcendental in just this sense, that is, knowledge that concerns 'the mode of our knowledge of objects insofar as … it is possible *a priori*'. We can therefore characterize transcendental knowledge as knowledge concerned with the grounds of

the possibility of our knowledge of objects, or, more broadly, of experience, and this is, of course, how Kant does himself describe it. According to Kant, however, the only guide in arriving at such transcendental knowledge concerning the ground of experience is experience itself.[25] Thus he says, of the principle that 'everything that happens has its cause', that, while it can be proved 'apodictically', it also has the peculiar character that 'it first makes possible its ground of proof, namely experience, and must always be presupposed in this'.[26]

Kant's mode of proceeding here might seem immediately to suggest a circularity in his approach and circularity has, indeed, often been taken as characteristic of transcendental philosophy and transcendental reasoning – both in Kant and elsewhere.[27] In fact, Heidegger discusses the apparent circularity that Kant acknowledges in the proof of the principles of the understanding, and connects it directly with the character of the transcendental project as fundamentally concerned with the issue of unity:

> The unity of thought and intuition is itself the essence of experience. The proof [of the principles] consists in showing that the principles of pure understanding are possible through that which they themselves make possible, through the nature of experience. This is an obvious circle, and indeed a necessary one. The principles are proved by recourse to that whose arising they make possible, because these propositions are to bring to light nothing else than this circularity itself; for this constitutes the essence of experience … Experience is in itself a circular happening through which what lies within the circle becomes exposed [*eröffnet*]. This open [*Offene*], however, is nothing other than the between [*Zwischen*] – between us and the thing.[28]

A similar circularity appears, not surprisingly, in Heidegger's own work, particularly in *Being and Time*, where it is seen as identical with the basic structure of care.[29] And while in his later thinking Heidegger avoids talk of circularity here,[30] the phenomenon at issue nevertheless remains central – as it must – since what is at issue in the 'circularity' of the transcendental is simply the way in which thinking is always already given over to the world and so the way in which thought and world always constitute an already given unity.[31]

For Kant, of course, the structure at issue here, which for early Heidegger is the structure of care, is understood as part of the essential structure of subjectivity, which is to say, of reason. The apparent circularity of the transcendental in Kant, which has also been seen by some commentators as actually a form of self-referentiality,[32] can thus be understood as referring to what might be understood as the self-constituting character of reason or subjectivity itself. And Kant does characterize transcendental thinking as based in just such a notion of self-constitution: 'transcendental philosophy,' he says, 'is the capacity of the self-constituting subject to constitute itself as given in intuition'.[33] At this point, of course, the question of the relation between transcendental philosophy and idealism comes directly into view. One might wonder, moreover, whether talk of

self-constitution does not suggest a conception of subjectivity as 'self-grounding' – something that would be problematic indeed. Much depends, of course, on exactly how transcendental subjectivity is to be understood and, while this is not the place for a detailed discussion of the matter, there are two points that should be noted. First, the Kantian focus on subjectivity need not entail any necessary reduction of the structure by which experience is possible to one element, namely subjectivity, since that focus can be taken to indicate only a certain ordering of elements within that structure. Second, the idea of transcendental subjectivity ought not to be understood as referring us to some substantive 'subject' that performs the work of constitution upon itself.[34]

From the perspective of the present discussion, however, what is crucial here is simply the idea of the transcendental as concerned with a form of grounding that is not achieved by reference to anything other than what is to be grounded. This need not imply any form of 'self-grounding', but only that the ground not be some further 'thing' that stands behind or beyond that which is to be grounded. In Kant's case, this means grounding experience through exhibiting its own 'internal' structure of possibility. The emphasis on the self-constituting character of the unity that is at issue in the Kantian conception of the transcendental – on the self-constituting unity of subjectivity or reason – thus gives special emphasis to the way in which the unity of being is only to be worked out in terms of the structure of being as such and cannot involve appeal to anything other than this. It is this that can be seen to underlie the frequent appearance of circularity in connection with the transcendental.

The emphasis on some notion of 'self-constitution', 'self-referentiality' or 'internality' is not peculiar to the question of ground as it arises only within a transcendental frame, however, nor is it peculiar even to the question of ground as it arises in relation to being. The appeal to such notions is characteristic of the question of unity wherever it arises. The real unity of a thing is to be found in the internal articulation of the elements that make it up, and their inter-relation, rather than in anything that 'imposes' unity from 'outside'. Indeed, any attempt to provide a principle of unity that stands outside of being, if one could even make sense of such an idea, would fail to address the unity of *being* – directing attention only to the unity of what is other than being or providing a unity that was essentially derivative of that 'other' (and so a unity in a similarly 'derivative' sense). Aristotle makes much the same point when he says that things that are one 'by nature' are more properly unitary than those things that are one 'by art' – unity is primarily unity of form, such that the unity of artificial things, whose unity of form is imposed from without, are unities in only a derivative sense.

From Kant and Aristotle, then, we can take, so far, two important points concerning the understanding of unity as it arises in relation to the question of ground (and also with respect to the idea of unity as it relates to the idea of transcendental). First, the unity at issue when we talk of ground is a unity that, even though it may give priority to some notions over others, nevertheless preserves an ordered multiplicity of elements within it. Second, the unity at issue is not to be found anywhere outside of that which is unified. Thus, in looking to establish the

ground of beings, we must look to the unity of the being of beings, but in doing this we cannot look beyond that being, nor to any other beings. In summary, we might say that the question of ground, understood in terms of the question of unity as expressed in Aristotle and in Kant, thus concerns the 'internal' articulation of an otherwise differentiated structure.

It is characteristic of Kant's project in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, however, that the task of *grounding* knowledge that is identical with the articulation of its proper unity is seen as also a matter of determining the *limits* of knowledge. Thus, in the Preface to the First Edition of the *Critique*, Kant says of the very project of a critique of pure reason that it will address 'the decision about the possibility or impossibility of a metaphysics in general, and the determination of its sources, as well as its extent and boundaries'.[35] Indeed, the task of determining the extent and limits of metaphysics, and more generally of reason and knowledge, is one that cannot be undertaken independently of the determination of its sources. The point can be put quite generally, in a way that is not restricted to Kant: to determine that in which the possibility of something rests is, at one and the same time, to determine what is possible for it – to determine ground is also to determine limit.

That there is a close connection between the ideas of ground and limit, and so also between limit and unity, is evident in Aristotle, as well as in Kant. Thus, in *Metaphysics* Delta, Aristotle writes:

> Limit means (1) the last point of each thing i.e. the first point beyond which it is not possible to find any part, and the first point within which any part is; (2) the form, whatever it may be, of a spatial magnitude or of a thing that has magnitude; (3) the end [*telos*] of each thing … (4) the substance of each thing, and the essence of each … Evidently, therefore, 'limit' has as many senses as 'beginning' [*arche*] and yet more, for the beginning is a limit, but not every limit is a beginning.[36]

Thus every principle of unity – every 'beginning' or 'origin' – is to be construed as also a limit, since to unify is to limit. But Aristotle here distinguishes the notion of limit as tied to origin, and so to unity, from another sense that is not so tied, and this latter sense encompasses, most obviously, the notion of limit that figures in the first definition he specifies: 'the last point of each thing … and the first point within which any part is'. The idea of limit given in this first definition seems to be more properly spatial than the ideas specified in the succeeding definitions and to be exemplified by notions of limit as used to mark out the area of a thing within space. Significantly, such a 'spatial' conception of limit brings no strong notion of unity with it beyond the idea that, in marking something as a limit, what lies within the limit is thereby demarcated from what lies without. In such an idea, however, there is no sense of the limit as derived from and determined by the nature of the thing limited – the limit is simply that at which something stops and so we might characterize it, in distinction from the concept of limit as origin, as a notion of limit as terminus.[37]

In the concluding chapter of the *Prolegomena*, titled 'On the Determination of the Bounds of Pure Reason', Kant himself discusses two different senses of limit (in the German these two senses are marked by two different terms – *Grenze* and *Schranke* – which are sometimes taken to correspond, in English, to bound and limit).[38] These two senses are distinguished in that one involves something positive while the other contains only negations. The positive sense of limit is that which leads Kant to posit the existence of *noumena*, and it is by means of this positive sense of limit that we are able to determine 'the bounds of reason', which is, in Kant's words, 'the spot where the occupied space (namely, experience) touches the void (that of which we can know nothing, namely, *noumena*)'.[39] The negative sense of limit is simply the sense that is exemplified by the always incomplete character of empirical knowledge. These two senses of limit do not correspond exactly to the two senses we distinguished in Aristotle – the sense of limit as that at which something merely stops, as its terminus, and the sense of limit as the determining nature of a thing, that is, as its origin – but there is nevertheless a correspondence here, even if a slightly complicated one.

Although Kant uses spatial metaphors to characterize the positive sense of limit, that positive sense is actually much closer to the idea of limit as origin than to limit as terminus, while the negative sense of limit is closer to the idea of limit as terminus rather than as origin. The positive sense of limit is closely tied to the character of that which is thereby limited, in this case reason, as also unified. The positing of the *noumenon* follows from the very character of reason itself and from the necessity of the distinction, drawn on the basis of the whole Kantian transcendental structure, between the thing 'as it appears' and the thing 'in-itself'.[40] Indeed, there can be no other access to the idea of the *noumenon* at all, since we can have no knowledge of such a 'thing-in-itself', but must posit it purely as a requirement of the understanding of reason, and of knowledge, in its unity and so together with its proper limits. The complication, of course, is that the negative concept of limit, as applied to empirical knowledge, is itself able to be grounded, when properly understood, in relation to the overall unity of reason, and so the negative sense of limit turns out to be grounded, at least in Kant, by reference to the positive sense – this is just what is indicated by the idea of *phenomena* as distinct from *noumena* (although matters are further complicated by Kant's introduction of a distinction between a positive and negative concept of *noumenon* in which the negative conception is given primary emphasis as the sense in which the *noumenon* operates as a limit).[41]

The idea of the *noumenon* thus plays an important role in the Kantian grounding of reason and knowledge, but not through being that in which reason is itself grounded. Indeed, even talk of the *noumenon* as 'cause' of the *phenomena* should not be taken to imply any simple causal grounding. Kant says of the realm of the *noumenon* that it is, to us, a 'void',[42] an 'empty space',[43] while in the *Opus Postumum* he is emphatic in talking of the *noumenon* as a 'mere thought-object (*ens rationis*).'[44] Although this is, once again, difficult and contentious territory, the crucial point for the purposes of this discussion is that the way in which the *noumenon* functions as limiting reason (in the positive sense of limit) is directly tied

to the way in which the concept of *noumenon* is part of the overall transcendental structure wherein the unity of reason is delineated and the articulation of which constitutes the proper grounding of reason. In this respect, the role of the *noumenon* in the Kantian transcendental structure is not to function as some 'thing' from which all else is derived and on which all else rests, but as one element in a much larger framework.

Throughout the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and also in the *Prolegomena*, Kant makes use of spatial, cartographic and topographic metaphors and images to describe his project and the ideas central to it. In the famous opening to the chapter on the distinction between *phenomena* and *noumena*, for instance, Kant describes his achievement in the first part of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in explicitly cartographic terms: 'We have now not merely travelled through the land of pure understanding, and carefully inspected every part of it, but have also surveyed it, and determined the place for each thing in it.'[45] The use of such metaphors is not merely a reflection of Kant's own geographical interests (he was, after all, one of the founders of modern geography within the university), but relates directly to the way in which he conceives of the question of ground and his own response to that question. Knowledge and reason are not to be grounded in anything that lies outside knowledge and experience; instead, the task is one of mapping out the very territory at issue – the territory that he refers to in the above passage as 'the land of truth (charming name). While the idea of the *noumenon* plays a role in that mapping, it is not through appearing on the map itself, but rather through its role in marking out the void into which no such map can ever take us – a void that must be posited, on the basis of what we know of the territory itself, in order that we can indeed make explicit the proper boundaries of the territory in question. Moreover, the map with which Kant provides us is one that is constructed only by an investigation and survey that proceeds from *within* the territory that is thereby mapped out (and here there are echoes of the same emphasis on 'internality' or 'self-referentiality' that are also to found in the ideas of the circular and 'self-constituting' character of the transcendental). The transcendental project is thus one that can be characterized as an attempt to describe and delineate a particular place: the place of reason, of knowledge, of experience.[46] And as with all such attempts at such topography or 'topology', the place to be described cannot be other than the very place in which the topographer or topologist is herself situated. Here we can see in Kant's own work a suggestion of the 'topology' that later becomes so important in Heidegger. But while in Kant 'topology' (and the topographic, cartographic and geographic ideas with which it is associated) provide a way of illustrating the transcendental project, in Heidegger the transcendental turns out to be a stage, albeit a necessary one, on the way to topology.

4

Just as Heidegger's approach to the question of being and ground is heavily indebted to his reading of Aristotle, so something analogous to the Aristotelian

equivocity of being appears as a central element in Heidegger's own thought. In *Being and Time*, for instance, Heidegger can be seen as taking the multiple senses of being, there understood in terms of the complex array of elements that are constitutive of the structure of Dasein (a structure that is identical with the structure of being understood as presence – *Anwesenheit* – or disclosedness), to be unified through the relating of those elements in ecstatic temporality in which the primary *ekstasis* is that of the future.[47] And while the role of temporality is modified somewhat in his later thinking,[48] still we find the same type of analysis in which a number of different elements are seen as together constitutive of the single structure that is the structure of being. Moreover, the equivocity that is first clearly set out in Aristotle, and which applies not only to Aristotle's talk of being but to a range of other key terms also, can also be seen to carry over into the Heideggerian vocabulary. Indeed, this is partly what makes for such difficulty in reading Heidegger, since the same term may be used in a range of different, and yet connected, senses, while different terms can sometimes refer to much the same structure, depending on the aspect of that structure that is to be given emphasis. Thus being is seen as closely tied to, sometimes almost identical with, a range of different notions such as presence, truth, clearing, opening and so forth, while being can also refer to the totality of beings, to the being of beings (and this too in more than one sense), to being as such. One might say that just as metaphysics, in its problematic forms, attempts to construe being (and ground with it) as identical with some particular being or aspect of being, so it also strives to eliminate the equivocity that attaches to terms such as being and to find some univocal sense to which they can finally reduced. Heidegger's own approach is to maintain such equivocity, although at the same time he avoids any presentation that would suggest that the various notions at issue here could be simply aligned one beside the other in some comprehensive hierarchy. The equivocity of being brings with it a certain necessary opacity.[49]

The way in which the equivocity of being is articulated in Heidegger's thinking naturally changes as Heidegger's own thought shifts. One of the distinctive features of the investigation of the equivocity of being in Heidegger's early thinking is its joining of the Aristotelian question of the unity of being with the problem of meaning as Heidegger inherits it from Dilthey and from Husserl. For Dilthey, meaning is the fundamental category for the understanding of the human world – for the understanding of that which we might say prefigures the Heideggerian concept of Dasein. For Husserl, too, the problem of meaning is central: phenomenology can be viewed as an attempt to uncover the structure of meaning through the analysis of the structure of consciousness, that is, of the structure of acts of meaning-constitution, *noesis*. On this basis, the inquiry into meaning can be viewed as an inquiry into that which makes possible the unitary field that is the field of intelligibility or meaningfulness – where the unity of that field is understood in terms of its own internal differentiation and integration, and so in terms of the 'internal' relatedness of the elements that make up that field. Meaning is, then, the unity of the 'field' or domain within which what is meaningful can 'show up' as meaningful. As Heidegger tells us in *Being and Time*,

meaning 'is that wherein the intelligibility [Verständlichkeit] of something maintains itself. That which can be articulated in a disclosure by which we understand, we call "meaning" ',[50] meaning is thus the structure wherein things can show up as meaningful; the inquiry into the meaning of being is the inquiry into that wherein things can show up as things that are, and thus the uncovering of the structures that make such intelligibility of being possible – the uncovering of meaning – is identical with the uncovering of the structure of being itself. Understood as a question that asks after the ground of 'what is', the inquiry into meaning aims to uncover such a ground by exhibiting the unity of the structure within which things are – by exhibiting the internal relatedness of the domain in which anything meaningful appears (and thereby also marking it off within its proper bounds). In *Being and Time* Heidegger reinterprets this problem of the unity of meaning in a way that integrates it, indeed shows it to be continuous, with the Aristotelian inquiry into the complex unity of being as well as with the Kantian inquiry into the conditions for the possibility of experience. It is in this fashion that Heidegger is able to transform ontology into phenomenology, the phenomenological into the hermeneutical, and the hermeneutical into the transcendental.

The unity of meaning that is identical, in *Being and Time*, with the unity of being is, of course, a unity that is worked out through the articulation of the complex interplay between a number of different elements. Inasmuch as this constitutes a response to the question of ground, it does so not by identifying a single element as primary, but rather by exhibiting the connectedness of those elements, albeit a connectedness that also requires a certain ordering. In *Being and Time* Heidegger refers to the mutual relatedness of the elements at issue here in terms of their 'equiprimordiality'. Thus, commenting specifically on the role of Being-in within the structure of Dasein, he writes:

> [I]f we inquire about Being-in as our theme, we cannot indeed consent to nullify the primordial character of this phenomenon by deriving it from others – that is to say, by an inappropriate analysis, in the sense of a dissolving or breaking up. But the fact that something primordial is underiveable does not rule out the possibility that a multiplicity of characteristics of Being may be constitutive for it. If these show themselves, then existentially they are equiprimordial. The phenomenon of the equiprimordiality of constitutive items has often been disregarded in ontology, because of a methodological unrestrained tendency to derive everything and anything from some simple primal ground.[51]

In this passage Heidegger can be seen implicitly to contrast two different conceptions of the notion of ground: one looks to ground as a single element from which all else is derived; the other looks to ground as precisely a complex and articulate unity of elements. Heidegger's rejection of the idea of any 'simple primal ground' here is closely tied to his conception of the analytic of Dasein as not a matter of dissolving or breaking Dasein up into its parts, but rather of

demonstrating its essential unity. Elsewhere, commenting on the concept of such an 'analytic' in *Being and Time*, Heidegger draws explicitly on Kant to reinforce this point. In the 'Analytic of Concepts', Kant emphasizes that the analytic at issue there does not entail what usually passes for analysis, but rather involves 'the much less frequently attempted analysis of the faculty of understanding itself, in order to research the possibility of *a priori* concepts by seeking them only in the understanding as their birthplace and analyzing its pure use in general'.[52] In relation to this Heidegger comments:

> From this Kantian concept of analytic, it follows that it is a dissection [*Zergliederung*] of the faculty of understanding. The fundamental character of a dissection is not its reduction into elements, but the tracing back to a unity (synthesis) of the ontological possibility of the being of beings, or in the sense of Kant: [back to synthesis] of the objectivity of objects of experience … In the ontological sense, 'the analytic' is not a reduction into elements, but the articulation of the [*a priori*] unity of a composite structure [*Strukturgefüge*]. This is also essential in my concept of the 'analytic of Dasein'.[53]

Even though the idea of the transcendental largely disappears from Heidegger's later thought, along with other Kantian notions such as that of an 'analytic', still one can discern the same emphasis on the articulation of unity over reduction into elements. Thus, as Dieter Henrich points out, the idea of equiprimordiality referred to in *Being and Time* is exemplified not merely by the structure outlined in that work, but also, much later, by the idea of the Fourfold (*Das Geviert*),[54] in which Earth, Sky, Gods and Mortals are jointly constitutive of 'World', and of the Opening that is World, and yet it is only within the unity of the Fourfold that Earth appears as Earth, Sky as Sky , Gods as Gods and Mortals as Mortals.

   Heidegger's discussions of the Fourfold also bring the connection between unity and limit clearly into view. The Fourfold is the gathering together of world-constituting elements into a single, but complex unity. That gathering together does not happen in some indeterminate 'nowhere', but always occurs in a determinate location, a place, and with respect to the particulars of that place. The descriptions of the gathering of the Fourfold in 'Building Dwelling Thinking,' and also 'The Thing', focus on the way in which the elements of world are brought together in and though particular things, a bridge, a jug of wine, and so also in particular locales or 'places'.[55] The unity that is established in the gathering of the Fourfold is thus the same unity as is to be found in the opening up of a place and so in the establishing of the boundary or horizon that is part of the structure of such a place. Indeed, Heidegger talks explicitly of the role of limit in a way that is immediately suggestive of the Aristotelian and Kantian understanding of limit as tied to origin and to ground: 'A space is something that has been made room for, something that is cleared and free, namely within a boundary, Greek *peras*. A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which

something *begins its presencing*. That is why the concept is that of *horismos*, that is, the horizon, the boundary.'[56]

The sense of limit as origin that appears in his talk of the Fourfold is not peculiar to Heidegger's later thinking, however, but is already evident in *Being and Time*. Thus, having completed the preparatory analysis of Dasein in Division One of Part One, and having arrived at the result that the being of Dasein is care, Heidegger argues that it still remains to understand the being of Dasein more primordially, that is to say, to understand the being of Dasein 'as a whole' (in a way that encompasses Dasein in its authentic and not merely inauthentic modes), and it is here that Dasein's 'being-toward-death' becomes a central issue. As Heidegger writes: 'The "end" of Being-in-the-world is death. This end, which belongs to the potentiality-for-Being – that is to say, to existence – limits and determines in every case whatever totality is possible for Dasein.'[57] Only through the limit of Dasein that is death, then, does the idea of Dasein as a totality – of Dasein in its structural unity as a whole – come into view. Death, which is grasped from within our lives, 'ontically' we might say, only as that at which our being ceases, and so as a negative limit, a mere 'terminus', is understood in Division Two of *Being and Time* as precisely that which makes possible a life as such, through making possible the unity of such a life. Death is thus understood, ontologically, as a positive limit – as 'end', it is also origin. In the light of its death, in the light of its non-being, Dasein comes into view in the totality of its being and so death, as originary limit, is disclosive of the proper being of Dasein.

The sense of limit at issue here connects further with Heidegger's emphasis on the privative character of what he often talks about as 'truth',[58] and which he also refers to as *aletheia* – unconcealment. *Aletheia* is the coming of things into appearance, into presence. In 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger talks of the happening of truth as unconcealment in terms of 'clearing' or 'lighting' (*Lichtung*). Thus he writes that:

> In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs. There is a clearing, a lighting … That which is can only be, as a being, if it stands within and stands out within what is lighted in this clearing. Only this clearing grants and guarantees to us humans a passage to those beings that we ourselves are not, and access to the being that we ourselves are. Thanks to this clearing, beings are unconcealed in certain changing degrees. And yet a being can be concealed, too, only within the sphere of what is lighted. Each being we encounter and which encounters us keeps to this curious opposition of presence in that it always withholds itself at the same time in concealment.[59]

Truth, understood as the unconcealment of beings, thus turns out to be inextricably bound to untruth, that is, to concealment, so much so that Heidegger writes: 'Truth, in its nature, is un-truth.'[60] Elsewhere, Heidegger makes a similar point by emphasizing the privative character of the Greek term *a-letheia*, in which the word-stem *leth-* or *lath-* (referring to concealment) takes primacy.[61] In

'The Origin of the Work of Art' Heidegger notes two ways in which beings remain concealed even while they are also revealed: first beings remain concealed inasmuch as they refuse themselves to us so that what we know of them is always limited; second, beings remain concealed inasmuch as their appearance also obscures ('One being places itself in front of another being, the one helps to hide the other, the former obscures the latter').[62] Truth is thus itself a delimitation just in so far as it is also an unconcealing.

Heidegger's emphasis on the primacy of concealment in relation to unconcealment, of untruth to truth, echoes the Husserlian emphasis on the aspectual character of appearance;[63] it also prefigures the Gadamerian emphasis on the positive role of prejudice, literally, 'pre-judgement', in all understanding – prejudice is a closing off that thereby also opens up.[64] The coming to appearance of things is thus a matter of their coming out of their prior concealment, but such revealing is precisely a matter of demarcation and limitation, since: 'Where demarcation is lacking, nothing can come to presence as that which it is.'[65] Limit is part of the very structure of unconcealment or presence – thus truth is possible only on the basis of 'untruth' and the being of the thing is possible only in relation to its 'non-being'.[66] Although there is much more at issue in the Heideggerian account, the interplay between the hidden and the unhidden that Heidegger describes, when considered in connection with the idea of limit as origin, may suggest a further link with the Kantian notion of the *noumenon*. As Kant presents matters, the *noumenon* functions as a positive limit through marking off the thing in itself from the thing as it appears, but in this respect the *noumenon* can be thought of as standing in much the same relation to the *phenomenon* that it thereby marks off as does the idea of the hidden, in Heidegger, stand to the unhidden, as untruth stands to truth. But if we think of matters in this way, then we must recognize that the *noumenon* indeed cannot be thought of as an object that is somehow not intuited (the 'positive' sense of *noumenon* Kant warns against), just as the 'hidden' does not name some thing to which we simply do not have access.

The conception of ground that can be found in *Being and Time*, along with the ideas of unity and limit with which it is necessarily connected, continues through into Heidegger's later thinking in spite of other shifts in his thought. Whether we look to the evocative descriptions of the Fourfold in essays such as 'Building Dwelling Thinking', to the depiction of the working of truth in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', or to the analysis of Dasein in *Being and Time*, the question of ground remains at issue, as does the working out of that question, and with it the question of being, in connection with the ideas of unity and limit. Yet equally there is a clear shift in Heidegger's thinking from the explicitly transcendental framework of the early work to the 'topology' that characterizes his later thinking. Such a topology – a 'saying of the place' – is already evident in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', in which the focus on unconcealment, and so on the 'clearing of being', is immediately suggestive of *topos*: the clearing of being is the *topos* of being, and the 'saying' of the clearing is thus also a saying of the *topos*, the place, of being.[67]

The idea of topology gives special emphasis to the non-reductive character of Heidegger's thinking – to its refusal to think being by way of beings – even while it aims, nonetheless, to 'speak' being and so to articulate the 'structure' within which any being comes to be. In addition, and unlike the explicitly transcendental approach of *Being and Time*, the topology of Heidegger's later thought does not take the analysis of the being of Dasein as its central focus, or even its starting point, but instead presents the being of Dasein (that is, the being of mortals – those beings capable of death) as a part of that more encompassing structure that is the truth, the clearing, the place of being. This does not mean, however, that the analysis of Dasein is thereby abandoned, but only that it needs to be moved through;[68] it is a necessary stage in the thinking of being even though it cannot represent the culmination of such thinking. The focus on the structure of Dasein is characteristic of the transcendental inasmuch as the transcendental is itself characterized by a concern with the structure of transcendence, that is, the 'passing over' of thought to its object,[69] and inasmuch as the essence of Dasein is identical with the structure of transcendence.[70] The project that makes up the first two parts of Division One of *Being and Time* thus takes the question of being as a question that concerns the structure of transcendence and what that project was unable to accomplish was the shift, the turning or reversal, that would have moved from the problem of transcendence understood as a problem concerning the being of Dasein, to the problem of the structure within which transcendence itself must be located and in which transcendence has its origin. In Heidegger's own thinking, this shift back to the truth or place of being was only accomplished through a reworking of the framework within which the inquiry into being was to proceed, and such reworking was required not merely because of the philosophical need to move beyond the transcendental framework employed in *Being and Time*, but also because of the readiness with which the language and approach of the earlier work was able to be assimilated back to a metaphysical perspective – that is, to a perspective from which being, and so also the notion of ground (as well as of unity and limit), is once again understood in terms of beings.[71] The thinking of the *Ereignis* that appears in Heidegger's work from the late 1930s onwards can be seen as aiming at just such a more originary thinking of the unitary and unifying ('gathering/appropriating') happening of the truth of being.

V

Hermann Philipse asks: 'What, we may wonder … justifies Heidegger's assumption that there must be one fundamental meaning of "to be"? Why does his question of being have a pole of unity?'[72] The question is not altogether clearly put, since it could be seen as asking why the various senses of being must be unified in relation to one primary sense or why the senses of being should be thought as having any unity at all. In fact, the latter question is clearly the more basic. If the various senses of being are to be unified, then this can only be through establishing some ordering of those senses, and so through the estab-

lishing of a certain priority amongst them, but this does not explain why any such unity should be sought in the first place. Philipse's question can thus be viewed as asking after the reason for the association of the question of being with the idea of unity. The answer to that question, however, should already be clear: the question of being is a question concerning the ground of being and this question is precisely a question that asks after the unity of being – to ground is, in fact, to unify. Indeed, once we understand the connection between the question of being and the question of ground, and the way unity is implicated in both such questions, then we can also understand why being might be thought in terms of unity itself (although in saying this we must be careful not to misconstrue the unity that is at issue here), as well as the way in which the articulation of such unity necessarily requires a certain marking out of limits.

In fact, leaving aside the details of the Heideggerian understanding of what is involved here, the idea that to ground is, in some sense, to unify is an implicit presupposition evident in almost all philosophical inquiry. Any attempt to understand or to explain is already a matter of establishing a certain unity or integration, and so also a certain demarcation, with respect to some particular range of phenomena or some particular domain. Thus one may look to explain some particular range of physical phenomena, for example by reference to some set of underlying physical laws – laws that may achieve the requisite relating and integrating of the phenomena in question by showing how one level of description of those phenomena is actually dependent on (or reducible to) another level of description. In this respect, while the way in which Heidegger understands the philosophical concern with ground and with unity may diverge from that which is common with the tradition, it is not discontinuous with it – the Heideggerian focus on ground, and on unity, is a focus that arises out of the tradition itself.

Perhaps what really perplexes Philipse, however, is not merely the Heideggerian concern with unity, but rather the Heideggerian concern with being as such – why should it be thought that there is some single encompassing question about being? The question of being, however, is inextricably bound to the question of ground. Asking why it should be thought that there is a question concerning being is thus the same as asking why it should be thought that there is a question concerning the ground of beings. But as soon as one puts matters in this latter form, as a question concerning the question of ground, then it should immediately become apparent that to ask why we should ask the question is to ask after nothing other than the very ground for questioning itself. To question the question of ground – and so also to question the question of being – is thus already to acknowledge the force of that question, it is already to take a step in the asking of the very question that is in question.[73] As soon as we allow ourselves to come into the vicinity of the question of being, then, so we also draw near to the question of ground, and as soon as we raise the question of ground, which is to say, as soon as we begin to question, so being is also raised as an issue.

Following the path of Heidegger's thought, we can clearly see the question of ground as a continuing concern that moves from the transcendental framework

of his early work to the explicitly topological approach of the later. Moreover, the concern with ground, and the working out of that concern in relation to concepts of unity and limit, turns out to provide an important illumination of what is at issue in both the transcendental and topological projects. Indeed, although the topological can be seen as a turn away from certain aspects of the transcendental – even, perhaps, as a 'reversal' – it does not represent an abrupt break, but is rather a continuation and deepening of the concerns that motivate and underlie the transcendental project. One can thus view Heidegger's thought, inasmuch as it always remains focused on the question of ground, as showing both the way in which the transcendental must give way to the topological if that question is properly to be addressed, and also the way in which the transcendental itself must already constitute a form of topology. In this sense, all thinking is topological precisely in the sense that it aims at a 'saying' of that place – a place that constantly opens up before us and that is therefore never to be reduced to what is merely 'present' – in which we find ourselves already given over to the mortals among whom we ourselves are, to the gods, to earth and to sky. It is this that is the place, the *topos*, of being. To ask after the ground of what is – after the ground of beings – is thus, whether knowingly or not, to ask after this very place; it is to ask after the place of being.

Notes

1 Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt, New Haven, Yale, 2000, p. 26. See also Heidegger's comment in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1984, p. 221: 'To philosophise means to exist from ground'.

2 Thus, as late as 1955–6, Heidegger gave a lecture course, under the title 'Der Satz vom Grund' (published in German in 1957 and appearing in English as *The Principle of Reason*, trans. Reginald Lilly, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1991), that focused directly on the issue of ground (the German word '*Grund*' means both reason and ground) taking Leibniz's statement of the principle of sufficient reason as his starting point. In these lectures ground and being are shown as belonging essentially together – as Heidegger puts it through the lectures: 'Being and ground/reason: the same' – see *The Principle of Reason*, p. 51.

3 See Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, p. 49. And in one of the annotations to the earlier 'On the Essence of Ground', he writes: 'The question concerning the essence of ground is therefore the question concerning the *truth of being* [*Seyn*] itself' ('On the Essence of Ground', in William McNeill (ed.), *Pathmarks*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 98).

4 Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, p. 76.

5 See *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 5th edn, 1997, p. 1.

6 Unlike some commentators, I do not take the transcendental approach of Heidegger's early work to be an unfortunate Husserlian remnant that Heidegger ought to have expunged (and eventually did expunge) from his thinking. Not only is the transcendental framework too deeply embedded in Heidegger's early thinking, but the idea of the transcendental is also clearly at the heart of Heidegger's engagement with Kant – an engagement which is certainly not incidental to Heidegger's thinking, whether early or late. In fact, what often seems to motivate the claim that the idea of the transcendental is somehow incompatible even with Heidegger's early

thought is a conception of the transcendental that seems to have little in common with the understanding of the notion to be found in either Heidegger or Kant. Concern with the transcendental does not imply an attempt to arrive at some special, 'transcendent' standpoint from which philosophy can survey a realm of timeless realities, but instead, as I hope will become clearer below, it involves the attempt to understand the structure of that by which the world is open to our grasp, providing an articulation of that structure without going beyond it. The shift away from the transcendental approach that occurs in Heidegger's later thinking is, indeed, only explicable if the centrality of that approach in Heidegger's early thought is given proper recognition.

7 Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, p. 51.

8 Although it is notable that Heidegger does himself refer to freedom as precisely 'the ground of ground' in 'On the Essence of Ground' (*Pathmarks*, p. 134), he immediately goes on to say that: 'Freedom's being a ground does not – as we are always tempted to think – have the character of *one* of the ways of grounding, but determines itself as the grounding unity of the transcendental strewal of ground. As *this* ground, however, freedom is the *abyss of ground* [Ab-grund] in Dasein'.

9 Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, p. 51. Notice that here the claim that 'being "is" not' must be taken strictly to mean only that the 'is' cannot be applied to being. See *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, p. 153, and 'Letter on Humanism', *Pathmarks*, p. 255.

10 Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, p. 111.

11 One might be tempted to say of philosophy 'in the West' except that one finds very similar tendencies in many varieties of non-Western thought also, while Heidegger himself claims that 'Western-European philosophy is, in truth, a tautology … because philosophy is Greek in its nature' – Heidegger, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. William Kluback and Jean T. Wilde, Plymouth, Vision, 1963, pp. 29–33.

12 See 'The Question Concerning Technology', in Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt, New York, Harper & Row, 1977, esp. pp. 14–23.

13 See, for instance, Heidegger's discussion in 'Introduction to "What is Metaphysics"' (1949) in *Pathmarks*, pp. 287–8.

14 Changes that can be most readily discerned, perhaps, in the contrast between the two works specifically focused on the problem of ground, 'On the Essence of Ground' (1929) and *The Principle of Reason* (1955–6). Heidegger's annotations to the essay, reprinted in the English translation in *Pathmarks*, indicate some of the changes in his thinking. See also Heidegger's comments on the earlier essay in *The Principle of Reason*, p. 45 (oddly, the reference to 'On the Essence of Ground' in the bibliographical notes to *The Principle of Reason*, p. 132, refers to it as being included in *Holzwege*, rather than *Wegmarken* – the latter being the volume of the *Gesamtausgabe* translated as *Pathmarks* – an interesting error given Heidegger's own severe criticisms of the essay).

15 Franz Brentano, *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, trans. Rolf George, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1975 [1862].

16 Martin Heidegger, 'A Recollection (1957)', in Thomas Sheehan (ed.), *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1981, p. 21. See also his comments in the 'Preface' to William J. Richardson, *Through Phenomenology to Thought*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhof, 1974, p. x.

17 Brentano emphasizes the unity of being through its focus on the being of the Categories and so of *ousia* – see *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, p. 148.

18 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, A10.

19 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B25.

20 See Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, pp. 80–81.

21 Heidegger often characterizes the transcendental as that which concerns *transcendence* – that is, the capacity of thought to move beyond itself to encompass that which is other than itself (see, for instance, 'On the Essence of Ground', p. 109). The problem of transcendence is thus a problem that encompasses both objectivity and subjectivity. Inasmuch as transcendence is always transcendence 'towards' the object, however, so the problem of unity at issue in the Kantian investigation concerns the unity of objectivity (a unity that is articulated through the unifying – the synthesis – of concepts, and of concepts and intuitions) – where that unity is seen as dependent on a structure that does not refer us to anything *beyond* the experience in which the object is given, and yet is *prior to* that experience – as well as the way in which that unity is itself based in the unitary structure of subjectivity, that is, of reason. Heidegger provides a brief discussion of the history of the notion of the transcendental (particularly in its connection with the notion of objectivity) in *The Principle of Reason*, pp. 78–83. There he is especially concerned to mark out the innovative character of the idea of the transcendental in Kant. Heidegger thus elaborates on the difference between Kant's employment of the idea of the transcendental and that which appears in medieval scholasticism, as well as the way in which scholasticism can be seen as taking up the ideas at issue here in ways distinct from Aristotle, even though ultimately derived from Aristotle.

22 In this respect, Heidegger's attempt, in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, to try to show that sensibility and understanding are really stems from a single root, namely, the imagination, can be seen as mistaken through not recognizing the properly 'transcendental' (in the sense suggested here) character of the Kantian project.

23 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A65/B90.

24 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A11–12/B25.

25 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A783/B811.

26 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A737/B765.

27 See my discussion of this in 'The Transcendental Circle', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 1997, vol. 75, pp. 1–20.

28 Heidegger, *What is a Thing?*, trans. W.B. Barton Jr and Vera Deutsch, Chicago, IL, Henry Regnery, 1967, pp. 241–2; see also pp. 223–4.

29 See *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York, Harper & Row, 1962, H315.

30 See 'A Dialogue on Language', in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz, New York, Harper & Row, 1971, p. 51.

31 Which is why scepticism is, on Heidegger's account, a philosophical irrelevance, since what it would question is precisely the prior belonging together of thought and world. Hence his comments in *Being and Time*, in regard to the attempt to 'prove' the existence of the external world, that: 'If Dasein is understood correctly, it defies such proofs, because, in its Being, it already is what subsequent proofs deem necessary to demonstrate for it', *Being and Time*, H205. In this respect, and in opposition to the generally accepted view of transcendental argument within, especially, the analytic literature (see, for instance, many of the contributions in Robert Stern (ed.), *Transcendental Arguments: Problems and Prospects*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1999, although note the different view presented in Graham Bird, 'Kant and the Problem of Induction: A Reply to Walker', pp. 31–45), the transcendental is mistakenly understood if viewed as having the refutation of scepticism as its aim.

32 See especially Rüdiger Bubner, 'Kant, Transcendental Arguments and the Problem of Deduction', *Review of Metaphysics*, 1975, vol. 28, pp. 453–67.

33 Immanuel Kant, *Opus Postumum*, trans. Eckart Förster, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 254 [Ak 21:93].

34 However, see my 'The Constitution of the Mind: Kant and Davidson on the Unity of Consciousness', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 1999, vol. 7, pp. 1–30.

35 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Axii.

36 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. W.D. Ross, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1928, 1022a3–12.

37 It is worth noting that every origin can be construed as a terminus, but not every terminus can be construed as an origin. Thus every positive limit can also be construed as a negative one. To understand limit as origin is also, moreover, to understand it ontologically – that is, as determinative of the being of that which it limits. In contrast, we might say that to understand limit in the merely negative sense as terminus is to understand it ontically – that is, as pertaining only to a feature of beings, rather than as determinative of being. Heidegger tells us that, as he uses it, 'ontological' is his word for what Kant meant by 'transcendental' (see Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars. Protocols–Conversations–Letters*, trans. Franz Mayr and Richard Askay, Evanston, Northwestern, 2001, p. 115). In that case, we might make the same distinction between the ontological and ontical here, in Kantian terms, by referring to the transcendental and empirical.

38 While Kant uses the terms *Grenze* and *Schranke* consistently with the distinction at issue here, translators have not always been so careful. Thus in Kemp Smith, for instance, there is no consistent translation of the terms into English that preserves the clear distinction between them (the more recent Cambridge translation is, on the other hand, generally consistent in translating *Grenze* as boundary and *Schranke* as limit). I am extremely grateful to Eliza Goddard for her meticulous work, as part of her PhD research, 'Limit and Bound in Philosophical Method', in investigating Kant's use of the *Grenze/Schranke* distinction and the issues surrounding it.

39 Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, p. 103 [Ak. 345–55].

40 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A249/B306ff.

41 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B307. One might say that, in its proper, that is to say, negative, employment, the idea of the *noumenon* must be understood merely in the sense of a positive limit. This is to understand the *noumenon* 'transcendentally' or 'ontologically' (see note 37 above). When we treat the *noumenon* in a positive sense, however, we treat it as some thing that stands beyond the appearance and marks the point at which the appearance stops and the reality begins. In this way we treat it as a being that stands in relation to other beings and so, in Heideggerian terms, we treat it 'ontically' or, in Kantian terms, 'empirically' (as that which could be the object of some kind of experience though not ours). The dogmatic metaphysician understands the *noumenon* in just this latter fashion.

42 Kant, *Prolegomena*, p. 103 [Ak. 354–5].

43 Kant, *Prolegomena*, p. 109 [Ak. 360–61].

44 Kant, *Opus Postumum*, pp. 173–4, 176, 180–81 and 184.

45 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A235/B294.

46 As Kant writes in a note in the *Prolegomena*: 'High towers and metaphysically great men resembling them, round both of which there is commonly much wind, are not for me. My place is the fruitful bathos of experience', p. 122 [AK 373].

47 See Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, p. 211: 'Temporality temporalizes itself primarily out of the future … [which is to say that] the world, which is grounded in nothing other than the ecstatic temporality of the time-horizon, temporalizes itself primarily out of the *for-the-sake-of-which*'.

48 In particular, although time retains a certain priority over space (hence the term '*Zeitraum*' – 'Timespace' – in which time is placed first), Heidegger abandons the attempt, set out in *Being and Time* §70, to derive existential spatiality from temporality – see *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, New York, Harper & Row, 1972, p. 23, and also *What Is a Thing?*, p. 16.

49 Julian Young argues for a particular equivocity in Heidegger's talk of being by distinguishing 'being', understood as more or less identical with 'presence', from 'Being', understood as the entire structure by which presence is possible – see Julian Young, *Heidegger's Later Philosophy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 10–25. There is no doubt that something like this equivocity is present in Heidegger's

thinking, although Heidegger's reluctance to make it explicit – a reluctance Young explicitly acknowledges – is also indicative of the fact that even this characterization may make the matter appear a little too clear cut. There will always remain an impenetrability to all talk of being that can never be completely dispelled – an equivocity in which the various 'voices' can never be completely separated out.

50 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H151.
51 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H131.
52 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A65/B90.
53 Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 115.
54 See for instance 'Building Dwelling Thinking', in Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter, New York, Harper & Row, 1971, pp. 149ff.; see also Henrich, 'On the Unity of Subjectivity', pp. 49ff.
55 See 'Building Dwelling Thinking', pp. 166ff. See also Julian Young's discussion of the Fourfold in Charles Guignon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, 2nd edn, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, forthcoming.
56 'Building Dwelling Thinking', p. 154. It is noteworthy that Heidegger uses the term '*Grenze*' here, translated as *boundary*. This corresponds to Kant's own usage of *Grenze* (positive limit, 'origin', 'bound') as distinct from *Schranke* (negative limit, 'terminus'). See also Heidegger's comment in *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982, p. 82: 'The limit as thought by the Greeks is not that at which something stops but that in which something originates, precisely by originating therein as being "formed" in this or that way, i.e., allowed to rest in a form and as such to come into presence.'
57 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H234.
58 The identification of truth with *aletheia* is, of course, something that Heidegger eventually abandons – see 'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking', in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, New York, Harper & Row, 1977, pp. 446–7; see also Heidegger, *Heraclitus Seminar*, with Eugen Fink, trans. Charles H. Seibert, University, AL, University of Alabama Press, 1979, p. 161.
59 'The Origin of the Work of Art', *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 53. The idea of truth as unconcealment here is already prefigured in *Being and Time* (see §44) and is also developed in a variety of other discussions – see, for instance, 'The Essence of Truth' (1930) and 'Plato's Doctrine of Truth' (1930/31 and 1940), in *Pathmarks*, pp. 136–82.
60 Martin Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 54.
61 See *Being and Time*, H33.
62 Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 54.
63 See, for instance, Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book*, trans. F. Kersten, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1983, §44.
64 See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. edn, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, New York, Crossroad, 1992, pp. 269ff. The positive conception of 'prejudice' to be found in Gadamer is clearly a development of the idea of the 'fore-character' of understanding as set out in *Being and Time*, but Gadamer also emphasizes the way his approach is indebted to the account of truth in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (see Gadamer, 'Reflections on My Philosophical Journey', in Lewis Edwin Hahn (ed.), *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, Library of Living Philosophers vol. XXIV, Chicago, Open Court, 1997, p. 47).
65 Heidegger, *Parmenides*, p. 82.
66 In talking of 'non-being' in this way, however, what is meant is not the simple absence of the thing from some part of space, but precisely its hiddenness – its 'non-salience'.
67 See Heidegger, 'Seminar in Le Thor 1969', in *Seminare*, *Gesamtausgabe* vol. 15, Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1986, p. 344. For more on the importance of place or *topos*, see Malpas, 'Locating Interpretation: The Topography of Understanding in Heidegger and Davidson', *Philosophical Topics*, 1999, vol. 27, pp. 129–48; also Malpas,

Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 33ff.

68 Thus, in the Le Thor seminar, Heidegger talks of three stages on the path of thought: from the thinking of the meaning of being, to the truth of being, to the place of being, see Heidegger, 'Seminar in Le Thor 1969', p. 344.

69 Heidegger, *What Is a Thing?*, p. 176.

70 In 'On the Essence of Ground', Heidegger writes '[Transcendence] belongs to human Dasein as the fundamental constitution of this being … If one chooses the title of "subject" for that being that we ourselves in each case are and that we understand as "Dasein", then we may say that transcendence designates the essence of the subject, that it is the fundamental structure of subjectivity' – *Pathmarks*, p. 108. It should be noted, however, that this does not imply that *Being and Time* is somehow subjectivist while the later work is not (Heidegger himself emphasizes the way in which his early thinking already stands removed from any subjectivism or anthropocentrism – see 'On the Essence of Ground', p. 125 incl. n. 66, and also 'Preface' to Richardson, *From Phenomenology to Thought*, p. xviii). Subjectivity may be a necessary element in the structure of being (that is, of presence) and yet this does not mean that being is thereby made 'subjective' since subjectivity is not the only nor the most basic element in the structure at issue here (indeed, in 'On the Essence of Ground', p. 109, Heidegger claims that 'world co-constitutes the unitary structure of transcendence' – see also the discussion of transcendence in 'On the Essence of Ground', pp. 125ff.). There is no doubt, however, that there are problems with the position Heidegger tries to articulate here, as he himself recognizes, and it may be that part of the problem is an ambiguity in the notion of transcendence itself inasmuch as it seems to refer both to the essential structure of Dasein and to that which encompasses both Dasein *and* world. It is notable that the explicit concern with the problem of transcendence, particularly as it relates to the problem of world, is a theme that runs through much of Heidegger's writing from the period 1928–30 – it appears in 'On the Essence of Ground' (written 1928), in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* (lectures 1928), and in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (lecture course 1929–30). While in these discussions world arises as a problem in relation to the structure of transcendence particularly as that is based in Dasein, by the time of 'The Origin of the Work of Art' the focus is directly on the structure of world as such – indeed, one might say that the structure of transcendence has there come to be based in the structure of world.

71 In 'Letter on Humanism' Heidegger suggests that one of the problems with *Being and Time* is that it has to operate too much within the terms of existing philosophy: 'these very terms were bound to lead immediately and inevitably into error. For the terms and conceptual language corresponding to them were not rethought by readers from the matter particularly to be thought' (*Pathmarks*, p. 271).

72 Herman Philipse, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being: A Critical Interpretation*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 102.

73 See Heidegger, 'The Essence of Ground', p. 129: 'grounding something means *making possible the why-question in general*'. See also *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, p. 213.

5 Facticity and transcendental philosophy

Steven Crowell

The title of this chapter is chosen to reflect a central point of dispute between Husserl and Heidegger over the nature of philosophy and the character of the philosophizing subject, and the aim of what follows is to sort out what I take to be a fundamentally misleading, though very common, way of construing that dispute.[1] It is commonly assumed that with the development of his 'hermeneutics of facticity' in the early 1920s, culminating in the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger rejected Husserl's neo-Kantian inspired version of 'transcendental' phenomenology in favour of a proto-pragmatic, historicist and 'de-transcendentalized' way of doing philosophy. This shift, it is argued, is made necessary because Heidegger understood the subject who philosophizes to be 'factic'. In contrast to the formal neo-Kantian principle of self-consciousness and to Husserl's 'pure ego' that constitutes the world, Heidegger's philosophizing subject is *situated*: a 'being-in-the-world' whose understandings are all structured, in a way ultimately impenetrable to transcendental reflection, by the limited historical, cultural and linguistic contexts in which it simply 'finds' itself. Such a subject has no place from which to make claims that would transcend these contexts – for instance, traditional transcendental-philosophical claims to *a priori* knowledge. Hence, 'facticity' is seen to stand for a cluster of issues which, taken together, render transcendental phenomenology impossible. It is this implication of the usual understanding of the dispute between Husserl and Heidegger that I would like to put into question, arguing, on the contrary, that facticity, properly understood, can illuminate the character of transcendental phenomenology itself.

It may appear, then, that what is at stake is primarily an historical question, a matter of concern to those with an interest in the vagaries of the phenomenological tradition, but beyond that of little philosophical moment. However, the assumption that something like facticity – that is, 'concrete' or 'situated' subjectivity – implies the impossibility of transcendental philosophy can without much difficulty be seen as emblematic of a much wider tendency in the philosophy of the twentieth century, a tendency that culminates in the view, more or less explicitly espoused by diverse thinkers in both the Continental and the Anglo-American traditions, that philosophy as a form of inquiry that is both autonomous and cognitive is impossible. Whether one sees philosophy as disappearing into natural science or into literature, the supposed

basis for this disappearance frequently reflects the traces of the debate over facticity that began in earnest in the dispute between Husserl and Heidegger. To suggest something of this larger picture, then, I will situate the discussion of Husserl and Heidegger within a loosely sketched framework of contemporary 'de-transcendentalizations' in which alternative conceptions of philosophy are offered. In particular, §1 will focus on what I call 'aestheticism', a view of the non-transcendental character of philosophy that believes itself entitled to appeal to Heidegger as a precursor and authority, but which – as I will argue in the remainder of the chapter – can do so only by misinterpreting the genuine philosophical achievement of *Being and Time*.

1 Philosophy between science and art

To facilitate the argument, let me sketch the place of transcendental philosophy within a matrix of positions established on the co-ordinates of cognitivity and autonomy. In my view, to say that philosophy is transcendental is to say, first, that it is *cognitive*, in the sense that it strives to attain truth about something, to 'get it right'. It thus belongs to the class of philosophical positions that see themselves as theoretical or scientific in the broad sense of the German term *Wissenschaft*. But in contrast to other members of this class – let us call them 'naturalistic' – transcendental philosophy does not see itself as continuous with the empirical sciences, a way of carrying on their work at a higher level of abstraction. This is because, second, to say that philosophy is a transcendental project is to say that it is *autonomous* or 'self-grounding', in the sense that it does not borrow premises from other cognitive domains: history, physics, psychology, and so on. With respect to the co-ordinate of autonomy, then, naturalistic positions appear as dogmatic: they simply assume what 'we know' from, say, physics or biology as the basis for further constructions. The effect is to deny that philosophy contributes anything cognitively *distinctive* to the scientific enterprise.[2] I shall not be much concerned with naturalized philosophy in this chapter, but there is an important parallel between it and the sorts of position I will be concerned with. These positions, which I call 'aestheticist', dogmatically assume certain premises drawn from the concept of facticity to contextualize philosophical practice in such a way that philosophy turns out to have no cognitive significance at all.

Aestheticist positions hold that philosophy is not primarily an inquiry but a 'way of life'. Now even scientific philosophy will be a way of life for the one who practises it, but aestheticism is distinguished by its *contrast* between 'way of life' and 'theory'. Philosophy is a way of life to the extent that it *abandons* the construction of accounts that aim to get it right about something and sees itself, instead, as a spiritual exercise. But as there was among naturalistic positions, there is among aestheticist ones a distinction along the axis of autonomy. 'Bald aestheticism' finds that nothing but linguistic preference distinguishes philosophical practice, while 'hermeneutic narrativism' – the position that shall occupy us below – tries to preserve for philosophy some autonomous, though non-cognitive, identity.

Bald aestheticism is familiar from Richard Rorty's remarks on Derrida and Heidegger.[3] According to Rorty, the former's extravagant intertextualism and the latter's meditations on the history of being are not part of public discourse at all. Such 'philosophy' belongs to aestheticized private life as a *Glasperlenspiel* to be enjoyed by those with a taste for it, but only a naïf would look there for truth about anything. Alexander Nehamas has recently expanded this into the view that philosophy is an 'art of living'.[4] Explicitly labelling his view 'aestheticist', he finds it exemplified in Montaigne, Nietzsche and Foucault.[5] Here philosophy is said to be a matter of 'self-fashioning', of becoming an 'individual' by crafting my time between birth and death into something inimitable, like a work of art. Virtue does not consist in embodying some theoretically defensible notion of the good, but in 'enlarging our understanding of what a "subject" can be' by harmonizing idiosyncrasy, situational contingency and passionate belief into the unity of a personal style.[6] This sort of 'care of the self' or 'aesthetics of existence' is only marginally a matter of actual *living*, however. Nehamas admits that 'the purpose of philosophy as the art of living is, of course, living', but 'the life it requires is a life in great part devoted to writing. The monument one leaves behind is in the end the permanent work, not the transient life.' Nor is such writing free to address just anything; it must engage with 'issues that have traditionally been considered philosophical'.[7] Thus it is not Nietzsche, but 'Nietzsche' – the character created in writing – who achieves the aestheticist's goal of being an individual, and he achieves it by being constructed from the materials of philosophical tradition.

Like Foucault before him, Nehamas obtains authority for this view of philosophy – he justifies his right to the term – not so much through argument as through a narrative about philosophy's past that highlights Hellenistic thought, where (it is claimed) the aim of philosophy was not construction of a theory but attainment of *eudaimonia* – the best, most complete, rich, and satisfying way of life. Yet Nehamas's narrative omits a crucial feature of this Hellenistic project, namely, that its way of life is philosophical only because one attempts to live *according to a theory*.[8] Now, retrieving a traditional project is not its slavish repetition, but one can doubt whether an aestheticist retrieval of Hellenism that wholly deconstructs its orientation towards truth is still a philosophical one. In abandoning the theoretical, does it not become *anti*-philosophy that merely plays with the material of a tradition whose claims it no longer respects?

Just as naturalism dissolves philosophy into a general scientism, so aestheticism reduces its so-called philosophical life to a general notion of self-making. And just as naturalism dismisses transcendental philosophy's claim to modes of knowledge that are neither logical deductions nor empirical generalizations, so contemporary aestheticism dismisses Aristotle's question of whether the highest life for a human being is the theoretical life devoted to contemplating truth, or the practical life devoted to political affairs.[9] A second version of aestheticism, however – the hermeneutic narrativism practised, for example, by Hans-Georg Gadamer, Charles Taylor, David Carr, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Charles Guignon – does not wish to have done with Aristotle's dilemma quite so quickly.

Like transcendental philosophy, it hopes to preserve something of philosophy's distinctiveness in the face of bald aestheticism. It is in the encounter between *this* sort of aestheticism and transcendental philosophy that the concept of facticity proves decisive. For on the hermeneutic view – compellingly argued by Guignon – a factic philosophizing subject is in no position to establish 'timeless, immutable structures', essences, 'eternal truths' that 'get it right' once and for all, as transcendental philosophy supposes.[10] In spite of this non-cognitivism, however, hermeneutics does not wish simply to dissolve philosophy into aesthetic self-making. Thus it seeks to carve out a certain autonomy for philosophy by appeal to Heidegger's notion of disclosedness (truth as *aletheia*). What is distinctive about the philosophical project is not that it 'offers us a correct representation of who and what we are', according to Guignon, but that through its phenomenological descriptions 'our lives are enriched and deepened'.[11]

On the usual reading of the dispute between Husserl and Heidegger, this is the position that Heidegger *should* have held in the late 1920s, though he failed to shed completely the Husserlian transcendental language committing him to the idea that philosophy ought to provide a 'better account' of something. And it is this reading that I will call into question in the remainder of this essay. While Heidegger's concept of truth does capture something important about the nature of philosophy, the lesson is lost if one holds that *Being and Time* is compromised by its involvement with transcendental philosophy.[12] If Heidegger's 'transcendental historicism is a nonviable mongrel',[13] as Guignon claims, then one ought to junk the historicism and not the transcendental philosophy if one hopes to keep hermeneutic narrativism from collapsing into bald aestheticism. To make part of that case, I shall ask whether the concept of facticity really does have the corrosive effects on transcendental philosophy that the narrativist claims it does.

2 The logical space of facticity: between formalism and empiricism

It certainly did not have these corrosive effects for Heidegger when, in the early 1920s, he introduced his 'hermeneutics of facticity'. Without a feel for the specific context in which the concept emerged, however, and hence for the peculiar logical space it was meant to occupy, this can be hard to recognize. Consider Heidegger's 1921 statement to Karl Löwith that he philosophizes 'concretely and factically out of my "I am", out of my intellectual and wholly factic origin, milieu, life-contexts, and whatever is available to me from these as vital experience in which I live'.[14] What does it mean to philosophize 'factically out of my "I am"'? How could one *not* do so? With what does such philosophizing contrast? Theodore Kisiel points out that 'initially "factic" was used as the "operative" counter-concept to "theoretical"',[15] which might suggest that Heidegger believes philosophy to be more an art of living than an attempt to give an account of anything. But in the 1920s Heidegger still describes philosophy as 'primal science', as 'cognitive comportment' that uncovers the *a priori*

'categories of factic life'. To philosophize out of my own factic 'I am' is therefore not simply to live, but to clarify factic life categorially.[16]

Nevertheless, following the long-entrenched Gadamerian view, Kisiel enlists Heidegger for aestheticism by claiming that his hermeneutics of facticity strove to be less theoretical and more 'phronetic'.[17] But even Gadamer, on re-reading Heidegger's so-called *Aristoteles-Einleitung* of 1922, expressed genuine surprise that '*phronesis* does not at all take centre stage in Heidegger's manuscript, but rather the virtue of the theoretical life, *sophia*'.[18] Indeed, the 1922 text never suggests that philosophy is a form of *phronesis* – the practical ability to 'find the mean' in matters that, because they concern particulars as particulars, fall outside of 'science', which always has to do with the universal. *Phronesis* is an intellectual virtue, but it is not equivalent to philosophy, which Heidegger describes as *sophia*, a 'pure looking-upon that understands'.[19] What the hermeneutics of facticity and *phronesis* have in common is a certain subject-matter – 'things that can always be otherwise', not the 'eternal' things studied by metaphysics – but they do not coincide in intellectual modality. Thus, while philosophy does not study 'the existence-in-general of some sort of universal humanity' but what '*is* always *as* its own',[20] it still aims at essential, theoretical truths *about* the latter. Six years later, in a 1928 lecture course, Heidegger will make this wholly explicit: 'If we say that "Dasein is in each case mine", and if our task is to define this characteristic of Dasein ontologically, this does not mean we should investigate the essence of my self, as this factical individual' since the 'object of inquiry' is 'the essence of mineness'.[21] This does not mean that theoretical investigation has no significance for practical life, but it is precisely *as* theoretical inquiry that it has it.

Still, since Heidegger denies that the factic subject is the 'existence-in-general of some universal humanity', shouldn't this rule out the search for essential, *a priori*, transcendental structures? To answer, we must understand the phrase not in its explicit Aristotelian, but in its implicit contemporary, context: the contemporary target of Heidegger's dismissal of 'the existence-in-general of some universal humanity' is the subject-concept advanced by neo-Kantians like Paul Natorp and Heinrich Rickert. As a purely formal condition of knowledge ('pure thought'), the neo-Kantian subject has no features that could be otherwise. In contrast, Heidegger's 'factic life' can 'always be otherwise', yet it is not simply *empirical* in the neo-Kantian sense. The significance of Heidegger's notion of facticity is that it delimits a subject-concept that transcends the stultifying dichotomy of the formal and the empirical, definitive of transcendental philosophy as the neo-Kantians understood it.

This dichotomy effectively precludes any idea of philosophical investigation into concrete subjectivity. According to neo-Kantianism, philosophy's task is to show how objectively valid knowledge is possible, and the transcendental or 'critical' solution to this problem requires distinguishing between the 'material' of knowledge – empirical, contingent, 'representation' – and the 'form' of knowledge – *a priori*, necessary, categorial. The latter, the 'pure laws of thought' belonging to transcendental logic, provide the principles that make objects (that is, *Sachverhalten*, correlates of objectively valid judgements) possible. As such

conditions, these principles are not themselves 'objects'; hence they are 'subjective'. The neo-Kantian concept of subjectivity is thus determined wholly formally and has nothing to do with the Cartesian psychological concept. Only by abstracting from anything that characterizes the subject in its concrete particularity does critical philosophy attain the subject as the *a priori* principle of knowledge.[22]

If one asks how this 'subject' stands to the factic subject, the neo-Kantian answer is systematically ambiguous. On the one hand, subjectivity in the sense of mental processes – experiencing, judging, sensing, perceiving, imagining – is relegated to the empirical science of psychology. Though we call them 'subjective', such processes are concrete occurrences and are thus, from the critical point of view, objects that *presuppose* subjectivity in the transcendental sense. On the other hand, the transcendental subject – what Rickert, for instance, calls 'consciousness in general' and Natorp the 'pure synthesis' – is supposed to be the *form* of the concrete ego, the principle that makes such an ego capable of objectively valid knowledge.[23] But between a system of formal transcendental-logical principles and an empirical ego conscious of a world there is no connection that could account for how objectively valid knowledge is a possibility *for* this empirical ego: it can be known only as an object *of* knowledge, never as knower. Confronted by this *aporia* in the neo-Kantian subject-concept, Heidegger introduces the factic subject to undermine the claim that there can be no philosophical, but only empirical-psychological, inquiry into concrete subjectivity. He is able to do so while remaining within the framework of transcendental philosophy because he adopts Husserl's phenomenology.

Husserl was no more interested than were the neo-Kantians in the Cartesian picture of subjectivity as *forum internum*, a space of mental representations. Given that picture, it might appear that theory of knowledge should provide an objectively valid explanation – perhaps a causal one – of how subjective representations, themselves worldly entities, can accurately picture 'transcendent' or objective worldly entities. Both Husserl and the neo-Kantians considered such a project self-contradictory. But where the latter saw transcendental philosophy as *justifying* empirical knowledge claims by demonstrating their place within a system of *a priori* principles (transcendental logic), Husserl saw transcendental philosophy as a matter of reflectively *clarifying* the constitution of 'transcendent' objects in the intentional experience of consciousness. Such reflection can be philosophical and not merely empirical-psychological, thanks to the phenomenological *epoché*. By 'bracketing', or suspending judgement on, all empirical claims about the world and the subject in the world, the field of experience can be explored exclusively in terms of its sense or meaning (*Sinn*). Because it is nothing but a clarification of the *meaning* of transcendence, transcendental phenomenology never abandons the concreteness of factic life. It is its intuitive explication.[24] This new conception of transcendental philosophy clears the space between formalism and empiricism that Heidegger will come to occupy. When Heidegger talks about *sophia* – the pure 'looking on that understands' – as the way to approach factic life, he has the phenomenological project in mind.

Though the subject of such philosophizing is not the empirical self (an item in the world), it is no purely formal construct either, since it is evident only along with what shows itself meaningfully as belonging to its own concrete experience.

Thus Heidegger's concept of factic life can escape the empiricism and naturalism to which the concrete subject had been relegated by the neo-Kantians. In the naturalistic sense, to speak of the subject as factic is to treat it as causally conditioned by various matters of fact obtaining at a certain time and place. The facts that I was born of particular parents, grew up in particular social, cultural and historical circumstances, am of a particular race, class and sex would all instantiate variables in laws that explain my behaviour. But though Heidegger's factic subject is always *je-weilig* ('of its time'), he specifically distinguishes the factic 'situation' (*Situation*) from the empirical 'circumstances' (*Lage*) – for instance, from 'what has already taken place and from those historical powers that determine the current moment'.[25] As introduced in 1921, the concept is not meant to imply that the subject can be explained in terms of its situation; rather, as *Evidenzsituation* it designates the philosophizing subject's stance towards the world as it attempts the phenomenological elucidation of that very stance.[26] The 'factic situation' is thus a transcendental concept that carries further Husserl's attempt to overcome the neo-Kantian division between the formal and the empirical, the rational and the concrete.[27]

But if Heidegger's concept of the factic subject as negotiating between the alternatives of empiricism and formalism makes sense only within the logical space of transcendental phenomenology, why is it so often taken to undermine that very philosophy? Even if facticity is distinguished from all empirical determinants of the subject, does it perhaps threaten in some other way the idea, common to Husserlian and neo-Kantian versions of transcendental philosophy, that philosophy should seek universal and necessary knowledge?

Here the question of facticity gets entangled with the issue of whether phenomenology is committed to foundationalism. It is argued, for example, that though Husserl does not simply identify the 'transcendental ego' with 'pure thought' as the neo-Kantians did, he cannot permit his non-formal phenomenological subject to be a factic one, exposed to the world's contingencies, since such a subject could make only parochial claims, not the universal and necessary ones that Husserl wants to endorse. On this view, then, Heidegger would have drawn the consistent anti-foundational conclusion from Husserl's turn to a non-formal subject, abandoning transcendental phenomenology in two stages. First, against the lingering rationalism in Husserl's conception of intentionality, Heidegger identifies a worldly, practical, pre-theoretical way of being – Dasein's 'understanding of being' – that precedes and sustains 'consciousness'. If all cognitive achievements, including philosophy, derive from this factic ground, then the idea that concrete experience has a rational structure is called into question. But by itself this will not rule out transcendental philosophy. Decisive would be Heidegger's claim that those factors that support intentional consciousness are *unavailable to reflection*.[28] Even Husserl acknowledged a stratum of experience that preceded intentionality: the pre-intentional self-constitution of the temporal flow

of consciousness. But this stratum can still become evident to reflection, and, according to Husserl, it reveals an implicit teleological orientation towards rationality. The pre-logical gives birth to the logical and so, ultimately, to philosophy. For Heidegger, in contrast, philosophy must recognize the subject's facticity precisely as being beyond what reflection can clarify. Philosophy must acknowledge the *fact that* it is incapable of getting to the bottom of what sustains it. Only a non-foundational hermeneutics of facticity, then, but no genuine transcendental philosophy, would seem to be possible.

But is it true that transcendental philosophy must be foundational? Why should the reflective unavailability of the factic ground of the subject rule out claims to *a priori* knowledge? Are we stuck with a version of the metaphysical conundrum – first felt in the Voluntarist theology of the fourteenth century – that if God is beyond our ken, then any order or necessity we grasp in the world is unreliable? Does the very distinction between the necessary and the contingent – crucial to transcendental philosophy's claim to be a distinctive cognitive enterprise – become untenable? In the following section I offer a limited answer to that question. This, in turn, leads to another: if the resulting position does not claim any ultimate metaphysical or epistemological foundation, how can it satisfy the autonomy condition for transcendental philosophy? How can a philosophy that admits the unavailability of its ground be a *self*-grounding theoretical enterprise? The final section shall address that issue.

3 The phenomenological *a priori* and the unavailable ground

The first question asks whether a philosophy that does not rest on an epistemically transparent basis can continue to employ a distinction between the necessary and contingent. Husserl encountered a version of this question when he came to recognize that while the 'absolute beginning' he sought in first-person reflection did have a certain methodological privilege, it was nevertheless conditioned in another way by historical reality. In order for the 'absolute' reflecting ego to grasp itself as a reflecting, philosophizing ego, it must be in communicative interaction with other such egos; that is, it must be historical. But *that* there is such an historical community is, from the point of view of reflection, simply a matter of fact. Thus in a manuscript from 1921 Husserl describes history as 'the great fact of absolute being' and acknowledges that the absolute beginning of transcendental phenomenology has a ground that escapes its reflection.[29] Should this not mean that any necessity revealed through reflective self-consciousness will be, from the perspective of historical facticity, merely *contingent*?

It is crucial to note that one can answer this question affirmatively without in any way compromising philosophy's pursuit of *a priori* truth, since the sort of contingency at issue here does not threaten the kind of essential claim that phenomenology makes. In this it differs from the approach to reason taken in neo-Kantian critical philosophy and traditional metaphysics.

For Husserl, essences are grasped *in re* through imaginative variation of what is given. Hence their necessity is always conditional: given such and such a thing, it must have these and those features. Where Kant attempts to establish that a certain *type* of experience is necessary by arguing that without it no unified self-consciousness is possible, Husserl can only reflect on the essential features of experiences that the subject *happens* to have. As Ernst Tugendhat puts it, 'Kant's *a priori* is relative to human subjectivity but holds universally for that, whereas Husserl's *a priori* is in *itself* absolutely valid, while being relative to particular matters given in experience that are not themselves necessary.'[30] For the same reason, phenomenological necessity differs from traditional metaphysical or absolute necessity. It cannot explain why there *must be* certain things. For instance, phenomenological reflection can establish a necessary connection between memory and perception: the act of remembering something refers necessarily to a previous act of perceiving it. But phenomenology can give no reason why there must be anything like memory, as a Leibnizian might argue that memory is necessary to the best of all possible worlds. Nevertheless, the contingency of memory in this sense does not undermine the eidetic claim concerning its connection with perception. In particular, it does not imply that memory could one day *change* in such a way that this connection might not hold. For in that case there would simply no longer be any 'memory'.

Nor does this mean that the phenomenological *a priori* reflects only what *we* – in some more or less parochial sense of 'we' – take things to be. Phenomenology grasps memory itself, not our interpretation of memory in the sense of some culture-bound conceptual scheme. If there are such schemes, they are porous; the languages we use are not prisons, but intertranslatable; horizons are, as Gadamer puts it, in a sense always already 'fused'.[31] Our interpretations *enable* the revelation of what is. One need not deny the importance of cultural difference or historical distance to deny that these are ultimate and nothing in the sheer existence of different cultural practices rules out the possibility of grasping trans-cultural universals. If my position within a culture enables me to see certain things and makes it difficult to see others, mere fallibilism of this sort cannot by itself undermine the very possibility of *a priori* insight.[32]

Thus even if the presence of a philosophizing ego in the world rests on some sort of contingent 'great fact', this is insufficient reason to impugn the theoretical enterprise of seeking necessary truth. Charles Taylor's idea that transcendental arguments 'articulate indispensability claims about experience as such' based on 'an insight we have into our own activity' captures this point. To the extent that we can identify ourselves as engaged in some definite activity at all – and so also encounter things in some specifically meaningful way – we can come to understand at least some of the rules and structures that make it possible, i.e. are necessary to it. Of course, as Taylor points out about transcendental arguments, 'there remains an ultimate ontological question they cannot foreclose'.[33] There is still room for a kind of scepticism, since we have no ultimate grounds for asserting that what we *take* ourselves to be is in fact what we *are*. But in Husserl's terms, the search for reassurance here belongs to the project

of metaphysics; and if, as he somewhat paradoxically put it, metaphysics is the ultimate 'science of fact'[34] – that is, an attempt to give ultimate grounds for the facticity of the fact – then the phenomenological doctrine of the conditional *a priori* is untouched by the success or failure of metaphysics. Neither Husserl's nor Heidegger's phenomenology claims to be foundational in *that* sense. As Guignon notes: 'There is no absolute ground for the existence of Dasein', and so 'Dasein may be thought of as contingent. But *given* the contingent fact of the existence of Dasein, it seems that our ability to discover certain structures is a necessary condition for our being able to identify an entity as an instance of Dasein.'[35] But if this is so, why does it seem that we must abandon the transcendental-philosophical attempt to get it right about Dasein, and embrace hermeneutic narrativism?

The answer, I think, depends on a *metabasis eis allo genos* that arises naturally if the facticity of the philosophizing subject is identified with its historicality. For when history is seen as the ultimate context of the phenomenological project, the empirical concept of historical change can illicitly take on metaphysical significance. Guignon, for instance, argues that though linguistic and cultural difference is not enough to undermine essentialism, the fact that 'our language has changed and will continue to change' makes 'the project of finding a truly "transcendental" horizon' in which knowledge could be established as 'timeless and immutable' seem dubious.[36]

I do not find such an argument compelling. For one thing, what is the disanalogy between linguistic difference and linguistic change that makes the one harmless and the other ruinous? Temporal distance is just difference. On the other hand, if the point is that *things themselves* change in such a way as to rule out any genuine trans-historical necessities, what sort of claim is that? If it is an essential phenomenological insight, it refutes itself and is contradicted by other essential insights; and if it is an empirical generalization (or sceptical induction) it begs the question. We have seen that it is no objection to the phenomenological concept of the *a priori* to hold that beings might change so that there was no longer any such thing as (say) memory. But hermeneutic narrativism seems to make a stronger, metaphysical, claim that places history in the role of the Voluntarist God so as to imply that what we see as necessary just cannot be. Consider, for instance, Heidegger's argument that understanding and emotional attunement are both necessary structures of Dasein, the being who dwells in a world of meaning: meaning presupposes that things *matter*, but nothing could matter to a being that lacked emotional attunement. The historicist, in contrast, with Voluntarist metaphysical faith in the alchemy of time, insists that for all we know Dasein could develop into a creature who inhabits a world of meaning, yet is entirely affectless. Against our entitlement to treat this sort of scepticism as an *intelligible* position, Ross Harrison argues – in my view compellingly – that if we think something as necessary,

> we must assume that it holds from any position that we can think, for other-
> wise it would not actually have been thought as necessary. Hence we cannot

imagine what a position would be like in which this necessity did not hold; and consequently we cannot say that there is possibly such a position. Therefore we cannot permit the sceptical inductive argument against necessities. Whatever history may inflict upon our thinking, it cannot now compel us to think that it is possible that these things are not really necessary.

If *that* were possible, he continues, 'then *everything* would be possible; and that means, nothing can intelligibly be said about the possible'.[37] This conclusion might please the fideist, but it ill suits hermeneutic narrativism.

If these arguments are correct, then there is no legitimate contextualization that can cast doubt *in principle* on the validity of phenomenological essential insight. This is not because we are in possession of some absolute epistemic foundation, but because none is needed. The hermeneutic exploration of our factic situation suffices for insight into necessary connections. This claim can be made more perspicuous by noting a further problem in the hermeneutic narrativist's strategy for undermining transcendental philosophy – namely, a tendency to equivocate on two separate concepts of facticity, or perhaps two aspects of a single concept.

We should distinguish facticity in a loose sense, which indicates the subject's situatedness, from facticity in the strict sense, which designates that aspect of what situates us that is *unavailable* to reflection. These senses are often run together. Hubert Dreyfus, for example, identifies facticity with socially constructed self-interpretations – for instance, 'masculinity' and 'femininity'.[38] Such constructed meanings belong to facticity in the loose sense and are available to phenomenological reflection. We can explore the necessary conditions for fulfilling them in a culture, the way they essentially hang together with other meanings, and their connection to certain practices without which they would be impossible. Dreyfus's further claim that 'Dasein can never get clear *about* its facticity, so it can never get clear *of* its facticity and interpret things in a radically new way',[39] however, does not follow from the loose sense of facticity but only from facticity in the strict sense, namely, the claim that facticity eludes reflection.

A tension between these two senses of facticity can be found in any account (and hermeneutic narrativism is only one) that tries to describe how facticity grounds intentionality. For if the account succeeds in saying something about that facticity, then it does not exceed the reach of phenomenological reflection and so is not the ground sought. In Gadamer's hermeneutics, for example, the facticity of the philosophizing self is identified with 'tradition' or 'language'. Here *one aspect* of the subject's situation is singled out and given quasi-metaphysical status as the ultimate factic context upon which intentionality depends.[40] Other philosophers single out other aspects of the situation to serve this role. Merleau-Ponty identifies facticity with embodiment, which becomes the quasi-metaphysical notion, 'flesh', that spans subject and object in a unity prior to both. Foucault invokes power, while Heidegger once identified facticity with 'nature' or the 'overpowering'.[41]

It is not wrong to say that the factic subject is historical, linguistic, embodied, social, and so on, but it is *irrelevant* if the point is to disclose what it is about

facticity that makes transcendental philosophy impossible. Each of these can be said to be aspects of Dasein's facticity in the loose sense – that which situates the intellectual operations of being-in-the-world – but none of them can be identified with the factic ground of the subject in the strict sense, since they are all available to phenomenological reflection. Otherwise I could say nothing about them. As J.N. Mohanty has argued, though 'language, body, and history' have each been taken 'as an autonomous other' to reflection, they are in fact 'constituted aspects of transcendental subjectivity' in the phenomenological sense.[42] They belong to the 'horizon' of a reflection on the subject for whom things are meaningful, the context of implicit 'references' in which intentionality takes place.[43] Hence the contribution of embodiment, history, language and social practices to the meaning sedimented in our self-interpretations (including our reasoning) can be intuitively unfolded, or made explicit, in reflection. It is true that this contribution cannot be *exhaustively* and *atomistically* specified,[44] but to the extent that it cannot be made explicit, neither can we help ourselves to the idea that 'it' – history, language, the body, social practices – operates 'beyond the reach of reflection' to constitute our being-in-the-world. *Not one* of them can shed any *light at all* on Dasein's facticity in the strict sense. Thus, on the one hand, to acknowledge facticity in the loose sense philosophy need not abandon the project of making theoretical (necessary and universal) claims, while, on the other, to acknowledge facticity in the strict sense philosophy must do more than merely cultivate, with false hermeneutic modesty, the pre-interpreted situation into which it is thrown.

This point is well expressed by Henry Pietersma: against Husserl's sort of foundationalism Heidegger argues that the subject cannot 'stand outside' of the complex of horizons to 'adopt the philosophical standpoint and critically assess' the constitution of such horizons. Dasein is factic just in the sense of being unable to 'view [itself] from an external viewpoint'. Thus 'all the subject can do with respect to' facticity – the dimension of its being that is 'not captured by speaking of the powers he deploys within a certain horizon or world' – is 'acknowledge its radical otherness'.[45] This is crucial. Facticity, considered as the *ground* of the subject, cannot be identified with *any* sort of situatedness: historical, religious, natural, or anything else. Reflection can only acknowledge the radical otherness at its basis – that is, the *fact that* it is incapable of getting to the bottom of what sustains it as a theorizing subject.

Surely this seems even more detrimental to the project of transcendental philosophy than is the erroneous claim that facticity is equivalent to something like embodiment or history. Yet it is not. For if, as I argued, the surreptitiously metaphysical appeal to an absolute notion of historical change is illicit, the mere existence of this or any 'radically other' factic ground cannot render otiose a claim of insight into essential truth. But since hermeneutic narrativism also admits the validity of such essences up to a point – preferring only to think of them as constructive or therapeutic self-interpretations rather than as 'getting it right' about the necessary conditions of meaning – a defender of transcendental philosophy must show that this move cannot preserve the desired distinction

between philosophy and bald aestheticism. With that obstacle removed, I shall conclude by suggesting how acknowledging the factic ground of philosophy amounts to its self-grounding as a cognitive practice.

4 Taking over the ground of philosophy

Though hermeneutic narrativism rejects the cognitive claims of transcendental philosophy, it does not simply equate the project of philosophy with aesthetic self-fashioning. Instead, it proffers a kind of truth-claim of its own, a normative concept governing philosophy as an interpretation that addresses itself discursively *to* factic life. Here the hermeneutic identification of facticity with history – or rather with the 'historicality' of the subject – is essential, since historicality supposedly yields the normative concept appropriate to a philosophy that acknowledges facticity.

Though variants of narrativism are many, the argument goes something like this: the factic subject does not merely have a history but 'is historical'. Selfhood is neither a substance, nor simply the *de facto* unity of the temporal stream of conscious experiences. Rather, it consists in 'historicality' (*Geschichtlichkeit*, the term is Heidegger's) – a project of self-understanding that takes place *narratively*, by way of a temporal structured whole of recollection, engagement and anticipation that constitutes events with beginnings, middles and ends. For a narrativist like David Carr, then, the idea that 'stories are not lived but told' operates with a 'totally false distinction'.[46] The factic subject's relation to the past is a function of its own narrative structure. Dasein exists only by 'taking over' possibilities that have been handed down, specific practices or 'abilities to be' originating in the history of its community. This can be accomplished authentically or inauthentically. On the one hand, inauthentic historicality treats the past as an indifferent sequence of bygone events to which one's own actions simply add; it thereby conceals its own narrative structure. On the other hand, authentic historicality lives the past as 'heritage', as the wellspring from which its own practical identity is drawn. Authentic historicality faces up to its narrativity. As heritage, the bygone is 'retrieved' (*wieder-holt*) – not as an historical curiosity but as a living possibility, my own futurally projected way-to-be that shapes the present.

Given this narrativist concept of self-understanding, something like a notion of existential 'truth' becomes conceivable as a norm specific to the philosophical project. For one can appeal to the norms that constitute a 'good' story, norms that Aristotle identified as *unity* and *coherence*. In a good story beginning, middle and end cohere, belong together in a satisfying and intelligible unity. Adopting these norms, hermeneutic narrativism holds that 'true' philosophical discourse 'discloses' the self: it does not correspond to some prior nature of the self but offers interpretations that overcome one's initial anonymity ('dispersal' in inauthentic, everyday self-understandings) and make possible a unified and coherent – hence liberating and empowering – practical identity.

Hermeneutic narrativism does not presuppose that the self is an ontologically *given* unity, that the stretch 'between birth and death' has a single, coherent

meaning. This would be to think that philosophical discourse aims to correspond to something already established.[47] Authentic historicality is not a matter of revealing the concealed *arche* of a life (Sartre's 'fundamental project'), but a Gadamerian creative reinterpretation. Nevertheless, if hermeneutic narrativism is to distinguish itself from aestheticism with the help of Heidegger's concept of truth, it must specify what the normative content of that concept is, and the likely candidates appear to be unity and coherence. Guignon, for instance, quotes the psychoanalyst Roy Schafer to illustrate the goal of philosophical self-interpretations: they 'free us from obsessions' (for example, Cartesianism) and allow us to construct 'narratives of personal agency' that channel change away from 'randomness or personally ahistorical or discontinuous consequences, such as total and abrupt reversals of values and behavior'.[48]

Now I have no wish to challenge the therapeutic wisdom of constructing such narratives, but I wonder whether, having rejected the 'hidden *arche*' model as well as the cognitivist view of philosophy, such narrativism is really any different from bald aestheticism. It appears to amount to the claim that we ought to *make* ourselves coherent and unified; interpretations that foster ways of life that achieve this will be called 'true', and others will be called 'untrue'. But can any reason for this preference be found in the character of factic subjectivity itself? Nothing seems to require that to acknowledge my facticity (in the sense of historicality) authentically I must construct true (in the sense of coherent) narratives of the self rather than untrue ones. The identification of facticity with historicality does not, then, provide a genuinely normative alternative concept of truth, but only expresses a preference for unity. It would seem that bald aestheticism is the more consistent position.

Behind this hermeneutic impasse is the identification of facticity with historicality, and thus history with the ground of philosophical self-interpretation. This generates what Guignon calls the 'self-reflexive problem': if Heidegger's account of Dasein's facticity undermines traditional theoretical philosophy – for instance, transcendental philosophy's claims to universality and necessity – why doesn't it undermine its *own* claims?[49] If, as I argued, one cannot, without falling into bald aestheticism, answer this question by saying that philosophy simply *makes* no claims but only offers empowering interpretations, and if (as we saw in §2) facticity does not necessarily undermine theoretical claims, might it not be that the self-reflexive problem is a sign that the transcendental project must be rethought, rather than abandoned, in light of the philosophizing subject's facticity? This is just what Heidegger undertook in *Being and Time*.

The first step towards appreciating Heidegger's revision of transcendental philosophy is to break the assumed identification between facticity and historicality. Why has such an identification appeared obvious? The reason lies in an understandable but fatal interpretative slide that equates a moment of Dasein's original temporality with a dimension of historical time. In discussing Dasein's temporal constitution, Heidegger describes facticity as 'already' finding oneself in a world 'beforehand' and argues that 'the primary existential meaning of facticity lies in the character of "having been" [*Gewesenheit*]'.[50] This appears to

mean that the factic subject is the historical subject, and thus that even if facticity eludes rational reflection, it can be recovered as the contingent historical content of my practical identity. A narrativist conception of the philosophical project seems to follow.

However, Thomas Sheehan has pointed out where this reasoning goes wrong. The translation of *Gewesenheit* as 'having been' is misleading, since the term names something that is 'not chronologically prior in any sense'. Nor is the error simply one of translation, since it is easy to miss the point even in German. *Gewesenheit* indicates not a tense but an *aspect*: the '*a priori* perfect' or the perfect tense in an *a priori* 'aspect' – not 'that which *has been* and still *is*, but that which … is always prior to and beyond our determination'.[51] Corresponding to the Aristotelian term often translated as 'essence' (*to ti en enai*), *Gewesenheit* has nothing to do with what I am 'in the process of becoming' or what 'occurred in the past and continues to impact in the present'.[52] It is what I *always* already am.

The destructive consequences of this for the hermeneutic narrativist reading of facticity are brought out nicely by William Blattner in his treatment of Heidegger's non-sequential theory of original temporality. Sharply distinguishing *das Gewesene* from *das Vergangene* (the bygone), Blattner, too, recognizes that *das Gewesene* has nothing to do with the past. Judging that Heidegger's chapter on historicality – whose aim is to fit original temporality into sequential time – is deeply confused, he concludes that if we nevertheless insist on maintaining its identification of 'the "historical past" with the heritage', then, paradoxically, what is meant by the 'historical past' cannot be taken to include bygone events at all.[53] Thus if Sheehan and Blattner are right, facticity, as *das Gewesene*, is anti-narrative and anti-historical, and authentic retrieval of facticity cannot be a matter of constructing a coherent narrative from the self's historicality. As Sheehan notes, there is an essential difference between 'retrieving supervenient past possibilities' (authentically acknowledging *historicality*) and 'retrieving one's essential alreadiness' (authentically acknowledging *facticity*). The latter 'irrupts to clean house' in the comfortable narrativizing of the self.[54]

Precisely in this break with historicism we glimpse the existential roots of transcendental philosophy. To conceive facticity as something that, when authentically acknowledged, resists incorporation into coherent narratives is to identify the condition that makes *criticism* possible and so, in a certain sense, necessary. Though a full account of these matters cannot be ventured here, I will describe how the concept of facticity in *Being and Time* illuminates what it *means* to engage in theoretical (transcendental) philosophy. I will note, first, how it supports a certain notion of philosophical autonomy, and, second, how a concern with reason and truth follows from this.

The autonomy of transcendental philosophy consists, negatively, in its independence from the premises of other sciences, its refusal to take these assumed 'truths' as its ground. Heidegger's introduction of the concept of facticity emphasizes just this stance in regard to first-order knowledge claims. As a 'definite way of being' of Dasein, facticity is not the mere 'factuality' of what is on hand as an entity in the world, and it 'never becomes something we can come

across by beholding it'.[55] Instead, facticity is phenomenologically encountered through our moods, the attunements thanks to which things – be they what they may – matter to us in one way or another. Through moods generally I understand myself as 'thrown' into the world: *that* I am shows itself in some specific way – joy, boredom, complacency – but 'the "whence" and the "whither" remain in darkness'.[56] Because facticity concerns this sort of 'mattering' and not entities *per se* – not 'what Dasein is acquainted with, knows, or believes' when it is in some mood[57] – to acknowledge facticity authentically *cannot* mean to establish a narrative of identity. Heidegger explicitly anticipates and rejects the narrativist interpretation of facticity by alluding to the two great frame-narratives of the time – the Bible and Darwin – to argue that

> even if Dasein is 'assured' in its belief about its 'whither,' or if, in rational enlightenment, it supposes itself to know about its 'whence,' all this counts for nothing as against the phenomenal facts of the case: for the mood brings Dasein before the 'that it is' of its 'there,' which, as such, stares it in the face with the inexorability of an enigma.[58]

The 'enigma' here refers to facticity in the strict sense; it indicates to Dasein that in regard to its self-understanding *none* of its knowledge – not even its historical 'heritage' – can be assumed as the ground of its identity. Dasein is, in this sense, autonomous.

There is more to Dasein's autonomy than this negative sense, however. The 'that it is' of facticity is not a mere fact but a 'having to be [*zu sein*]'. This does not mean that Dasein understands itself to be a necessary being; rather, it grasps itself as 'delivered over to the being which, in existing, it has to be'.[59] I do not merely exist but am 'delivered over' to existing; I must relate myself to it in some way, take a stand with regard to it. A *positive* sense of autonomy is implied in the necessity of taking a stand, as becomes clear in Heidegger's account of that mood to which he attributes special significance for the practice of philosophy, *Angst*.[60]

Anxiety reveals my facticity in such a way that the world no longer makes any claim on me. As Heidegger puts it, 'the world has the character of completely lacking significance' since in anxiety my ability to lose myself in everyday practices, an ability that sustains significance, breaks down.[61] Anxiety is thus methodologically distinctive because it shows the factic subject to be autonomous with respect to the *normativity* that belongs to the everyday practices (including the practice of making truth claims) in which entities show up meaningfully, the *claim* these practices have on me. It is not that such norms – the true, the good, the beautiful; the traditional *topoi* of philosophy – are shown to be null and void. Rather, anxiety reveals my peculiar relation to them, namely, that their claim on me is inseparable from my interest in them. In Heidegger's terms, it is their 'everyday *familiarity*' that 'collapses'.[62] This does not mean that I now have some reason for doubting them; anxiety does not yield moral or epistemological information. Rather, it reveals that their 'mattering' to me, their very claim as norms *for* me, is not absolute. Recalling that facticity, revealed in mood, indicates my

'having to be' my being, what anxiety reveals is not the nihilistic absence of normativity but my *responsibility* for it. Anxiety is thus philosophically crucial because it discloses something like an existential *meta-norm*: authenticity as a kind of responsibility. Authentic retrieval of one's facticity would thus be identical with taking responsibility for normativity, and so for truth. This positive sense of autonomy embraces the meta-norm of responsibility and establishes the sense in which transcendental philosophy is self-grounding. Though Heidegger did not (and perhaps could not, as Tugendhat shows) work out these implications in sufficient detail, the outlines of an existential grounding of normativity are clear enough. With the collapse of the familiar in anxiety, the normativity of the normal is referred back to my choice: either to take responsibility for (for example) truth, or else to flee that responsibility.[63] To say that philosophy is self-grounding, then, is not to say that it has some fixed metaphysical or epistemological foundation, but that it explicitly acknowledges this existential responsibility.

But what sort of responsibility is that? Surely it cannot mean, as some have imagined, that I am the 'heroic' *creator* of norms. The very idea of created norms has something vaguely contradictory about it. Nor can it mean simply that I choose them; for unless more can be said than that, this sort of 'responsibility' is no different from arbitrariness. I suggest that to recognize my responsibility in the existential sense is to understand that the *being* normative of norms, their functioning *as* norms, is grounded in my concern for normativity as such – for instance, for the distinction between true and false and for the practice of giving reasons, grounds, that goes with that distinction. Thus I agree with John Haugeland, who argues that '*commitment* to constitutive standards' is the condition of intentionality, including cognition.[64] But commitment to this or that set of constitutive standards rests on what Heidegger calls an 'ontological' basis, namely, on the existential circumstance that a *concern* with normativity *constitutes* selfhood. This is to see existential responsibility as the 'source of normativity' in something like Christine Korsgaard's sense. Anxiety shows that the everyday norms and standards that make it possible for me to be *someone* in particular (practical identity) depend on the 'fact' of my autonomy – that I am the kind of creature (Dasein) defined by responsibility, one who can make myself accountable, to myself and others, for what I do and say. Doing so means that I turn grounds (in the sense of givens) into *reasons*.[65]

Here the connection between philosophical self-grounding and the commitment to truth becomes explicit. Becoming accountable is what Heidegger calls 'conscience'. In Heidegger's vocabulary, conscience is the 'discourse' that articulates the intelligibility of the self-understanding that belongs to anxiety.[66] An aspect of the authentic retrieval of facticity, conscience articulates the ontological conception of selfhood invoked above: to be a self is to be *concerned* with grounding: 'To be its own thrown ground [*Grund*] is the ability-to-be that is at issue' for authentically factical Dasein.[67] But just this describes philosophy conceived as a transcendental, self-grounding, practice. Philosophy is 'critically' oriented towards norms because it finds its 'absolute beginning' in conscience; it

does not appeal to a privileged foundation but transparently enacts the taking responsibility that constitutes selfhood as such. For Heidegger philosophy is very much a 'way of life' ('ability-to-be'), but it is also a discursive practice that distinguishes itself by its explicit concern for 'grounding'. It thus cannot be divorced from an interest in truth, an interest in getting it right about something.[68]

This, too, is evident in Heidegger's account of conscience. The authentic factic subject is not a rational being from the 'ground' up; rather, as thrown, the anxious self acknowledges as its ground an enigma, over which 'it can *never* become master'. And yet, it 'must take over being the ground in existing'; that is, it must become responsible *for* that existing; it is 'answerable [*überantwortet*]'.[69] To take over being the ground is to become self-grounding – not by taking oneself as an absolute epistemic certainty or ultimate metaphysical principle, but by *becoming* rational, that is, by understanding myself as 'accountable', hence as committed to *giving reasons*. As Heidegger puts it, Dasein does not exist 'through itself' but is 'released *to* itself from the ground in order to be *as* this ground. Dasein is not the ground of its own being to the extent that this ground emerges from its own projection; as being-a-self, however, it is the *being* of the ground.'[70]

Autonomy consists in the fact that Dasein is not just 'grounded' or absorbed in the world's order but is 'released *to* itself'. As so released, it becomes the 'being of the ground', which means that the radically other takes on the *meaning* of *being* a ground only through this release. But what it means to be a ground (*Grund*) is to be a *reason* [*Grund*: *arche*, *aitia*, *ratio*, *causa*]. In the very same movement whereby the factic subject, in conscience, discovers its autonomy (responsibility as having to take over 'being the ground'), it discovers the project of reason-giving, since this is what 'being a ground' *is* when understood normatively – that is, when 'understood' at all, something that is only possible for a self, a being defined by a concern for normativity. This is not enough to ensure that philosophy will attain the sort of truth it seeks, but it is enough to ensure that transcendental philosophy – self-grounding and oriented towards truth – cannot be undermined by the notion of a factic subject. For it is nothing but the factic subject's authentic self-understanding.

Notes

1 Earlier versions of this chapter were delivered at a conference on 'What is Philosophy?' sponsored by the Seattle University Philosophy Club, and at the first annual meeting of the International Society for Phenomenological Studies at Asilomar, California. I am very grateful for the helpful criticism I received at these conferences. Particular thanks are due to Professor Burt C. Hopkins, organizer of the first, and Professors Hubert Dreyfus and Mark Wrathall, organizers of the second.

2 John McDowell, *Mind and World*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1996, pp. 73, 76–7, captures this point in his concept of 'bald naturalism' – the view that the normative space of reasons (or meaning) can be reduced to the space of *law*. Hence there would be nothing that cannot be framed in the language of natural science. McDowell, ibid., pp. xxiii–xxiv, 178, rejects the idea of 'constructive' philosophy, including transcendental philosophy, in favour of a therapeutic model, but in 'Having the World in View: Sellars, Kant, and Intentionality', *Journal of Philosophy*,

1998, vol. 95, p. 446 and throughout, his remarks are more favourable to the transcendental project.

3 See, for instance, Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 73–140.

4 Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998, p. 2.

5 Nehamas, *The Art of Living*, p. 10.

6 Nehamas, *The Art of Living*, p. 179.

7 Nehamas, *The Art of Living*, p. 8.

8 Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1995, pp. 206–13, esp. p. 208, already raised this objection against Foucault's appropriation of Hellenism. See also Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994, who admits that Hellenistic philosophical 'experts' became such, at least partly, by their command of a theory. For criticism of Nussbaum's tendency to minimize the importance of theoretical truth, see Brad Inwood, 'Truth in Moral Medicine', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 1999, vol. 59, pp. 805–10.

9 Aristotle judged the former too high for us since we cannot remain in contemplation all the time, but he also held that the latter would be badly pursued in a context where contemplation was altogether lacking. 'Practical wisdom' cannot stand alone. At the other end of the tradition, Husserl makes the same point in his plea for philosophy as rigorous science: the practical affairs of life 'cannot wait' and we 'have to take a position' in the absence of definitive scientific justification; yet it would be disastrous to believe that philosophy should simply construct worldviews or become an aesthetics of existence devoted to 'wisdom' and 'profundity'. For this would be to sacrifice altogether the *orientation* of practice towards rational accountability, the basis of 'the ethical ideal called for by the development of humanity'. Edmund Husserl, 'Philosophy as a Rigorous Science', in Quentin Lauer (ed.), *Edmund Husserl: Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, New York, Harper & Row, 1964, pp. 141, 138. In §4 below we shall consider the relation between facticity and this orientation towards rational accountability.

10 Charles Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1983, pp. 208–9.

11 Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, p. 250. In later essays Guignon has modified his view in the direction of a kind of narrative realism according to which narratives are true in the ordinary sense of 'capturing and remaining faithful to the integrity of the individual's life story'. See Charles Guignon, 'Narrative Explanation in Psychotherapy', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 1998, vol. 41, p. 571. For my doubts about narrative realism, see 'Mixed Messages: The Heterogeneity of Historical Discourse', *History and Theory*, 1998, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 220–44.

12 For a transcendental reading of Heidegger's notion of truth see J.E. Malpas, *Donald Davidson and the Mirror of Meaning*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, esp. chapters 6 and 7; and Malpas, 'The Transcendental Circle', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 1997, vol. 75, esp. pp. 11–20.

13 Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, p. 232.

14 From a letter of August 19, 1921, published in *Zur philosophischen Aktualität Heideggers*, Dietrich Papenfuss and Otto Pöggeler (eds), vol. 2, *Im Gespräch der Zeit*, Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1990, p. 29. Extensively discussed in Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's* Being and Time, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, pp. 7, 121–68.

15 Theodore Kisiel, 'Das Entstehen des Begriffsfeldes "Faktizität" im Frühwerk Heideggers', *Dilthey-Jahrbuch*, 1986–7, vol. 4, p. 103.

16 See the texts from 1919 in Martin Heidegger, *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie*, *Gesamtausgabe* vols 56–7, Bernd Heimbüchel (ed.), Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1987, p. 13 and throughout.; and the 1921–2 lecture course, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu*

Aristoteles, *Gesamtausgabe* vol. 61, Walter Bröcker and Käte Bröcker-Oltmanns (eds), Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1985, pp. 58, 79ff. There are important connections between Heidegger's understanding of categories and Kierkegaard's notion of indirect discourse, but Heidegger employs his categories not, as did Kierkegaard, to motivate people beyond philosophy to faith, but rather to establish what he calls evidence-conditions for philosophical cognition. For further discussion see Steven Crowell, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning: Paths Toward Transcendental Phenomenology*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 2001, ch. 8: 'Philosophy as a Vocation: Heidegger and University Reform in the Early Interwar Years', pp. 152–66. As Kisiel, 'Das Entstehen des Begriffsfeldes "Faktizität"', pp. 113, 119, has noted, the common opinion that 'the terminological source, and thus the leading meaning of facticity, is religious-theological, is an exaggeration' since the development of the problem in Heidegger is 'determined by conditions of primal science and phenomenology'. The term itself entered philosophy via the Fichte-inspired neo-Kantianism of the Southwest German School.

17 Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, pp. 270, 17, 59.

18 Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'Heideggers "theologische" Jugendschriften', *Dilthey-Jahrbuch*, 1989, vol. 6, p. 231. A similar emphasis on *sophia* is found in Heidegger's 1924–5 lecture course *Platon: Sophistes*, *Gesamtausgabe* vol. 19, Ingeborg Schüßler (ed.), Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1992, pp. 166, 169ff.

19 Martin Heidegger, 'Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation)', *Dilthey-Jahrbuch*, 1989, vol. 6, pp. 258, 239.

20 Heidegger, 'Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation)', pp. 258, 239.

21 Martin Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1984, p. 188; *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik*, *Gesamtausgabe* vol. 26, Klaus Held (ed.), Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1978, p. 242.

22 This conception of 'subjectivity' has recently been revived by Julian Roberts, *The Logic of Reflection*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992.

23 See Manfred Brelage, *Studien zur Transzendentalphilosophie*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1965, pp. 94–101.

24 Of course, from the neo-Kantian perspective this 'intuitionism' vitiated the phenomenological project from the beginning. See the classic discussion of these issues in Hans Wagner, *Philosophie und Reflexion*, München, Ernst Reinhardt Verlag, 1959.

25 Heidegger, 'Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation)', p. 161.

26 See Crowell, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning*, ch. 7: 'Question, Reflection, and Philosophical Method in Heidegger's Early Freiburg Lectures', pp. 129–51.

27 See Brelage, *Studien zur Transzendentalphilosophie*, p. 213: 'Heidegger's critique of the idea of a pure "ego" or "consciousness in general" nevertheless fully acknowledges a justified grain of truth in this subject-theory' since he sides with transcendental phenomenology in his 'conviction that being [that is, meaning] cannot be clarified through beings'.

28 This is the central insight of Carl-Friedrich Gethmann's *Verstehen und Auslegung: Das Methodenproblem in der Philosophie Martin Heideggers*, Bonn, Bouvier Verlag, 1974.

29 Husserl's phrase is found in *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Zweiter Teil: Theorie der phänomenologischen Reduktion*, R. Boehm (ed.), *Husserliana*, vol. VIII, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1965, p. 506. See the discussion in Ludwig Landgrebe, 'Meditation über Husserls Wort "die Geschichte ist das große Faktum des absoluten Seins"', in *Faktizität und Individuation*, Hamburg, Meiner, 1982, pp. 38–57.

30 Ernst Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1970, p. 165; emphasis added.

31 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, New York, Crossroad, 1991, p. 306.

32 See Laurence Bonjour, *In Defense of Pure Reason*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 142–7, for an argument against the epistemological demand for a 'meta-justification' of the possibility of rational insight.

33 Charles Taylor, 'The Validity of Transcendental Arguments', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1978, vol. 79, pp. 163, 160, 165.

34 Landgrebe, 'Meditation über Husserls Wort "die Geschichte ist das große Faktum des absoluten Seins" ', p. 59.

35 Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, p. 212.

36 Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, p. 213.

37 Ross Harrison, 'Zeitlose Notwendigkeit des Denkens', in Eva Schaper and Wilhelm Vossenkuhl (eds), *Bedingungen der Möglichkeit*, Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 1984, p. 55.

38 Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's* Being and Time, *Division I*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1991, p. 24.

39 Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, p. 25.

40 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 342: 'we are concerned to conceive a reality that limits and exceeds the omnipotence of reflection'.

41 Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, pp. 156–8, 11; *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik*, pp. 198–202, 13. The fact that candidates for this quasi-metaphysical ground are so numerous already leads one to suspect that something like the Kantian antinomy of reason is at work here: once one goes beyond phenomenological evidence to specify what supposedly grounds *it*, one loses any criterion for deciding between rival candidates.

42 J.N. Mohanty, 'The Destiny of Transcendental Philosophy', in *The Possibility of Transcendental Philosophy*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1985, p. 219 and throughout.

43 Burt Hopkins, *Intentionality in Husserl and Heidegger*, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1993, esp. chapters 9 and 10.

44 This is the valid point that Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, pp. 46–59, 115–27, makes against a certain intellectualism in Husserl and Searle, and the cognitivism of the AI project.

45 Henry Pietersma, 'Husserl and Heidegger', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 1979, vol. 40, p. 203.

46 David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 61. The phrase 'stories are not lived but told' is from Louis O. Mink's article 'Narrative Form as Cognitive Instrument', in R.H. Carney and H. Kozicki (eds), *The Writing of History*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1978.

47 See, for instance, Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, p. 235.

48 Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, p. 250. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 293–4, invokes the 'fore-conception of completeness' – that 'only what constitutes a unity of meaning can be understood'. And Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, p. 98, while criticizing MacIntyre's facile attribution of a single story to the self, still argues that our lives '*should* have and may fail to have' a 'kind of coherence'. Narrativism is driven to supply its own norms for the kind of truth that belongs to philosophical interpretations since Heidegger failed to do so. As Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*, pp. 359, 361, argues, Heidegger's attempt to extend the concept of truth beyond propositions to 'understanding' demands 'first that the specific difference between truth and untruth be worked out' – that is, that the sort of normativity at issue be specified. But this Heidegger could not do, since he simply *identified* Dasein's 'disclosedness' – authentic as well as inauthentic – with 'truth' and thus could not distinguish between the two by appeal to the normative concept of truth.

49 Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, p. 209. See also p. 215, where he opts explicitly for historicism: 'fundamental ontology is an historical product', by which he means that it can consistently make no trans-historical claims.

50 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York, Harper & Row, 1962, H328. The published translation has occasionally been altered without further notice.

51 Thomas Sheehan, 'Heidegger's New Aspect: On *In-Sein*, *Zeitlichkeit*, and *The Genesis of* "Being and Time"', *Research in Phenomenology*, 1995, vol. XXV, pp. 219, 217.

52 Sheehan, 'Heidegger's New Aspect: On *In-Sein*, *Zeitlichkeit*, and *The Genesis of* "Being and Time"', p. 218.

53 William Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 288. This view finds support in Gethmann, *Verstehen und Auslegung: Das Methodenproblem in der Philosophie Martin Heideggers*, p. 271, who argues that from a methodological perspective the chapter on *Geschichtlichkeit* in *Being and Time* is not a 'more radical approach' to the analysis of temporality, as Heidegger suggests, but an 'anthropological excursus motivated by the concrete situation of philosophy in the first decades of this century'.

54 Sheehan, 'Heidegger's New Aspect: On *In-Sein*, *Zeitlichkeit*, and *The Genesis of* "Being and Time"', pp. 220, 216, 219.

55 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H56, H135.

56 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H134.

57 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H136.

58 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H136.

59 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H134.

60 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H182.

61 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H186.

62 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H189.

63 Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*, pp. 319ff.

64 John Haugeland, *Having Thought*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1998, pp. 298–9 and throughout.

65 Christine Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 122ff.

66 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H276.

67 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H377.

68 In abandoning the term 'philosophy' for 'thinking', the later Heidegger perhaps acknowledges this point.

69 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H284.

70 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H285.

6 Heidegger in America or how transcendental philosophy becomes pragmatic

Mark Okrent

The topic of this chapter is simple. I have long held that the early Heidegger was a specific kind of philosophical animal, a transcendental pragmatist. But there seem to be powerful reasons to think that it is simply incoherent to be both a pragmatist and a transcendental philosopher. If this conjunction of positions is indeed incoherent, and if we read Heidegger charitably, as we must, then there are also good reasons to think that Heidegger could not have been a transcendental pragmatist. In this chapter I first briefly lay out my reasons for thinking that Heidegger was both a transcendental philosopher and a pragmatist, and then show how it is indeed possible to coherently be both.

In this context, the *locus classicus* for the term 'transcendental' is, of course, Kant. And, for once, Kant is reasonably clear concerning what he means by this term. In a passage from the Introduction which appears in both editions of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant defines 'transcendental knowledge' as follows: 'I call all cognition *transcendental* that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*.'[1] And in the Discipline of Pure Reason Kant specifies that a certain class of propositions counts as 'transcendental': 'Synthetic propositions that pertain to things in general, the intuition of which cannot be given *a priori*, are transcendental … They contain merely the rule in accordance with which a certain synthetic unity of that which cannot be intuitively represented *a priori* (of perceptions) should be sought empirically.'[2]

For Kant, transcendental knowledge is distinguished by its distinctive subject matter, by that with which it is 'occupied'. Instead of being concerned, as most of our knowledge is, with ordinary objects, the tables, quarks, beasts of the field, and human beings, of our ordinary acquaintance, transcendental knowledge is knowledge about our *a priori* knowledge of these ordinary objects. As the bulk of the *Critique* makes clear, there are two sides to this transcendental 'occupation' with *a priori* knowledge. On the one hand, Kant raises the transcendental question regarding our *a priori* knowledge of ordinary objects concerning just how it is possible for us to have such knowledge. So any answer to this question, any claim concerning how it is possible to have *a priori* knowledge of objects, if known to be true, would count as transcendental knowledge. On the other hand, as the second quote makes clear, Kant also speaks of our *a priori* knowledge of

ordinary objects as itself transcendental, if that knowledge is derived from and grounded in transcendental knowledge in the first sense, that is, if it is grounded in knowledge of how it is possible to have *a priori* knowledge of objects. For Kant, when we come to have transcendental knowledge in the sense of coming to know how it is possible for us to have *a priori* knowledge of objects, we also come to have transcendental knowledge in a second sense, *a priori* knowledge of what pertains to the ordinary objects of knowledge themselves as such.

So, in the canonical sense of the expression as it is used in Kant, there are two kinds of transcendental knowledge. When we know that some propositions concerning how it is possible for us to have synthetic *a priori* knowledge of ordinary entities are true, that knowledge is transcendental. For example, when in the Transcendental Aesthetic Kant answers the question 'how can an outer intuition inhabit the mind that precedes the objects themselves, and in which the concept of the latter can be determined *a priori*?' with the response '… not otherwise than insofar as it has its seat merely in the subject, as its formal constitution for being affected by objects and thereby acquiring immediate representation, i.e. intuition, of them …',[3] that response, if known to be true, would constitute an example of transcendental knowledge in the first sense. Similarly, when we know *a priori* the truth of some proposition concerning ordinary objects, and this knowledge is supported by transcendental knowledge in the first sense, that knowledge is also transcendental. The Second Analogy, the principle that 'All alterations take place in accordance with the law of the connection of cause and effect'[4], is an example of transcendental knowledge in this second sense.

For Kant, *a priori* knowledge about objects is synthetic, rather than analytic, so transcendental knowledge in the first sense is knowledge concerning how it is possible to have synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects. Kant uses 'possible' here in a distinctive way. One might think that there could be several sets of conditions which if met would make synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects possible. But as the remainder of the first *Critique* makes abundantly clear, Kant thinks that there is a unique set of such enabling conditions. Given this fact, the unique set of conditions which render it possible for us to have synthetic *a priori* knowledge are seen by Kant as *necessary* conditions on this kind of knowledge. And, since for Kant these unique enabling conditions of synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects also ground and justify that knowledge of objects, these same conditions also specify what it is possible to know *a priori* concerning the necessary features of these ordinary objects. This is the highest principle of all synthetic judgements: 'The conditions of the possibility of experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and on this account have objective validity in a synthetic judgement *a priori*.'[5]

In Kant and his transcendental successors, knowledge of how synthetic *a priori* knowledge is possible supports *a priori* knowledge of objects themselves in a distinctive way. For Kant, synthetic *a priori* knowledge of a kind of object is uniquely made possible by the fact that any intention which is directed towards that sort of object must embody certain necessary features without which those intentions would not intend that sort of object. For example, when one knows

how it is possible to know the truth of the Second Analogy *a priori*, *what* one knows is that to intend one event as the cause of another is to intend the two events as related according to a rule of temporal order, and to know that unless one intends something as having some such predecessor, one is not intending that entity as an *event*, that is, an alteration in an object, at all. So even though the *concept* of an event does not imply that all events have a cause, what it is to intend an event as an event implies that intending anything as an event involves intending it as having some cause or other. Our synthetic *a priori* knowledge that every event has a cause is possible only because what it is to intend something as an event requires that we intend it as having some cause, and this fact justifies the assertion that every event we can intend as such has a cause. For Kant and his transcendental successors, synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects that is supported and elucidated in this fashion by our knowledge of how synthetic *a priori* knowledge is possible also counts as transcendental.

Now, given the meaning of the expression 'transcendental knowledge', the meaning of the expression 'transcendental philosopher' also becomes apparent. Any philosopher who attempts to understand how it is possible to have *a priori* knowledge, or attempts to determine what we know *a priori* by first attempting to determine how it is possible for us to have such knowledge, counts as a transcendental philosopher. And, let me hasten to add, the early Heidegger so counts.

My claim that the early Heidegger counts as a transcendental philosopher according to the Kantian conception might at first seem somewhat surprising. For, after all, as Kant defines it, 'transcendental' has to do primarily with knowledge, and it is well known that the early Heidegger is not primarily interested in epistemology. Rather, his primary interest has to do with *being*, or what 'being' means. But if for Heidegger philosophy in general, and his own philosophy in particular, concerns being, and transcendental philosophy primarily concerns the conditions under which we can know *a priori*, then in what sense can Heidegger be a transcendental philosopher? The answer to this question goes by way of Heidegger's distinctive understanding of the '*a priori*'.

In Kant, of course, the adjective '*a priori*' primarily qualifies 'knowledge'. The early Heidegger suggests that Kant's focus on *a priori* knowledge blinded him to a deeper sense of 'the' *a priori*. This deeper *a priori* is conceived by Heidegger to have two sides. First, for Heidegger there is a sense in which being is prior to, '*a priori*' in relation to, everything that is: 'In early antiquity it was already seen that being and its attributes in a certain way underlie beings and precede them and so are a proteron, an earlier. The term denoting this character by which being precedes beings is the expression a priori, *apriority*, being earlier or prior. As a priori, being is earlier than beings.'[6] This priority of being in relation to beings is associated with a second priority, the priority of *intentions* directed towards being in relation to intentions directed towards beings. For the early Heidegger, unless it were possible to intend what it means for an entity to be, it would be impossible to intend any entities themselves, so the intention directed towards being itself is *a priori* in relation to intentions directed towards things that are. *A priori* knowledge in Kant's sense, which is necessary for the possibility of any specific

knowledge of any particular entity, is only a special case of the more general principle that it is possible to *intend* entities as entities that are only if it is already possible to intend what it is for them to be. 'The positive positing of any being includes within itself an a priori knowledge and a priori understanding of the being's being, although the positive experience of such a being knows nothing of this understanding and is incapable of bringing what is understood by it into the form of a concept.'[7]

It is thus obvious that the early Heidegger accepts his own version of the highest principle of synthetic judgement. For Heidegger, there are conditions which must be met by any intention that intends something as something that is. These conditions at once amount to an understanding by the intender of what it is for any entity to be and conditions which determine *a priori*, or prior to any specific experience of the entity, some of the character of any particular entity that can be intended as something that is. So for early Heidegger the philosopher's articulation of our *a priori* understanding of being, or what it is for an entity to be, allows us to see how such an understanding underlies and grounds the character of any intentions directed towards things that are.

And, finally, for Heidegger, this prior, *a priori* being, and intending of being, are only accessible to philosophy as the science of being, a science which itself makes use of an *a priori* mode of cognition, that is, a kind of intending that is independent of all intentions directed towards things that are. Heidegger's name for this *a priori* method of the science of being is 'phenomenology', and phenomenology itself is the description of the *a priori* structures of intentionality that allow for the possibility of intending being and thereby allow for the possibility of intending entities that are. 'The a priori character of being and of all the structures of being accordingly calls for a specific kind of approach and way of apprehending being – *a priori cognition*. The basic components of a priori cognition constitute what we call *phenomenology*. Phenomenology is the name for the method of ontology, that is, of scientific philosophy.'[8] 'Phenomenology is the analytic description of intentionality in its a priori.'[9] I will return to this Heideggerian version of transcendental method at the end of this chapter.

While Heidegger's understanding of the *a priori* is thus rooted in the Kantian conception, he understands himself as deviating from the Kantian usage in three related respects. First, while Kant's suggestion that we have *a priori* knowledge of objects 'in general' certainly implies that our cognition intends *a priori* what it is for such entities to be, Heidegger makes this implication explicit. Second, Heidegger generalizes a qualification that Kant applies to knowledge to apply to all intentions. Heidegger claims that it is a necessary condition on *intending* any particular entity that one be capable of intending the being of that entity, and intending what it is for that entity to be is in that sense *a priori* in relation to intending that entity. Third, under the influence of Husserl, Heidegger suggests that the appropriate way of investigating 'intentionality in its a priori' is descriptive and intuitive rather than inferential and discursive. So Heidegger understands himself to be offering transcendental-phenomenological descriptions rather than transcendental arguments.

Now whatever one thinks of these modifications of Kant, it should be clear that they in no way imply that Heidegger is any other than a transcendental philosopher in the straightforward Kantian sense. To be a transcendental philosopher in that sense is to attempt to come to have explicit knowledge about what can be known *a priori* about entities themselves by first determining how it is possible to *know* entities *a priori*. Heidegger's project is just a slight modification and development of this attempt. That Heideggerian project involves the attempt to determine what it is for any entity to be by first determining how it is possible, prior to any experience of objects, to intend or understand any entity as something that is. That is, Heidegger turns Aristotle's science of being into a transcendental science of being by raising the question that Kant designates the transcendental question *par excellence*, which Heidegger thinks is prior to the question that Aristotle raises in Book Zeta of the *Metaphysics*: 'If philosophy is the science of being, then the first, and last and basic problem of philosophy must be, What does being signify? Whence can something like being in general be understood? How is understanding of being at all possible?'[10] To answer the first question, 'What does being signify?', by first asking and answering the last question, 'How is understanding of being at all possible?', is to be a transcendental philosopher. So Heidegger is a transcendental philosopher.

But is Heidegger also a pragmatist? The answer to this question of course turns on what is meant by the term 'pragmatism'. Pragmatism is a recognizable philosophical movement which, in a general way, is characterized by a cluster of features that together serve to pick out a group of positions which share a family resemblance in virtue of which they deserve to be called pragmatic. I would include four such features in any characterization of pragmatism. These features include characteristic views regarding meaning, regarding truth, regarding belief and knowledge, and regarding the priority of acting over thinking in any attempt to specify what is distinctive about human being. As opposed to the other three features which are characteristic of pragmatic positions, this last feature has not as yet been articulated in a simple slogan, but of these it seems to me that the pragmatic tendency to understand thinking in terms of acting is the most characteristic pragmatic view and the one that best accounts for the others. I will briefly discuss each of these tendencies of the pragmatic movement, ending with the last, and from my perspective, most important.

First, in general pragmatists tend to be verificationists regarding meaning. Indeed, Peirce's claim that 'the meaning of a sentence turns on what could count as evidence for its truth' could serve both as definitory of verificationism and as partially criterial for pragmatic theories of meaning. This slogan is only partially criterial for pragmatic theories of meaning, however, because pragmatists associate verificationism with a distinctive operationalism concerning what counts as evidence. As opposed to the logical empiricists who were active at the same time as the second generation of pragmatists, pragmatists tended to think of evidence as the result of discrete overt activities rather than as embodied in simple sensation. That is, for pragmatists the meaning of a sentence turns on what would count as evidence for its truth, and in general what would count as evidence for

the truth of some sentence is that some active intervention has some specific result. So, the meaning of a sentence is specified by a set of subjunctive conditionals, the antecedents of which are some specific overt operation or class of operations, and the consequents of which are some specified results. For example, to say that 'a is harder than b' is to say that were 'a' and 'b' dragged along each other, the result would be that 'b', and not 'a', would be scratched. Now, of course, as stated this view of meaning is far too crude to ever count as an acceptable theory, but all later, more sophisticated, pragmatist views of meaning can be seen as developments of this core intuition.

Second, pragmatists tend to accept a theory of what it is for a sentence to be true that meshes nicely with the pragmatist view of meaning. If the meaning of a sentence turns solely on what would count as evidence for its truth, then, reciprocally, for a sentence to be true is for a speaker, given the meaning of the sentence, to be warranted by the evidence to assert it. Tying the meaning of a sentence to evidence implicitly ties that meaning to the conditions under which some speaker would be warranted in asserting that sentence, because the word 'evidence' is just a shorthand way of referring to the conditions which would justify the assertion of or belief in some sentence. But since what one asserts when one asserts some sentence, or what one believes when one believes it, is that the sentence is true, the truth of the sentence comes to be associated with warranted assertibility. To say that a sentence is true, then, is to say that the evidence that is specified by the meaning of the sentence is in principle available, so a speaker would be warranted in asserting that sentence. That is, a sentence is true just in case were the operation specified in the antecedent of the conditional which gives the meaning of that proposition carried out, the result specified in the consequent of that conditional would actually occur. If when 'a' and 'b' are dragged along one another, 'a' scratches 'b' rather than the reverse, then one is warranted in asserting that 'a' is harder than 'b', and the sentence is true. Once again, this view of truth is, of course, unacceptable as stated. Nevertheless, this view can be seen to lie at the basis of all later pragmatist accounts of truth.

The pragmatist association of truth and warranted assertibility, combined with the pragmatist insistence that evidence, or warrants for assertions, primarily involve the results of operations, yield the characteristic pragmatic positions regarding belief and knowledge. Beliefs are states of agents. Given a pragmatic theory of meaning, what one says when one says that Jane believes that 'a' is harder than 'b' must be specified in terms of the evidence that warrants asserting that Jane believes that it is true that 'a' is harder than 'b'. When one believes that some sentence is true, what one believes is that one is warranted in asserting that sentence, and since what the assertion of the sentence says is specified by a subjunctive conditional, what one believes when one believes that one is warranted in asserting it is that were one to perform the operation specified by that conditional, one would obtain the result specified by that same conditional. So there are two sorts of evidence that warrant one in saying that Jane believes that 'a is harder than b'. Jane can simply assert the sentence, which if she is not lying gives us evidence that she believes she is warranted in asserting it, or alternatively and

more basically she can *act* on the belief. That is, if when Jane wants to scratch 'b' she runs 'a' along it, then we have evidence that Jane believes that 'a' is harder than 'b'. And since for a pragmatist what it is for it to be true that Jane believes that 'a' is harder than 'b' is fixed by the evidence that supports the claim that she does so believe, then for Jane to hold that belief is for her to be in a state such that she would act on it were she attempting to scratch 'b'. For a pragmatist, beliefs are *essentially* action guiding. But if this is what belief is, then knowledge, as justified true belief, is just as surely tied to action. Jane knows that her belief is true only if the action guided by her belief is really warranted by the evidence, and it is really warranted by the evidence only if action guided by the belief would be successful. That is, truth is what is good in the way of belief, and knowledge is the ability to act so as to accomplish what one is out to accomplish. Jane knows that 'a' is harder than 'b' when she knows how to use 'a' to scratch 'b'. Knowing how is the basis for knowing that.[11]

This last characteristically pragmatic doctrine, that knowing that something is the case is founded on knowing how to do something, is thus directly tied to the pragmatist insistence that belief is essentially action guiding, which in turn is associated with the pragmatist position that the meaning of a sentence is rooted in a specification of a set of possible results of a set of concrete overt operations. But this nest of pragmatic doctrines regarding the semantic properties of meaning, truth, knowledge and belief is itself based upon a still more fundamental pragmatist belief. In each instance, pragmatism takes a semantic property which has been traditionally associated with the private thought of an individual conscious agent and reinterprets it in terms of overt action. What it is for an agent to believe 'p' is reinterpreted in terms of that agent acting in accordance with 'p'; what it is for a sentence to have a meaning is reinterpreted in terms of a set of overt operations and their potential results; what it is for an agent to know that some sentence is true is reinterpreted as that agent knowing how to accomplish some end; and, perhaps most distinctively, what it is for a sentence to be true is reinterpreted in terms of an agent being warranted in engaging in a type of overt *action*, the action of asserting that sentence.

Now all of these semantic characteristics, an agent believing 'p', or knowing 'p', or the meaning of sentence 's', or the truth of sentence 's', involve an *intentional* dimension, and in all of these cases the pragmatists root that intentional dimension in the concrete overt activity of real agents who act so as to achieve ends. So for a pragmatist, the intentionality of thought must be understood in terms of the goal-directed activity of agents, as what it is for an agent or entity to have or be in one of those intentional states, the *being* of those intentional states, can only be understood in terms of the overt activity of agents who act so as to achieve concrete ends. To coin a slogan, the fundamental pragmatist position from which all the other characteristic pragmatic doctrines flow, is that the intentionality of thought is 'founded on' the teleology of action.

More than a decade ago I argued at length in a book that the early Heidegger's characteristic doctrines regarding meaning, truth, knowledge, and what it is for an agent to have intentional states are all pragmatic in the sense

that they satisfy the first three criteria outlined above for counting as pragmatist.[12] I have nothing to add to or subtract from those arguments and I do not intend to waste your time by repeating them here. Anyone interested in those arguments can look at the first half of my book. What I will do here is to briefly point to some evidence that supports my view that the early Heidegger also accepts what I have just claimed is the core pragmatist position, that the intentionality of thought is founded on the teleology of action.

It is perhaps the early Heidegger's most characteristic doctrine that, as he puts it in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Dasein's being-in-the-world is the '*foundation of intentionality*'. For Heidegger, there is no intentionality without being-in-the-world, being-in-the-world is a necessary condition on intentionality. Dasein is 'in' the world in the sense of inhabiting it, or dwelling in it. But what is it for Dasein to be-in the world in that sense? Well, here are some possible 'modes' of 'being-in': 'working on something with something, producing something, cultivating and caring for something, putting something to use, employing something for something'.[13] All of these modes of being-in are kinds of overt, goal-directed activity. But 'a' is a mode or modification of 'b' only if an entity 'S' having or being 'a' implies that that entity also has or is 'b'; e.g. for Descartes, believing is a mode of thinking. So for Heidegger to say as he does that all of these types of overt goal-directed practical activity are modes of being-in is to say that any entity that engages in these activities *thereby and in virtue of that fact* also counts as being-in-the-world. Now Heidegger finds that all of these overt activities imply that the agent cares about things and takes them into her care, and it is in virtue of this fact that these count as modes of being-in. But this care is in each of these cases essentially embodied in activity which works towards the realization of some *telos*. That is, it is the teleology of action that is essential to care and thus to being-in. But being-in is, for early Heidegger, the foundation for intentionality, and being-in essentially involves the teleology of action, so the teleology of action is a necessary condition on intentionality. So the early Heidegger is a pragmatist. But this is a *transcendental* claim, in the very straightforward sense that it is a claim regarding how intentionality as such and in general, including the *a priori* intention directed towards being, is possible. So the early Heidegger is a pragmatist, and a transcendental one to boot. QED.

Unfortunately for me, however, things are not quite so simple and straightforward. There are powerful reasons that one might think that pragmatism is inconsistent with transcendental philosophy, so that anyone who was both, including Heidegger, could only be both if he were inconsistent. Since Heidegger was surely not inconsistent, it would follow from this conclusion that he could not have been both a pragmatist and a transcendental philosopher.

But what reason is there to believe that pragmatism *is* inconsistent with transcendental philosophy? Here is one that derives from the pragmatic notions of meaning and knowledge. Transcendental knowledge is knowledge that concerns how it is possible to know objects in the world *a priori*, or which, on the basis of knowing how it is possible to know objects in the world *a priori*, actually asserts some such *a priori* knowledge. But it is part of the core of pragmatism that the

meaning of any sentence is fixed by a set of subjunctive conditionals concerning what would occur were some overt operation actually carried out. So if Jane believes that 'a' is harder than 'b', then she believes that if 'a' and 'b' were dragged along one another, 'b' would be scratched. And it is further part of that pragmatic core that for some agent to know that some such sentence is true involves that agent knowing how to be successful at action that is guided by the belief that that sentence is true. For example, Jane's knowledge that 'a' is harder than 'b' involves Jane knowing how to use 'a' to scratch 'b' should the occasion arise. But, it can be fairly argued, that some operation will have some result is a paradigm case of an *a posteriori* sentence: one can only know that some operation will have some result by carrying out the actual experiment. Hence the pragmatic emphasis on the role of experiment and trial and error. But if the meaning of *all* sentences is fixed by some such conditional, then there are no sentences that can be known to be true *a priori*. And if there is no knowledge *a priori*, there can be no transcendental knowledge. So it follows that pragmatism and transcendentalism are inconsistent, and Heidegger could not have been both unless he were also inconsistent. But surely he was not, so it must be Okrent who is confused.

I must admit that at first blush this argument to the conclusion that transcendental philosophy is inconsistent with pragmatism seems pretty tight. There is no question that pragmatists are, in general, opposed to most varieties of essentialism and predisposed to doubt any claims to *a priori* knowledge, and that these tendencies are rooted in the core belief that action has priority over thought. Nevertheless, there are certain confusions hidden in the above line of argument. To uncover those confusions let us look at some sentence that Kant suggests is properly seen as a case of transcendental knowledge of the second sort, that is, a case of *a priori* knowledge concerning objects that is justified by knowledge concerning how synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects is possible. My example will, once again, be the Second Analogy, 'All alterations take place in conformity with the law of the connection of cause and effect'.

Intuitively, a proposition counts as synthetic *a priori* if, and only if, it says something about objects and one is justified in believing that the proposition is true, even though one lacks the experiential evidence of those objects which would seem to be required for warranting such a belief. In order for the proposition to be synthetic, it must say something about objects. To say that it is known *a priori* requires that the proposition can be known to be true independently of experience of the objects it is about. Kant fleshes out this intuitive sense of what is involved in a synthetic *a priori* proposition by proposing two criteria we can use to determine that a synthetic sentence is knowable only *a priori*. These criteria are universality and necessity.

For Kant, existential generalizations and singular synthetic propositions can only be known to be true in light of our experiences of the objects they are about. But, following Hume, Kant holds that universal propositions about objects can never be warranted in that way. There is no finite set of experiences which could ever justify a universal judgement. So if some such proposition is nevertheless justified, it must be so justified by something other than the appeal

to experience. But, Kant claims, there are some universal propositions about objects which *are* justified. That they are is shown by the fact that some such propositions are 'necessary'.

What can Kant mean when he says that some universal synthetic judgements, the ones that are synthetic *a priori*, are necessary? He cannot mean that they are logically necessary, as if they were they would be analytic and not synthetic and it would not be possible to distinguish Kant's transcendentalism from Leibniz's rationalism. Nor can he mean that it is simply impossible for us to believe that such a sentence is false. If that was all that were involved in Kant's sense of necessity, it would not be possible to distinguish his transcendentalism from Hume's naturalism. Rather, when Kant says these claims are 'necessary' he means something like that they are practically or *normatively* necessary, that the action of coming to believe them is justified or that we *ought* to believe that they are true. To borrow a bit of terminology from Christine Korsgaard, we can say that synthetic *a priori* propositions are *rationally* necessary in the sense that if we are rational then we ought to believe that they are true.[14] But this amounts to the suggestion that there are *reasons* we ought to believe in the truth of synthetic *a priori* judgements, that we are justified in believing them true, even though, and in the face of the fact that, we *lack* and must lack the evidence we would ordinarily need to justify having that belief, given the meaning of the sentence we believe to be true. No wonder Kant thinks that there is a special problem concerning how we could ever have synthetic *a priori* knowledge.

In the example of the Second Analogy we can see how this is all supposed to work. On its face, the Analogy is a universal synthetic proposition. It asserts that something is true of every possible instance of a certain class of particulars, namely alterations in persisting objects. As such, it could never be justified by appeal to experience of actual alterations. Nevertheless, Kant claims that this proposition is *necessary*, that is, that we ought to accept it as true of every event even though we have no reason to think it true of some event, and even if we have reason to believe that it is *not* true of that event. That is, Kant holds that we ought to believe that we are justified in believing that every event has some cause come what evidence may.

How could a pragmatist deal with this kind of Kantian example? It is notoriously difficult for anyone to provide an acceptable analysis of causal judgements, but perhaps a pragmatist might try something like this. She might attempt some sort of pragmatic interpretation of a singular causal judgement, using appropriate subjunctive conditionals, perhaps something like: 'An event of type b would not occur unless an event of type a were to occur'. This is the sort of thing that a pragmatist might be able to test operationally for any supposed cause 'a', by varying initial conditions and seeing whether an event of type 'b' occurs. She could then go on to interpret the 'all' literally. The result would be something like: 'For every event b there is some a such that b would not occur unless a were to occur'.

As I have unpacked what is involved in being a pragmatist, pragmatists are committed to an operationalism regarding verifiability conditions. But there is no

finite set of operations the results of which could ever justify a universal judgement, so it is difficult for a pragmatist to understand how a universal synthetic judgement could ever be verified by the range of evidence that seems relevant to its truth. So it seems that a pragmatist must conclude that the evidence does not warrant belief in the Second Analogy.

But it is crucial to note that in this respect a pragmatist is no different from Kant or any other transcendental philosopher. Transcendental philosophers only think that there is a puzzle about the possibility of knowledge of the truth of universal synthetic judgements *because* such judgements can never be justified by the unique range of evidence that is directly relevant to their truth. What makes such assertions problematic is that they nevertheless seem to be *necessary* in Kant's sense; that is, it appears that we ought to believe that each event has a cause even when the evidence seems to suggest that some event does not. So it does not follow from the fact that a pragmatist cannot see how a synthetic *a priori* claim could be supported by the directly relevant evidence that a pragmatist cannot be a transcendental philosopher. If it did, Kant could not be one either.

In fact, pragmatism is uniquely well suited to understand how it possibly could be the case that we rationally ought to believe that every event has a cause even in the face of apparent counter-examples, that we ought rationally to act as if the Second Analogy is true, even when we lack direct evidence for its truth. For a pragmatist, beliefs are, ultimately, guides to action. And one is justified in holding a belief if holding that belief is a guide to *successful* action. So, for a pragmatist, if we are rational we stand under the meta-norm that we ought to hold true whichever beliefs we have good reason to think lead to successful action, *regardless of whether or not* those beliefs appear to be justified by the local evidence that seems relevant to their truth. And, for a *pragmatist*, there can be good reasons to accept this normative counsel which are less than perfect reasons. For a pragmatist, the reason to believe that it is true that one ought to believe that every event has a cause, come what experience may, is our *experience* that agents that act according to that universal principle are successful agents, and those that do not are not. As it happens, the principle that every genuine alteration in a genuine persisting entity has a cause is so tightly connected with the way in which we understand what it is to be an alteration and what it is to be a persisting entity that it would be very hard to speak any human language, or operate successfully in any sophisticated human community, or intervene successfully in the physical world, if one did not accept this principle. So a pragmatist can have experiential evidence that supports the claim that one should accept the universal principle that every event has a cause even though one lacks the evidence to support this universalization itself.

In effect, a pragmatist justifies a belief in something such as the Second Analogy by pointing out that any agent that holds a *system* of beliefs that includes the principle that every event has a cause is likely to cope with the world more successfully than an agent whose system of beliefs does not include this principle. For the pragmatist, for an agent to hold this belief is for the agent to be disposed to act in accordance with this belief. And for an agent to be disposed to act in

accordance with the Second Analogy is for that agent to be disposed to attempt to 'get a handle' on any new and initially puzzling phenomenon. But, the pragmatist can plausibly argue, we have ample evidence that agents that act in this way are more likely to succeed, are more likely to arrive at greater 'know-how', than those who passively accept new types of events as unaccountable. And, since knowing-how is at the origin of knowing-that, any agent who believes this principle is likely to come to have greater knowledge of her world than any agent who does not accept the Second Analogy. This in turn justifies a belief in the principle that every event has a cause.

One needs to be careful with the logic here. A proposition counts as a bit of synthetic *a priori* knowledge if, and only if, it meets a set of four conditions. First, the claim must be true, otherwise it would not count as a bit of knowledge. Second, it must be about objects, otherwise the claim would not count as synthetic. Third, the judgement must be justified, otherwise it would not be known. And fourth, it must be universal and 'necessary' in Kant's sense. That is, it must be a universal proposition which could not be justified by the relevant direct evidence concerning its truth, which nevertheless we rationally ought to believe is true even in the face of this lack of evidence. The Second Analogy meets all of these conditions, for a pragmatist as well as for Kant. For a pragmatist, the empirical evidence that is relevant to the truth of the Second Analogy has directly to do with whether for every event it would not have occurred unless some other event occurred. And, for a pragmatist, the evidence of this type that we could have could never be sufficient to warrant the assertion of the Second Analogy. Nevertheless, the pragmatist can argue that we do have evidence that it is rational for an agent to *believe* that every event has a cause, that one *ought* to believe that every event has a cause, come what direct evidence may. This evidence is supplied by the role that this principle plays in the cognitive economy of successful rational agents. And since *what* an agent ought to believe when she ought to believe this principle is *that* every event has a cause, and she ought to believe this regardless of the lack of direct evidence in favour of this belief, she ought to believe this claim to be true come what direct evidence may. So there is no reason that a pragmatist cannot consistently believe in the possibility of Kant's second type of transcendental knowledge. There is no incoherence in a pragmatist holding that there are true synthetic *a priori* judgements that we are justified in believing true, regardless of a lack of direct empirical evidence in favour of these judgements.

What is *not* relevant to the issue of whether some proposition is knowable synthetic *a priori* or not is what, in fact, *does* justify us in following the norm that we ought to believe that and act as if such principles are true. As long as we are so justified, and that justification does not come from our experience of the instances that fall under the principle, the principle that we follow has the status of synthetic *a priori* knowledge.

What is unique about the pragmatist is the status of her answer to Kant's guiding transcendental question concerning how synthetic *a priori* knowledge is *possible*. That is, the pragmatist differs from other transcendental philosophers

regarding the *status* of her answer to the question of what it is that does justify our synthetic *a priori* knowledge. The pragmatic understanding of the status of this knowledge is unique in two respects. As we have seen, for the pragmatist, it is only our experience of the success of agents who act on certain universal principles concerning objects which explains to us the apparent 'necessity' of those principles, why it is that we should hold those principles true even in the face of apparent counter-evidence. So, for the pragmatist, our transcendental knowledge of how it is possible for us to have synthetic *a priori* knowledge is not, ultimately, *itself a priori*. Rather, it is based on experience and thus *a posteriori*. This difference in status implies a second difference. Because, for a pragmatist, our reasons for believing that we ought to believe, for example, that every event has a cause have to do with our experience of the utility of this belief, our knowledge that that belief is true is itself less than apodictic. That is, what we believe when we believe the Second Analogy to be true is that it is universally the case that events have causes. Because it is rational to hold this belief, we are justified in believing in any given case that an event has a cause, even though we have no information regarding that cause. But, since for the pragmatist we have less than apodictic *a priori* grounds for our belief in the truth of the Second Analogy, that belief is itself fallible: we might be wrong. So, for the pragmatist, the fact that it is possible to know the truth of the Second Analogy *a priori* does *not* imply that this knowledge itself is infallible. But this fact does not imply that there is anything incoherent in a pragmatist holding that there is indeed transcendental knowledge of Kant's second sort, e.g. synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects.

So it is not inconsistent to be a pragmatist and to hold that there is transcendental, that is, synthetic *a priori*, knowledge concerning ordinary objects. The trick is to hold that there are good, though less than apodictic *a priori*, reasons to hold that we ought to believe some universal propositions even in the face of a failure of direct evidence. Because for the pragmatist there is a distinction between the claim that every event has a cause and the claim that an agent ought to believe that every event has a cause, we can have good reasons to believe the latter even when we lack deciding reasons to believe the former. But because of the character of the claim that one ought to believe that every event has a cause, if one has reason to believe *it* one also has reason to believe that every event has a cause. The fact that the reasons for believing that one ought to believe that every event has a cause come what may are themselves reasons which might be undercut by further evidence in no way alters the fact that *what* such considerations give us reason to believe is *that* every event has a cause, come what may. That is, for a pragmatist, the evidence which might undercut the Second Analogy does not have to do with our experience of the causes of events, but rather has to do with the utility of our beliefs regarding the causes of events.

But what of transcendental knowledge of Kant's first sort, knowledge concerning how synthetic *a priori* knowledge of ordinary objects is possible? Well, the facile thing for a pragmatist to say in response to this question is just that if one *is* a pragmatist who believes that there *is* transcendental, that is, synthetic *a priori*, knowledge concerning ordinary objects, then there is no reason not to ask

Kant's question of how that knowledge is possible, and thus obtain transcendental knowledge of the first sort. Indeed, that is just what I have been doing here.[15] After all, Kant does not *say* that, to count as transcendental, answers to his question must themselves count as being known synthetic *a priori*. So the fact that pragmatic claims regarding how synthetic knowledge is possible are not thought to be *a priori* does not disqualify such claims as transcendental.

But one must admit that there *is* something facile about this response. Traditionally, transcendental questions concerning how it is possible to have *a priori* knowledge of ordinary objects have been answered by appeals to structural features of the intentions that are directed towards those entities. The necessary conditions on the possibility of intending ordinary entities are structural features of intentions directed towards those entities without which the intentions would not be the intentions they are. As I mentioned above, in Kant, when one knows how it is possible to know the truth of the Second Analogy *a priori*, *what* one knows is that to intend one event as the cause of another is to intend the two events as related according to a rule of temporal order, and to know that unless one intends something as having some such predecessor, one is not intending that entity as an *event*, that is, an alteration in an object, at all. But since these structural features are taken to be necessary to the intentions in question, it is natural to think that such features of intentions can only be grasped through some kind of non-empirical means. In Kant, these means are something akin to conceptual analysis of what it is to intend entities of various sorts, while in Husserl's phenomenology such analysis is replaced with an *a priori* analytic description of the intentions themselves. But, in both of the traditional cases, the *grounds* on which we are to answer the first sort of transcendental question, the question concerning how it is possible to know *a priori*, are themselves taken to be *a priori*.

Transcendental philosophy, then, involves the attempt to ground synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects on synthetic *a priori* knowledge of the necessary features of intentions directed towards those objects. Pragmatism, on the other hand, insists that we have less than *a priori* knowledge of how our synthetic *a priori* knowledge is possible. Does this difference not show that it is inconsistent to be both a pragmatist and a transcendental philosopher after all?

Not really. Transcendental knowledge of the first sort, that is, knowledge of how it is possible to have *a priori* knowledge of objects, is, according to Kant and his successors, *itself* an instance of synthetic *a priori* knowledge. The object of this knowledge is intentionality itself, and what one knows if one has this sort of transcendental knowledge is that it is necessary for an intention to be the intention it is that it have some feature or other. But a pragmatist has available for her use a perfectly good pragmatic way of understanding *that* sort of claim. To say that one has synthetic *a priori* knowledge that all intentions of some class 'O' have feature 'F' is, for a pragmatist, to say that, rationally, one always ought to believe that intentions of class 'O' have feature 'F', come what direct evidence may. That is, the pragmatist can hold that such propositions concerning intentionality are 'necessary' in just the same sense that, say, the Second Analogy is necessary.

There are reasons, independent of our experience of intentions, that we should hold that certain universal propositions concerning intentions are true, even in the face of apparent evidence to the contrary. How such transcendental knowledge of intentionality is itself possible is, of course, a different matter.

There is no reason a pragmatist cannot coherently assert that our knowledge of the structure of intentionality is itself synthetic *a priori*, or even assert that our knowledge of how it is possible for there to be synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects is itself based on this synthetic *a priori* knowledge of intentions. All she needs to do is to repeat the same move she made before, except this time apply it to our knowledge of the structure of intentions. Our knowledge of the structure of intentions is embodied in universal judgements which are not supported by our experience of intentions, but these judgements are nevertheless necessary, that is, rationally justified. Just as long as the pragmatist *ultimately* appeals to the meta-norm that it is rational to believe those propositions that lead to successful action, and our *a posteriori* experience that following some principle does lead to success, in explaining how knowledge of such principles is possible, there is no reason that she cannot coherently maintain the existence at each level of synthetic *a priori* knowledge.

But what less than apodictic *a priori* grounds could support some synthetic *a priori* principle concerning intentionality? Here is an example. One might maintain that nothing could count as an agent that has beliefs unless most of that agent's beliefs were true. This, I take it, would be a synthetic *a priori* claim regarding a class of intentions, beliefs. Now for a pragmatist, one is entitled to say that some agent has beliefs only if one could recognize that agent as acting for some purposes or other. And there might be good but less than apodictic *a priori* grounds for holding that nothing could be recognized as acting for purposes unless most of that agent's beliefs were true. If this were the case, one would have supplied a pragmatic, less than *a priori* answer to the question of how it would be possible to have knowledge of a synthetic *a priori* claim regarding intentionality, in this case, the principle of charity. So, after all, it is possible for a transcendental philosopher to be a pragmatist even in regard to transcendental knowledge having to do with how it is possible to have *a priori* knowledge of objects, knowledge of the necessary conditions for intending entities.

What does all this have to do with Heidegger? If what I have been saying is right, then it is possible for a pragmatist to also be a transcendental philosopher. One of the many reasons Heidegger could not be a pragmatist cannot be because he is a transcendental philosopher. One *can* be both, and so Heidegger can be both. In the interests of fairness, however, I must now admit that there is a closely related claim to the one we have been examining which is true about what is inconsistent, and which is relevant to Heidegger. I mentioned earlier that I would return to a certain characteristic doctrine of the early Heidegger that I illustrated with a quote from *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. It is time to return to that doctrine and that quotation. 'The a priori character of being and of all the structures of being accordingly calls for a specific kind of approach and way of apprehending being – *a priori cognition*. The basic components of a priori cogni-

tion constitute what we call *phenomenology*. Phenomenology is the name for the method of ontology, that is, of scientific philosophy.'[16] This quote enunciates, as clearly as possible, the early Heidegger's understanding of and adherence to a certain philosophical method of justification that he calls 'phenomenology'. According to that method, it is possible to have *a priori cognitions* concerning categorial structures, including the structures of being. That is, phenomenology, as Heidegger understands it, involves the ability to have intuitions of the structure and nature of categorial intuitions which themselves yield *a priori* reasons to believe that there are certain ways of understanding what it is to be without which one could not intend any being. From this it follows immediately that, in so far as Heidegger is a phenomenologist, he believes that our knowledge of how it is possible for us to have synthetic *a priori* knowledge is *ultimately* synthetic *a priori* itself. And, as we ought to have recognized by now, no pragmatist could believe *that*, on pain of inconsistency.

Since pragmatism and transcendental philosophy are in fact compatible, it is false to say that Heidegger could not consistently be a transcendental pragmatist. What one can say truly is that because pragmatism, transcendental philosophy and phenomenology are inconsistent, it is incoherent for anyone, including early Heidegger, to be a pragmatic transcendental phenomenologist. Now I am sure that many would go on from here to conclude that since Heidegger was surely a transcendental phenomenologist, he could not consistently be a pragmatist. But, as that other great pragmatist Quine has taught us, which of an inconsistent triad one chooses to reject is to some degree optional. And, since it seems so clear to me that most of what is interesting in early Heidegger is his pragmatism, and phenomenology is such a dubious method anyway, it is also clear to me that Heidegger could not be a phenomenologist because he was (or should have been) a transcendental pragmatist.

Notes

1 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, A11/B25.
2 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A720/B748.
3 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B41.
4 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B232.
5 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A158/B197.
6 Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982, p. 20.
7 Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 52.
8 Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 20.
9 Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, trans. T. Kisiel, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1985, p. 79.
10 Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 15.
11 Later pragmatists such as Sellars have pointed out that, while the action-guiding character of beliefs is central, there are other conditions that must be met if an agent is going to count as having beliefs of the human type or knowledge. The issues here are complex and need not detain us now.
12 Mark Okrent, *Heidegger's Pragmatism*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1988.
13 Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 159.

14 Christine Korsgaard, 'The Normativity of Instrumental Reason', in Garrett Cullity and Berys Gaut (eds), *Ethics and Practical Reason*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 245–9.
15 I have also argued in the past, and would defend today, that it is possible to know *a priori* that every agent capable of intentions must satisfy certain universal and necessary conditions, and thus possible to come to have *a priori* knowledge concerning the meaning of the being of any intentional agent, just as Heidegger thought. And if this is the case, it should also be possible to come to know how this *a priori* knowledge of intentionality is possible; that is, it should be possible to do what I have called transcendental semantics.
16 Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 20.

7 On the power and limit of transcendental reflection

Karsten Harries

1

The following remarks develop their argument in a dialogue with Karl-Otto Apel's *Transformation der Philosophie*.[1] This collection of essays traces a path that in some ways parallels my own and that has helped me over the years to clarify my understanding of the power and limits of transcendental reflection.

Apel called the essays that make up this work his *Holzwege*,[2] inviting comparison with Heidegger's work of that title. Such a comparison, however, reveals difference more than similarity. Consider what a *Holzweg* is and why Heidegger chose that title: *Holzwege* are used to transport felled trees out of the forest. Where there was forest, there now is a clearing, a light-filled open space, perhaps covered with brambles and foxglove. The solitary hiker easily loses his way on such paths, which do not go anywhere but suddenly stop. Heidegger invites us to think the philosopher in the image of such a hiker. And did not Wittgenstein, too, point out that philosophical problems have the form 'I don't know my way about',[3] a characterization that may be understood as but another appropriation of Aristotle's determination of the origin of philosophy in wonder? Leading into the clearing, Heidegger's *Holzwege* were meant to return us to the origin of authentic philosophizing.

Did Apel think of his essays in this way? They certainly do not present him as another solitary thinker. And has philosophy not been transformed in a way that makes the 'category of the "great thinkers"' a thing of the past?[4] Not that we are done with these great thinkers; their work remains an abiding challenge. But has not our approach to philosophy become much more professional, and that is to say also: less monological, less solipsistic. And does not such professionalization presuppose that philosophy has finally found its way? Heidegger, to be sure, would have understood the fact that in philosophy, too, the team today is replacing the solitary thinker, a betrayal of philosophy's origin. Apel, by contrast, appears confident of the road on which he is travelling. Thus even if, as he himself emphasizes, the essays collected in these two volumes do not add up to a single argument, even if there are repetitions, meanders, and even if some paths taken are later abandoned, if they proved to be *Holzwege* in this sense, these essays yet mark Apel's, and not just Apel's, progress.

That the site of Apel's philosophizing is not Heidegger's clearing is shown by his reluctance to make a point without at the same time also calling the reader's attention to work by fellow philosophers that supports or challenges what is being asserted. Albert, Austin, Carnap, Chomsky, Gadamer, Gehlen, Habermas, Lorenzen, Popper, Searle, Stegmüller, Weisgerber and Winch – to give just some of the more familiar names – are all quoted at length and engaged in discussion, as are such 'great thinkers' of the past as Kant, Hegel, Marx, Peirce and the two most recently anointed great thinkers, Heidegger and Wittgenstein. Apel's commitment to communication is expressed also by his philosophical style: again and again he will soften a particular claim by adding the abbreviation *m. E.*, standing for *meines Erachtens*, 'in my opinion'. The philosopher here no longer claims to speak in the name of truth or the absolute spirit. This is a philosophy under way; to make its way it requires the exchange of opinions, a conversation that is going on first of all in the ivory towers of our universities. Apel knows of course about the artificiality of this conversation, but defends it as 'the institutionalization of human communication as *philosophy*'.[5] Beyond power politics, beyond the miseries of human life, he finds here 'an island of communication' that in a world burdened by need and repression, shadowed by the threat of ecological catastrophe and nuclear war, may still seem 'necessary and consoling'.[6]

A further linguistic clue to the site of Apel's thinking is provided by expressions like *quasi-transzendental* or *transzendentaler Stellenwert*. This transformation of philosophy is first of all a transformation of Kant's transcendental philosophy, although the place occupied by the transcendental unity of the apperception and by the categories has been assigned to other structures, which, however, are no longer quite transcendental in Kant's sense, but 'quasi-transcendental', a term of which Jürgen Habermas, too, is fond. Kant's transcendental subject has been historicized and brought down to earth. The 'transcendental' has been incarnated. Phenomena that are part of the world and as such can be investigated by science are assigned a transcendental value, for example language or the body. They can be assigned such a value if they can be shown to be conditions of the possibility and validity of knowledge.[7] This opens up the possibility of a collaboration of transcendental philosophy with science, especially with such sciences as linguistics, sociology and cognitive science. From the point of view of a purer transcendental philosophy, to be sure, such collaboration must appear to blur the profound difference that should separate what is purely transcendental from what is merely factual or ontic. But is such purity not incompatible with the situatedness of all our knowledge?

2

Apel's transformation of philosophy exemplifies what, with reference to Kant, we may call a third Copernican revolution. The key to all three Copernican revolutions is provided by a simple thought pattern: to be aware of the perspectival nature of what we see or think is to know also that what is thus seen or

thought is only appearance, is to draw a distinction between appearance and reality. Crucial here is an awareness of the constitutive power of point of view. Copernicus thus contrasts the *appearance* of the daily revolution of the heavens with its *actuality*, which, he says, belongs to the earth. He thus takes seriously the advice given already by Plato in the *Republic*: if, as beings whose first access to reality is furnished by perception, we are bound to appearance, we yet transcend such bondage in reflection and are able to gain insight into the workings of perspective and thus master its distortions. Reflection allows the human knower to transcend perspective-bound appearance. Such reflection has the power to free us for the truth. The anthropocentrism presupposed by such confidence in the liberating power of reflection should be noted: Copernicus had faith in our ability to grasp reality as it is. God is not so miserly as to keep the truth for himself.

Kant shakes such Copernican faith by raising reflection to a higher level: is the human understanding not inevitably bound by its own constitution, just as perception is bound by the make-up of the senses and our body's location in space and time? Whatever we are able to understand is ruled by our categories and forms of intuition. They circumscribe the space of all possible understanding. Theory cannot penetrate beyond phenomena; things as they are in themselves are beyond the reach of what we can comprehend. Kant did not draw from this the conclusion that the truth pursued by science is therefore itself no more than a subjective illusion, that the Enlightenment's prejudice against prejudice is, as Hans-Georg Gadamer was to put it, itself but another prejudice. Quite the contrary: as already with Descartes, the turn to the transcendental subject, this formal subject, constitutive of all possible experience, was to secure the sciences' pursuit of objectivity. Purified of the distortions brought about by the body's temporal and spatial location, the transcendental subject's 'point of view' is that of all possible knowers. The other side of the thought of the transcendental subject is thus the ideal of a truly objective understanding of reality. We can demand that thinking free itself from all dependence on particular points of view and from the perspectival distortions that are bound up with such dependence; we can demand objectivity. Given that demand, all those aspects of reality that presuppose a reference to some particular perspective have to be understood as mere appearance. This includes all secondary qualities, which are essentially tied to our senses and thus to what happens to be the constitution of the human body. We gain objective understanding only to the extent that sights and sounds yield to measurable shape and movement. The demand for objectivity also has to lead to a demand that language be purified as much as possible from everything that would bind it to particular perspectives. Discourse must thus be freed from everything that ties it too closely to a particular natural language; logic must be freed from grammar.[8] To put this point differently: scientific texts should be translatable. The devaluation of rhetoric and metaphor is a consequence. So understood, all discourse that would serve the truth has to aspire to whiteness in the sense in which Jacques Derrida, following Anatole France, has spoken of the whiteness of metaphysics.[9]

But even if Kant admits that we shall never know things as they are in themselves, does he not still have too much faith in our ability to free ourselves from the prison of perspectives? Must further reflection not reveal that transcendental reflection can never secure the objectivity of scientific knowledge because it can never extricate itself from its dependence on inevitably situated, ordinary language. As Apel reminds us, Hamann insisted that the *Critique of Pure Reason* should be preceded by a *Metakritik*, which would be a critique of language,[10] a demand repeated by Herder,[11] who protests against the elision of both the concrete person and language in Kant's critical project. Against Kant, Herder insists that we think with words not abstract concepts, and that we cannot think in any language other than our own. In the same vein, Wilhelm von Humboldt argued that we cannot consider language the means to represent an already known truth; rather it is language that lets us discover what would otherwise remain unknown, that provides the space in which alone anything can present itself. An inevitably historical culture and language is the transcendental (or rather quasi-transcendental? – I shall have to return to this difference) presupposition of thinking and experience. The incarnation of logos in everyday language here appears as a transcendental requirement. As Heidegger was to put this point in *Being and Time*: 'Discourse [*Rede*] is existentially language [*Sprache*], because that entity whose disclosedness it Articulates according to significations has as its kind of Being, Being-in-the-world – a Being which has been thrown and submitted to the "world".'[12] Being-in-the-world is constitutive of human being; and to be in the world is to belong to a language community. Our language constitutes that linguistic space in which all that can present itself to us must find its place. Transcendental reflection itself, it would seem, forces transcendental philosophy to make that linguistic turn called for already by Hamann, Herder and Humboldt. This turn was to become as characteristic of philosophy in the Anglo-Saxon countries, which, following the lead of Wittgenstein, transformed metaphysics, as Herder already had demanded,[13] into the analysis of language, as of philosophy on the Continent, where Apel's own work attests to the pervasive influence of Heidegger's thinking.

Central to this third Copernican revolution is thus the claim that as finite knowers we cannot extricate ourselves from the prison of perspective. The hope to distil from language a *mathesis universalis* that would finally free us from the distortions of everyday language must fail. Never will our language be white or pure enough; always will it be contaminated by particular interests, particular points of view. This is also true of any supposed transcendental argument. As Kant uses it, such an argument depends on our ability to survey the field of, say, 'all possible experience'. But are we finite knowers in a position to do so? Will our attempts to consider all that is possible not inevitably be limited by what we are now able to think as possible? And will this not depend on our cultural situation, part of which is the language we happen to speak? The accident of our spatio-temporal location will always mar our attempts to seize the truth. Have developments in physics and mathematics not called into question Kant's analysis of space, time and causality? In this sense, a changed understanding of the

way the world is may force revisions of supposedly transcendental arguments. 'All possible experience' inevitably turns out to mean 'all experience that we now think possible', given our historical situation and language. If this is right, all supposedly transcendental arguments turn out to be only quasi-transcendental.

But if we thus attribute to ordinary language a quasi-transcendental significance, that is, if we make it constitutive of whatever can present itself to us, if we make it in this sense the house of being, the distance that on the Kantian account separates the concrete and the transcendental subject threatens to collapse, and with it the distance that separates subjective from objective appearance,[14] as it does in paradigmatic fashion already in the writings of the young Nietzsche, when he self-consciously blurs the distinction between illusion (*Schein*) and appearance (*Erscheinung*). For that very reason he has become one of the patron saints of post-modernism.[15] With this collapse our language has to lose its outside, our speaking its responsibility. The third Copernican revolution thus leads inevitably to the self-de-construction of philosophy.

Apel refuses to travel down this road quite that far and just this gives his thought continued relevance today. His refusal is supported by reflections designed to show that what I have called here the third Copernican revolution has illegitimately extended itself to a point where responsible thinking must give way to play, despite the legitimacy of many of the considerations advanced.

3

As Apel himself suggests,[16] he began his philosophical journey very much under the spell of Heidegger, even though from the very beginning he was also at home with the very different way in which philosophy was being practised in England and the United States. An essay such as 'Language and Truth in the Present Situation of Philosophy'[17] allows us to trace Apel's response to the latter and at the same time helps illuminate the nature of his initial commitment to what I have termed the third Copernican revolution and the price that such a commitment exacts. Of central importance here is Charles W. Morris's distinction within semiotics between syntactics, concerned with the relationships between signs without regard to how these signs relate to reality, semantics, which examines just that relation of signs to an extra-linguistic reality, and pragmatics, concerned with the way these signs are actually used. Apel accepts the argument that 'every "syntactics" of a functioning language presupposes a special "semantics"' and that 'every "semantics" presupposes a "sign pragmatics"'.[18] There are no brute facts; their first presentation is always already in light of human meanings, human interests. In this insight, pragmatism and Heidegger's fundamental ontology are said to converge.

If Apel is right, this progress from syntactics to semantics and finally to pragmatics reflects a necessity of thought. Consider the view held by Carnap in a particularly radical form that philosophy furnishes 'the logical syntax of language'. An attempt is made here to abstract from all content and to view language only as a combination of signs. Philosophy is to clarify their syntactic

relations. Following the lead of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, Carnap thus seeks to dissolve the problem of verification by reducing all meaningful propositions to atomic or protocol sentences capable of empirical verification.[19] That such an attempt has to get entangled in problems of semantics is shown by the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein is thus credited by Apel with having exhibited the aporias of logical atomism with a clarity that prepares for the step beyond its limitations. Recalling Descartes, logical atomism has its foundation in the dream that our speaking might become truly clear and precise: 'What can be said at all can be said clearly; and whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent.'[20] Stated as if it were self-evident, this assertion, really a prescription, conceals that it has no room for just about everything that we normally count as 'saying something'. There is no suggestion that something might be lost when language is reduced to what can thus be said clearly. Only towards the end of the *Tractatus*, when the dimension of that of which we cannot speak seems to include just about all that really matters, does this loss show itself.

The *Tractatus* begins with a few propositions outlining a formal ontology: the world is said to be 'everything that is the case';[21] something 'can either be the case or not be the case and everything else remain the same'.[22] So understood, the world is like a mosaic: each stone, each atomic fact, could equally well not be. Neither causality nor the divine will bind the separate stones together. While atomic facts are the primitive parts of more complex facts and finally of the world, they in turn are said to be constituted by the 'combination of objects (entities, things)'.[23] These objects, we are told, are simple and endure.[24] Together they constitute what Wittgenstein calls the substance of the world.[25] Since facts must be conjunctions of objects, this substance determines the limits not only of this, but of all possible worlds. That there must be such a substance, even though as a philosopher he need not, indeed should not, say what it is, Wittgenstein tries to show by indicating that we must presuppose it if our propositions are to have sense. Only if the world has a substance can we speak clearly, and, given the restriction placed on language in the preface, can we speak at all: 'To understand a proposition means to know what is the case, if it is true. (One can therefore understand it without knowing whether it is true or not). One understands it if one understands its constituent parts.'[26] Meaningful propositions are true or false, not something in between, and to understand their meaning is to know what would verify them. Discourse has been reduced to the in principle unambiguous communication of information. That such discourse leaves no room for reflection, be it on language, be it on the subject, is evident. Both can be spoken of only as facts in the world. But such an understanding of language does not allow us to make sense of '*The limits of my language* mean the limits of my world'.[27] A realistic approach to language, which places it in the world, and a transcendental approach, which makes it constitutive of all possible worlds, are in tension in the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein relies on the former to make sense of truth as a correspondence of picture and fact, on the latter to claim the isomorphism of language and reality. Wittgenstein needs both to hold on to his version of the picture theory. But the two are incompatible, an incompatibility that

suggests that any attempt to make language constitutive of reality shows its inadequacy when confronted with the problem of truth.[28]

What then about the language of *Tractatus* itself? Wittgenstein himself, of course, was rigorous enough to dismiss its propositions as senseless: 'he who understands me finally recognizes them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it.)'[29] But to thus climb we depend on ordinary language. We must, for example, be able to make sense of 'world' and 'everything that is the case' to understand even the first proposition. There can be no understanding of the *Tractatus* without resources that it cannot furnish, without drawing on meanings that belong to everyday language.[30] In this connection we should note that Wittgenstein's declaration that the propositions of philosophy are mostly without sense presupposes an unacknowledged and questionable construction of what he terms the substance of the world. Giving a constructive twist to Kant's Copernican turn, Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* thus lays down 'self-consciously and arbitrarily what is to count as the *a priori* of all possible propositional meaning: the rules of logical semantics'.[31] The possibility of verification is presupposed, but by the very nature of this enterprise left indeterminate. But if logic cannot determine what is to count as verification, it cannot preclude the possibility of constructing a language in which the propositions of traditional metaphysics become meaningful.[32] That verification here would not mean an appeal to experience is evident.

What matters to Apel in all this is that every logic has to rely on a meta-language to introduce its rules, where the final meta-language is ordinary language itself, which provides the ground and measure of all such constructions. A pure understanding, encountering but totally uninvolved with what it encountered, would be paralysed. It would not know how to begin the task of understanding and that means also of naming. Semantics may not be divorced from pragmatics. Modern philosophy thus had to learn once again what Cicero and Quintilian, Salutati or Valla already knew,[33] that language is too important to be left to the logicians. Morris, as Apel points out, knew about the relations of his three-dimensional semiotics to the 'ancient trivium of logic, grammar, and rhetoric', the last dethroned by him as 'an early and restricted form of pragmatics'.[34] But the orator, as the tradition understands him (and the same is true of Morris's pragmatics), presupposes the properties of things and the needs and interests of those whom he would address. Both provide his speaking with a measure and allow his audience to measure the success or failure of his speaking. Here, too, something like a correspondence theory of truth is presupposed: there is, as Morris would say, a proper denotation of things, even if the orator's valuation is relative to the needs and interests of his audience.[35] Such propriety, however, presupposes that there is a sense in which our access to things transcends our needs and interests.

But does it therefore transcend language? Does our access to things not inescapably presuppose our language? Once again ordinary language appears as the transcendental ground of all that we could possibly experience. But Apel

himself hints at what calls such an elevation of ordinary language into a quasi-transcendental ground into question:

> To be sure, every immediate relation between situated human beings and their environment contains an element of significance that more or less transcends the conventional linguistic world interpretation – that renders the known properties of things and also the known needs of human beings questionable and appears to call for new concepts.[36]

This transcendence of the world over our language must be recognized. In this necessity every transcendental interpretation of ordinary language has its limit. To recognize here with Apel an element of significance that calls for new concepts and thus for new words is to recognize that there is speaking that, responsive to what transcends ordinary language, enlarges or changes the house of language so that it has room for the new. With Vico and Heidegger, Apel finds the paradigm of discourse that thus discloses things for the first time in poetry. All pragmatically verifiable language use is said to presuppose 'a poetic-incarnative truth function of language'.[37] First of all and most of the time, to be sure, we speak as one speaks. Ordinary language, as Wittgenstein understands it, is thus in its entirety what Heidegger terms *Gerede*, 'idle talk'. But language-games come into being. How are we to understand their emergence? As something established, the house of language in which every one of us lives must be given its origin in such an establishing. Transcendental reflection on the linguistic presuppositions of experience leads us, as it led Heidegger, from logic to ordinary language to poetry, in which transcendental reflection discovers what limits and binds it.[38]

But with the turn to poetic 'meaning-events',[39] to an understanding of language as the house of being and of poets as the builders of that house, philosophy threatens to become uncritical. In what sense can such poetic building be criticized? How could it be said to be true or false? Once again such poetic meaning-events threaten to bind language and being so closely together that, hardly recognized, the transcendence of the world over language is almost immediately obscured. As in Wittgenstein's language-games, albeit in a very different way, language and being here appear so intimately joined that it seems impossible to separate the two in a way that would allow us to declare some poetic disclosure of the world, or for that matter a particular language-game, in any way deficient. Deficient with respect to what? The problem of truth forces Apel, and us, to take a step not just beyond the poetic turn given by Heidegger to transcendental reflection, but beyond any philosophy that makes language constitutive of being in a way that leaves no room for a reality that transcends language and can function as its measure.

4

In developing the considerations that force us beyond Heidegger, Apel appeals repeatedly to Ernst Tugendhat's *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*.

Tugendhat had called attention to Heidegger's problematic replacement of Husserl's claim that an assertion is true when it exhibits or discovers what is 'as it is in itself' with the simple 'an assertion is true when it discovers'. Truth in its most fundamental sense is said to be *aletheia*, disclosure that inseparably joins the discoverer and the discovered. Truth is understood as a mode of human existence.[40]

But how then is it possible to give disclosure a measure in the disclosed, as it is in itself? Heidegger's conception of truth as disclosure threatens to blur the distinction between semblance and truth, between truth and error. With his blurring the term he threatens to lose all connection with what we usually call 'truth'. This is suggested by Heidegger's claim that 'the proposition that "Dasein is in the truth" states equiprimordially that "Dasein is in untruth"'.[41] We should, however, not be too quick to draw such a conclusion from these two statements. The former asserts that Dasein is the place where disclosure happens, the clearing in which beings can alone present themselves; the latter that that presentation is never unclouded by ordinary language and its ways of seeing and understanding; there is no pure seeing, no pure thinking; understanding is 'dominated by the way things are publicly interpreted'. We might say that ordinary language is here recognized in its 'quasi-transcendental' significance. But no one, certainly not Heidegger, would claim that to understand as one understands is to understand what is so understood as it is in itself. Quite the opposite: ordinary language, as Heidegger insists, covers up what it lets us understand, even as we understand it. First of all and most of the time our understanding is dominated by public ways of seeing and speaking and as such inauthentic.

Even this much too brief sketch shows that Heidegger does not want to blur the distinction between truth and untruth. The call to authenticity is at the same time a call to truth. Heidegger thus demands that Dasein 'explicitly appropriate what has already been uncovered, defend it against semblance and disguise, and assure itself of its uncoveredness again and again'.[42] Semblance is given its measure in what discloses itself to authentic understanding. In *Being and Time* Heidegger thus attempts to give knowledge something like a foundation by making a particular mode of presentation primary. Being in the truth is being authentic. To be authentic, as Heidegger understands it, is to project oneself resolutely unto one's own death and thus to appropriate one's finitude, one's facticity, and historicity. Having thus gained possession of itself, authentic Dasein is in a position to see for itself.

As Heidegger himself points out in *Being and Time*, the anticipation of death and the self that such anticipation yields play a part like that given by Kant to the transcendental subject.[43] But the self that is gained in the resolute anticipation of death is not constitutive of all possible experience, but a self that in every case is the individual's own. The same has to be said of authentic disclosure. But can such disclosure then still be said to be true? Apel seems to me right when, following Tugendhat, he insists on the difference between disclosure, even authentic disclosure, and the truth of assertions. To claim truth is not to be content with the evidence presented by subjective disclosure. Truth demands

objectivity. When I assert something to be true, I presuppose that the facts are there not just for me, or for some particular group or culture, but for everyone. Anyone who seeks to know has to think himself capable of knowing and, that is to say, capable of drawing a distinction between semblance and reality. Claims to truth presuppose an ability on the part of the concrete subject to transcend itself as it first of all finds itself, bound by all sorts of perspectives. The direction of such self-transcendence is indicated by Kant's transcendental subject. The thought of such a subject is part of the self's self-emancipation.[44]

A defender of Heidegger might reply that, far from neglecting this issue, *Being and Time* does give an account of the kind of objectivity that has here been demanded, of an understanding of truth as a correspondence between our thoughts or propositions and the objects themselves. Does he not point out that such an understanding of truth rests on a reduction of experience? Dasein disengages itself from the world, as the usual readiness-to-hand of things is transformed into mere presence-at-hand. Dasein becomes a subject confronting a world that is now understood as the totality of objects or facts. Like pictures, propositions, too, come to be understood as such facts. Truth now becomes an ontic relation of correspondence in the world.

Such an account, however, still cannot do justice to the kind of objectivity demanded because it continues to think the object relative to a particular subject and to its point of view. Objectivity as it is demanded by the concept of truth must be thought as free from such relativity. It implies freedom from perspectival distortion. The being of objects is not being for a subject imprisoned in some particular here and now, but for an ideal subject that transcends the accident of location. Objectivity and truth presuppose that the human being possesses the power of self-transcendence in reflection. Our experience is indeed bound to the body and to the accident of its location in space and time and to that extent inescapably perspectival. But as soon as this becomes an object of reflection, the difference between appearance and reality has to open up. To think a particular perspective as a perspective is already to have transcended, at least in thought, its limitations.

The same consideration applies to language. First of all and most of the time we are indeed caught up in the world and in its language-games. In this sense, too, our understanding is perspectival. But we are beings of reflection and as such never quite so caught up in the language-games of the everyday as the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations* would have us believe. Wittgenstein refused to recognize the unsettling power of self-reflection, which has to deny us that 'ground' which ordinary language was supposed to provide and which Wittgenstein wanted to 'clean up' or 'lay bare'.[45] Hegel could have taught him that reflection denies us such a ground. To think a particular perspective as such is to have lost the 'ground' that that perspective may have seemed to offer. The power of self-reflection denies the human being every version of paradise.

Heidegger recognizes that the power of self-transcendence is inseparable from human existing. Citing Calvin and Zwingli, he appeals to the traditional view that the human being has been created in the image of God and gains his

measure by reaching beyond himself, looking up to God.[46] But despite such recognition, Heidegger's own analysis fails to do justice to the vertical dimension opened up in reflection. Philosophy's conception of a godlike subject and with it the conception of objective truth are said by him to rest on a confusion of theory and philosophy. Heidegger speaks of a jumbling together of Dasein's phenomenally grounded 'ideality' with an idealized subject as 'residues of Christian theology within philosophical problematics that have not as yet been radically extruded'.[47] There is indeed an historical and a systematic connection between the Christian idea of God, which grounds the medieval understanding of the transcendentals *Unum*, *Verum* and *Bonum* as the most fundamental determinations of whatever deserves to be said to be, and the idealized subject of transcendental idealism; Kant's transcendental subject plays at least some of the part the tradition had assigned to God, even if it provides only the form of the experienced world, not its substance. But the fact that there is such a connection in no way discredits the idea of such a transcendental subject. With this idea our consciousness gives itself a measure. Heidegger's own temporal account of the ecstatic being of Dasein cannot do justice to the power of self-transcending reflection that allows human knowers to measure themselves by the idea of a knowing free from the accident of place and time.

As Apel points out, Theodor Litt's neo-Hegelian 'dialectical criticism' here provides an important corrective to both Heidegger's and Wittgenstein's views on language. Litt speaks of a *Selbstaufstufung der Sprache*, a self-elevation of language, that is the linguistic expression of the self-transcendence of the human being in reflection. To do justice to ordinary language we have to recognize the role reflection plays in it. This role becomes conspicuous when we have lost our way or have come to doubt the reliability of the maps we have been furnished with. Thus displaced we experience our own freedom as a burden: what are we to do? In reflection ordinary language reaches for new directives, new maps; it gives birth to higher-order languages such as the language of philosophy. Philosophical language cannot be opposed to ordinary language as just an idling of language. Part of ordinary language is what we can call language-games of decision, where we do not know what is to be done and seek to reorient ourselves. Much philosophical reflection has been a groping for forms of representation less bound to particular points of view than everyday language. The mathematical language of modern science stands in this sense higher than the language used by Aristotelian science, which remains more intimately bound to the senses and thus to appearance. Copernican revolutions are not just paradigm shifts, but steps in this process of self-elevation. There is an unambiguous sense in which modern science, just by its mathematical form of description, and that is to say by its greater objectivity, has left Aristotelian science behind.

Reflection must, however, also call into question the understanding of being presupposed by empirical science. Traditional ontology lacks a foundation as long as it takes an understanding of experience for granted that privileges detached observation and seeks to read the meaning of being of the things thus understood. Heidegger's fundamental ontology is right to remind us that experience

may not be reduced to the experience that is a presupposition of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*: in that sense there could not even be an experience of persons as persons demanding respect. Fundamental ontology attempts to address such deficiencies by considering the many different ways in which human beings exist in the world and deal with persons and things. Its goal is the exhibition of the structures constitutive of human being in the world, without violating its many different dimensions. Heidegger includes language among these structures.

But constitutive of our being is also the possibility of using language not just to reflect on the relationship of language to the world, but to reflect on that reflection and its presuppositions. Apel credits Theodor Litt[48] with having shown that hidden in ordinary language lies something like 'an immanent semantic "theory of types"', which, unlike Russell's theory of types, does not involve an infinite regress. As the generality of our assertions is raised, self-reflection comes 'to a conclusion that coincides with its self-founding, that is, with the noological self-reflection of philosophy'.[49] Transcendental reflection may well have ascended here as high as it can, but, as Apel also points out, the price of this ascent is a loss of substance. Such reflection has to lose touch with the historical situation of the thinker and its reality. Small wonder that Litt's voice was hardly heard. And yet it has the power to awaken those who have been enchanted by Heidegger and Wittgenstein.

5

Again and again Apel reminds us that philosophical thinking becomes insubstantial when it abstracts from the historical situation of the thinker, from his engagement in the world and his often all too mundane interests. Not that we must therefore agree with Gadamer when he claims that 'the dialectical superiority of the philosophy of reflection' is only a 'formal illusion'. Such philosophizing does help to keep open the possibility of challenge, whenever some particular world interpretation threatens to freeze into dogma.[50] But the same transcending of concrete historical reality that grants transcendental reflection its liberating power also denies it sufficient substance or content to provide something like a world orientation of its own. Philosophy here becomes 'only a last formal reflection' on the conditions that constitute, first, experience, then the individual sciences and their validity.[51]

No more than such transcendental reflection are the individual sciences able to furnish the demanded orientation. Validity and power of the sciences are bought at the price of a reduction of experience. Lost in that reduction is the experience of what immediately claims us, first of all the experience of the other as deserving my respect, compassion and love. Perhaps the most important task facing philosophy today is that of providing a world orientation that recognizes not only the 'abstract one-sidedness' of the scientific approach, of its fundamental questions and idealizations, but also its legitimacy, and is not afraid to make use of its results. If it is to succeed in this, Apel suggests, it must attempt to critically relate 'reflection' and 'material praxis'. Such an attempt will lead us

'back into the region of what remained unthought between Hegel and Marx'.[52] It will admit the power of the kind of reflection represented by Litt, but it will also recognize the dialectic of material praxis and seek to mediate between the two. Heidegger's and Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy may seem to promise such mediation, but Apel is right that both do not so much mediate between as keep their distance from both reflection and material.

> In the return to *the history of being*, conceived of, with Heidegger, as the productivity of time, seems to me to lie an *asylum ignorantiae* in as much *as the real mediation of consciousness and material praxis*, which makes up the productive continuation of history in human understanding, remains unanalyzed.[53]

A parallel criticism can be made of Wittgenstein. This is not to question that that whole 'consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven', which Wittgenstein called a language-game, is a presupposition of all knowledge. Everyday language may thus be assigned a quasi-transcendental function.[54] Apel, however, is too deeply impressed by the power of reflection to simply assign ordinary language a transcendental function in the Kantian sense. What both ties him to and separates him from such a transcendental interpretation of ordinary language is made clear by his own formulation: as the equivalent of 'the highest point' of Kant's transcendental unity of the apperception, he proposes a '*transcendental synthesis of interpretation mediated by language*, qua unity of *coming to understand one another concerning some matter* in a *communication community*'.[55] In this connection Apel speaks also of the transcendental language-game. In developing this conception he appeals to the fact that Wittgenstein's different language-games must not only be available for observation that leaves everything as it is, but the observer must be able to project himself into these different language-games to even recognize them as such. Ordinary language philosophy here links up with hermeneutics. Wittgenstein himself is not just playing another language-game, but one of a higher order, which allows him to imagine and understand different language-games, inviting us to reflect on the transcendental unity of all these language-games. This unity allows us to postulate the transcendental language-game as the necessary condition of the possibility of breaking out of the linguistic space of some particular language-game into that of another, a possibility that is given with language: to know how to speak a particular language is also to know what it is to speak a language. Presupposed is the '*transcendental language-game*, which, however, has its *real* basis and its genetic origin in the basic facts of the life of the human species'.[56] Here we may not forget that to be involved in a form of life is to be involved also in the human form of life. This allows for that self-elevation of language on which Litt insists. To be sure, to do justice to language we have to understand its inescapable rootedness in a concrete form of life. Transcendental reflection on language may not overlook this pragmatic dimension. Apel thus calls for 'a *transcendental pragmatics* of speech acts and acts of understanding as the subjective-intersubjective conditions of the possibility of communication and thus also of language'.[57]

Apel's own progress towards such a pragmatism is indebted above all to Peirce's transformation of Kant's transcendental logic, a transformation that reaches its highest point with the conception of the 'indefinite Community of investigators',[58] a conception that joins

> the semiotic postulate of the supra-individual *unity of interpretation* and the postulate of the logic of inquiry concerning the *experimental validation of experience in the long run*. The quasi-transcendental subject of this postulated unity is the unlimited *community of experimentation*, which is at the same time the unlimited *community of interpretation*.[59]

Particularly convincing, in Apel's opinion, is Peirce's

> positive transformation of the Kantian distinction [between phenomena and things in themselves], which takes into account Kant's justified motives, but without succumbing to its difficulties: for instead of distinguishing between unknowable and knowable objects, Peirce distinguishes between the real that is *knowable in the long run* and what is as a matter of fact *known* given a particular situation, keeping in mind our fallibility.[60]

In Kant the distinction between phenomena and things in themselves is linked to that between theoretical and practical reason. If the first distinction goes, so does the second. Apel, as we shall see, is aiming at something of the sort. How close he feels to Peirce is apparent in this statement:

> At this point now Peirce's semiotic transformation of the 'highest point' of transcendental logic reaches its *highest* point in the postulate of what was to be called later his 'Logical Socialism': the person who wishes to act logically in the sense of Peirce's synthetic logic of all possible inquiry, has to sacrifice, for the sake of the unlimited community's interest, all private interests bound up with his finite life, including the, in Kierkegaard's sense, existential interest in his salvation. Only this community has a chance to ever reach this goal of truth: 'He who would not sacrifice his own soul to save the whole world, is illogical in all his inferences, collectively. So the social principle is rooted intrinsically in logic'.[61]

Apel makes a similar attempt to give a quasi-transcendental foundation to the unity of practical and theoretical reason.

But before examining this, I would like to consider two aspects of Peirce's Kant reception as Apel interprets it for us. Apel, as we have seen, approves of Peirce's transformation of the Kantian distinction between phenomena and things in themselves into a distinction between what is known provisionally and what is knowable in the long run. I would suggest that the distinction that corresponds to this one in Kant is not that between things in themselves and appearances, but the distinction between objective and subjective appearance

discussed above. Objective appearances are never simply given. They are only known in our interpreting reconstructions of experience and such reconstructions cannot in principle claim finality. The object-in-itself, to be distinguished from the thing-in-itself, functions in Kant as a regulative ideal.[62] This ideal justifies the hope that we might understand possible inhabitants of other stars, should these some day be found; and already Kant recognizes that this regulative ideal calls for a willingness on the part of the individual researcher to join with others in a community.[63]

The distinction between phenomena and things in themselves, however, has a very different point: it is to suggest that there is a sense in which all theoretical understanding remains perspectival and thus cannot claim to grasp reality as it is. And we should not overlook the positive side of this limitation of the claims to be made for theoretical knowledge: as did Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*, Kant recognized that the forms of description used by natural science have room neither for persons nor for values. If one were to be convinced that the objects pursued by science were to be identified with reality as it is, there would be no escape from nihilism. Reality would have lost its aura of transcendence. Meaning and value would be rendered subjective and illusory. But when we care for another human being, our experience of the other is more than an experience of just another object. The content of such experience is not captured by the scientific point of view. And who is to say that the latter is more adequate to reality? What would it even mean to say that? More adequate, to be sure, if what is wanted is objective knowledge. Were we to equate what such knowledge can get hold of with reality, we would condemn all value to a subjective contribution. But goodness and beauty have their own domains that science cannot touch. The restrictions Kant has placed on theoretical knowledge safeguard that domain.

Apel could reply that I am operating here with an unduly restricted, scientistic understanding of theory, which must yield to higher reflection. I wonder, however, whether the commitment to objectivity and to truth, understood as a correspondence of our thoughts or propositions and the objects, does not depend on such a reduction, a reduction reflection is able to render perspicuous. The humanistic sciences still have not found a methodology that would make them truly scientific. If scientific means objective, they never will.

Apel could not accept such claims. Even Peirce is criticized by him for his scientism, which prevented him from doing full justice to the problem of communication. Royce is said to have seen this. Royce thus

> sublates this scientistic reduction of the problem of communication in favour of the hermeneutic mediation of tradition in the widest sense; but the mediation of tradition within the community of interpretation corresponds according to Royce, who here agrees with Hegel, to a teleological process of human self-knowledge. The progress of this process is directed, not just, as with Peirce, through a regulative principle towards virtual completion, but guaranteed by an actually infinite, absolute system of the self-representation of spirit.[64]

Apel rejects such an absolute. Heidegger and Gadamer were right to deny such a guarantee. But Apel is close enough to such an absolute to insist at least on a regulative principle that he finds in the '*idea of the realization of that unlimited community of interpretation*'.[65] This idea is presupposed implicitly by 'everyone who engages in an argument (i.e. everyone who thinks!) as an ideal court of appeal'.[66] It yields a principle of progress, understood first of all as a progress of interpretation. With this we come to the most exciting and important, but also most questionable, aspect of Apel's transformation of philosophy.

6

We tend to divorce understanding, reason and thought, on the one hand, from feeling, desire or passion, on the other. An expression of this divorce is the difficulty we have making sense of Kant's pure practical reason – Schopenhauer already considered it a wooden iron. There is, to be sure, a quite unproblematic sense in which reason can be called practical: reason can serve passion or desire; it can, for example, establish an order among our desires and generate hypothetical imperatives. What it cannot do, on this view, is furnish categorical imperatives.

What makes this divorce unsatisfactory is that it denies the possibility of settling disagreements concerning what matters by dispassionate argument, by demonstrating, say, that certain values or ideas are binding on all human beings. But do we not need such ideals, especially today when personal or tribal interests, on the one hand, and instrumental reason, on the other, threaten to overwhelm respect for persons as persons? One of the tasks facing philosophy today is that of reconciling the demands of technology, which seems to generate its own irrational imperatives, with those of humanity. We have learned to be suspicious of appeals to economy and efficiency. Such suspicion notwithstanding, technology more and more circumscribes not only our lives, but even our desires. Human beings, too, are being reduced to material to be organized by and subjected to technological planning. Not that we dare or should take leave from the technological world: given the problems that face us, such a suggestion is irresponsible. We have little choice but to affirm technology, even to welcome it. But such affirmation should not mean surrender. We have to learn to put technology in its place, to bound its progress. Philosophy in its present state is ill equipped to meet this task. We have no ideal image of the human being adequate to the challenges of the world we live in.

Apel offers us an historical interpretation of the split between objective facts and subjective values:

> The complementarity between the value free objectivism of science, on the one hand, and the existential subjectivism of religious acts of faith and ethical decisions, on the other, proves to be the modern philosophical-ideological expression of the liberal separation of the public and the private sphere of life that has developed in the context of the separation of church and state.[67]

But sound as this interpretation may be, it does not help us to overcome that separation, which presents itself to us as not just part of another world interpretation, one among many, but as having its foundation in that self-elevation of the spirit in reflection discussed above. Apel would agree, but claims that there is a still higher level of reflection that will allow us to recover what is lost in the emancipation of subjectivity and in that turn to objectivity which is its corollary. Part of such reflection is the recognition that even the supposedly so objective discussion of the natural sciences never succeeds in becoming purely theoretical, in ridding itself of the pragmatic dimension that is so prominent in ordinary language. The limits set to any attempt to reduce what is to objective fact become much more obvious when we consider the human sciences. To be sure, attempts have been made to insist here, too, on objectivity.[68] But the human sciences cannot escape the necessity of understanding human beings. Such understanding requires interpretation of human intentions and projects, of particular world-views and language-games. Such interpretation in turn presupposes the interpreter's own situation, engagement and the valuations these imply. We may thus speak here of a hermeneutic circle of understanding and evaluation. But, as Apel also points out, insight into this circle will not provide ethics with a foundation. Rather, it invites a 'historical-anthropological cultural *relativism*'.[69] Neither Heidegger nor Wittgenstein thus gives us the means of criticizing a given world-view or language-game. Where would they find the stand for such a critique? Apel attempts to escape that conclusion by insisting that the language-games of the everyday do not present themselves to us as a ground that cannot in principle be challenged or transcended. But is Apel not himself committed to a similar view when he attributes to everyday language a quasi-transcendental status? To claim this, however, would be to overlook the extent to which he has accepted Theodor Litt's understanding of a self-elevation of language. 'Only in this respect is communication in everyday language not-to-be-gotten-around [*nichthintergehbar*]: in so far as the *normative ideal* of communication can be realised in everyday language – and only in it – this ideal must, therefore, always already be anticipated'.[70] If Apel is right, the very possibility of communication and argument presupposes the ideal communication community. If so, we should be able to offer a transcendental deduction of the foundation of morality.

> In this sense I would like to try to reconstruct the ethical conditions for the possibility and validity of human argumentation and, therefore, also of logic. This effort differs, however, from Kant's classical transcendental philosophy in as much as it takes the 'highest point,' which has to orient transcendental reflection, to be not the 'unity of consciousness of the object and self-consciousness,' posited in a 'methodologically solipsistic' manner, but rather the 'intersubjective unity of interpretation' qua understanding of meaning and *qua* consensus of truth. In principle at least, if argumentation is to have any *meaning* at all, it must be possible to achieve this unity of interpretation in the unlimited community of those engaged in argument,

supported by experiment and interaction. In this sense my philosophy understands itself as a transformation of transcendental philosophy that, based on a critique of meaning, takes for its point of departure the *a priori* fact of argumentation as a quasi-Cartesian starting point, not to be gotten around.[71]

Apel's indebtedness to Peirce is once again evident, although, as we have seen, he criticizes Peirce for having absolutized one particular human interest, the interest to know that governs science. That interest is itself in need of justification. Is not the interest in life, say in food or sex, more basic than the interest in truth? If our understanding of the community of argumentation is to do justice to such interests, it may not be too closely tied to the community of scientists or scholars. Not all claims that require justification are claims to truth. They include claims that human beings make for themselves, for and on others, including the claims made by institutions. Apel insists that all human needs have an ethical relevance inasmuch as they involve a claim that is communicated to others; they are recognized if they can be justified to these others by argument.[72] Presupposed by any real community is said to be an ideal community, whose members would act only in ways that they could justify to others with good arguments. In such a community conflict between the different claims of its members would always be resolved by argument. That this ideal community conflicts with any real community is evident and leads Apel to posit two fundamental regulative principles: (i) act in such a way 'that the *survival* of the human species as the *real* community of communication is secured' and (ii) act in such a way 'that the *ideal* communication community will become a reality'. From the second principle follows the demand for emancipation.

How convincing is this argumentation? Can this transcendental argument establish the foundations of an intersubjectively valid ethics, as Apel claims? Can transcendental arguments ever yield anything like such a foundation? It seems to me that no properly transcendental argument can, as such, issue a prescription or categorical imperative. Transcendental arguments seek to establish the objective validity of certain *a priori* concepts without reference to how such concepts as a matter of fact happened to emerge or be acquired. Kant thus distinguished an empirical from a transcendental deduction. The former exhibits how, as a matter of fact, we came to acquire certain concepts, the latter our right to assert the objective *a priori* validity of such concepts. By definition such a deduction, if it were indeed properly transcendental, could not be refuted by any possible experience.

But we shall never be able to survey the field of all that is possible! What we consider possible will always be conditioned by our cultural situation. We shall thus never be able to claim for transcendental arguments quite as much as Kant did. There are no pure transcendental arguments! Even the best are only quasi-transcendental. Thus historical change may lead to revisions of our conception of the realm of all possible experience, which in turn would require a revision of earlier supposedly transcendental deductions. In that sense a pure transcendental

deduction remains itself a regulative ideal. But as such it can help to liberate us from dogmatically assumed categories. Transcendental arguments may in this sense be considered instruments of liberation.

What they cannot do, however, is yield something resembling a categorical imperative. Kant knew this very well. 'No deduction, no effort of theoretical, speculative, or empirically aided reason,' he insisted, could prove 'the objective reality of the moral law'.[73] As persons, to be sure, that is, as freely acting beings, we know ourselves to be placed under such a law: the reality of the moral law can thus become the principle of a deduction of freedom.

Just because it is supposed to exhibit what is constitutive of all possible experience, a transcendental deduction cannot yield an imperative: no person could help but be in accord with such a transcendentally established principle, no matter what he or she did. Transcendental principles open up a space of possibilities. They do not determine which one of these, or even what sort of possibility, ought to be realized. By their very nature, they cannot offer a world orientation. Quite the opposite: they disorient. That is the other side of their liberating power.

There are discussions that look like transcendental arguments and issue in something like imperatives. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* may thus be read as a transcendental argument issuing in the claim: 'Whereof one cannot speak [in Wittgenstein's sense], thereof one ought to be silent.' But although the propositions of the *Tractatus* are perhaps best defended when read as part of an attempt to state the necessary conditions for the possibility of speaking clearly in Wittgenstein's sense, on such a reading the work yields only a hypothetical imperative. Had Wittgenstein in fact stated the conditions governing all speaking, there would have been no way of escaping them. The concluding proposition of the *Tractatus* would then state an inescapable fate. Its hortative power presupposes that, as Wittgenstein himself came to recognize, first of all and most of the time (and perhaps always) people do not speak clearly in his sense. If the *Tractatus* yields something like a norm, its normative character is not established by a transcendental argument, but just an unpacking of the prejudice that finds a first articulation in the Preface.

The same is true of all 'transcendental arguments' that seem to yield some norm or imperative. To the extent that the idea of 'the unlimited community' of those engaged in argument is indeed constitutive of human being as essentially a being-with-others, it could not function as an ideal, demanding to be realized. Just as Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* slides too easily from clear speaking to speaking, Apel slides too easily from his ideal community, whose members are committed to genuine dialogue, to that indefinitely open communication community that is indeed a presupposition of human being. No purely transcendental argument can establish the normative character of the former.

Apel might reply that I have here tied transcendental arguments to theoretical reason in a way that must be rejected. Is such a rejection not implicit in the very conception of a 'transcendental pragmatics' and a 'transcendental hermeneutics'? And must I not grant that the theoretical approach rests on a one-sided

abstraction from an experience in which theory and practice are inextricably interwoven, as, for example, in Wittgenstein's language-games. But suppose we broaden our understanding of experience in keeping with what is here being suggested and grant that, together with the pragmatic, we have also introduced a normative dimension into our understanding of experience. If we can show that experience so understood presupposes what Apel calls the 'transcendental language-game', that is, his ideal 'communication community', would this not mean that we ought to realize that community? I agree with Apel that ordinary language implies the possibility of such a community. This possibility can be thematized. The idea of such a community opens up a possibility. But what elevates this possibility into an ideal?

But in raising this question, have I not assumed illegitimately the role of a detached observer? Am I not, as someone joining others in considering such questions, already committed to this ideal? Is it not implied in the project of inquiry? Kant already makes this point. Apel's charge of methodological solipsism notwithstanding, Kant explicitly criticizes the 'logical egoist' who thinks it unnecessary to test his judgement by the judgements of others and thinks he is not in need of this *criterium veritatis externum*. Kant, too, insists that human beings cannot do without such testing; such testing in turn presupposes freedom, especially freedom of the pen. Without such freedom we cannot hope to escape error.[74] He who commits himself to the search for the truth commits himself also to the freedom of those who are to join in this search. A strategy of emancipation is indeed implicit in this commitment, although, given a particular historical situation, say fifth-century Athens, it is easy to construct arguments that, appealing to Apel's ideal communication community, arrive at elitist consequences. For what matters here is finally concern for the truth, not respect for the individual as such: many may have to be repressed so that a few gifted individuals will have the freedom and leisure necessary for genuine dialogue.

But ought we to be committed to truth? What price should we be prepared to pay? If the interest in truth is in fact constitutive of human beings, if all men, as Aristotle would have it, by their nature desire to know, it is nonetheless only one among many interests. There is, for example, the selfish interest in personal survival, which, as Plato shows in the *Phaedo*, often conflicts with the desire to know. Why should I side in such a conflict with truth? Nietzsche thought this a sign of decadence. How would one argue the matter? Apel could point out that any such argument has to assume that the desire for truth is already part of the commitment to truth that it wants to establish as an imperative. But Apel's 'transcendental argument' has persuasive power only as a rhetorical strategy to help us recollect what we already sort of know to have a claim on us. Whatever success it may have depends on the experienced reality of this claim. Plato seems to me more nearly right when he endows his logos with erotic power: Socrates helps us to recollect our true home. Such recollection lets us commit ourselves to the logos, even as we discover that the individual becomes truly himself when he finds the strength to sacrifice himself, if necessary, for the truth. Transcendental arguments do not establish recollection, although they may help awaken it.

Transcendental reflection seeks to establish what is constitutive of all possible experience, all possible language use, all possible worlds. In this sense, I suggested, it has the power to open windows and doors in the different houses prejudice has built, houses that inevitably have shut out a great deal that is possible and, more importantly, desirable. What gives transcendental reflection its importance is its emancipatory power, its ability to call into question all sorts of supposedly unshakeable foundations. Transcendental reflection sets us free.

To be sure, it would seem to aim at just the opposite, to once again bind us by pointing to what is not to be gotten around. Is transcendental reflection not supposed to establish something like a firm ground? But to the extent that we find such reflection successful in exhibiting such a ground, it also has to strike us as quite uninteresting, since I could not even imagine myself not standing on that ground. By its very success, such reflection could not tell me what I ought to be doing, could not even be experienced by me as in any way binding me, since that would presuppose that I can imagine another possibility.

There are of course transcendental arguments that promise to reorient us in an age in need of orientation. Apel's attempt to provide ethics with a rational foundation is an example. But the appeal of this attempt should not obscure the threat posed by transcendental arguments: is a loss of transcendence not the price exacted by transcendental reflection that seeks to exhibit what is constitutive of all that is possible? For 'all that is possible' here can mean only 'all that we, given our situation, think possible'. Reality is here understood as falling into a logical or linguistic space that governs our understanding. The human ability to comprehend is here made the measure of reality.

Against this I would argue that to understand the reality of the real is to understand it as transcending our comprehension. As Apel himself had hinted, invoking Vico and Heidegger, we have to experience reality as significant in a way that forces us to recognize the inadequacy of our names and linguistic frameworks. The house of our language may not be conceived of as a prison, but, to repeat, should be thought of as a house with windows and doors that open to what lies outside. We need transcendental reflection to keep open such windows and doors. All too often transcendental arguments slam them shut. The experience of one other person is sufficient to show that ethics cannot be grounded in transcendental reflection, for we cannot make sense of such experience except as an experience of a transcendent meaning incarnated in matter. In the other we experience what lies outside the house of language. Here we experience the limit of all transcendental reflection.

Notes

1 Karl-Otto Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, 2 vols, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1976. An English translation by Glyn Adey and David Frisby of some of the essays was published as *Towards a Transformation of Philosophy*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980. It includes one essay from the first and from the second volume. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the German in this chapter are my own.

2 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 8.

 3 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, New York, Macmillan, 1955, I, §123.
 4 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 11.
 5 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 10.
 6 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 10.
 7 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 72.
 8 See Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C.K. Ogden, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922, 4.003; Heidegger, *Die Lehre vom Urteil im Psycholgismus*, Leipzig, Barth, 1914, p. 101.
 9 See Jacques Derrida, 'White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy', trans. Alan Bass, *Margins of Philosophy*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1982.
10 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, pp. 138–9.
11 See Johann Gottfried Herder, 'Eine Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft', in Erich Heintel (ed.), *Sprachphilosophische Schriften*, Hamburg, Meiner, 1960, pp. 183–6.
12 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York, Harper & Row, 1962, H161.
13 Herder, 'Eine Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft', p. 184.
14 See especially Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, B69–70, note.
15 See especially Friedrich Nietzsche, 'On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense', *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s*, trans. and ed. Daniel Breazeale, Atlantic Highlands, Humanities Press, 1979, pp. 79–97.
16 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 7.
17 Apel, 'Sprache und Wahrheit in der gegenwärtigen Situation der Philosophie: Zur Semiotik von Ch. Morris', *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, pp. 138–66.
18 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 126.
19 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 142.
20 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, Preface and 7.
21 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 1.
22 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 1.21.
23 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 2.01.
24 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 2.02, 2.027.
25 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 2.024.
26 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 4.024.
27 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 5.6.
28 See Karsten Harries, 'Two Conflicting Interpretations of Language in Wittgenstein's *Investigations*', *Kantstudien*, 1968, vol. 59, pp. 397–409.
29 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 6.54.
30 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 143.
31 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 145.
32 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 145.
33 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 158.
34 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 157; Charles Morris, *Foundations of the Theory of Signs: International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, vol. I, no. 2, no. 8, O. Neurath, R. Carnap and C. Morris (eds), Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1953, pp. 56 and 30.
35 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 159.
36 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 159.
37 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 166.
38 See Karsten Harries, 'Wittgenstein and Heidegger: The Relationship of the Philosopher to Language', *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 1968, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 281–91.
39 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 166.

40 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H220. See Karsten Harries, 'Truth and Freedom', in Robert Sokolowski (ed.), *Edmund Husserl and the Phenomenological Tradition*, Washington, Catholic University Press, 1988, pp. 131–55.
41 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H222.
42 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H222.
43 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H318.
44 See Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 317.
45 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 118.
46 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H49.
47 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H229.
48 See Theodor Litt, *Denken und Sein*, Stuttgart, Hirzel, 1948; *Mensch und Welt*, Munich, Federmann, 1948; *Hegel: Versuch einer kritischen Erneuerung*, 2nd edn, Heidelberg, Quelle and Meyer, 1961.
49 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 248.
50 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 20.
51 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, pp. 10–11.
52 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 12.
53 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. I, p. 18.
54 See Ernst Konrad Specht, *Die sprachphilosophischen und ontologischen Grundlagen im Spätwerk Ludwig Wittgensteins*, Köln, Kölner Universitäts-Verlag, 1963.
55 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 354.
56 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 257.
57 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 314.
58 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 173.
59 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 173.
60 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 175.
61 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 17.
62 See note 14 above.
63 See Kant, *Logik*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin, Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter & Co. (Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften), 1900–, vol. 9, p. 83.
64 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 207.
65 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 215.
66 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 215.
67 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 370.
68 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 380.
69 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 386.
70 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 390.
71 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 411.
72 Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, vol. II, p. 425.
73 Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, A81–2.
74 Kant, *Anthropologie*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 7, BA6.

8 The opening to infinity

Derrida's quasi-transcendentals

Claire Colebrook

[T]he beyond or the this-side which gives sense to all empirical genius and all factual profusion, that is perhaps what has always been said under the concept of '*transcendental*,' through the enigmatic history of its displacements. Difference would be transcendental. The pure and interminable disquietude of thought striving to 'reduce' Difference by going beyond factual infinity toward the infinity of sense and value, i.e., while maintaining Difference – that disquietude would be the transcendental, since it can look forward to the already announced *Telos* only by advancing on (or being in advance of) the Origin that indefinitely reserves itself. Such a certainty never had to learn that Thought would always be to come.

Jacques Derrida[1]

This chapter locates Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction within the phenomenological tradition of transcendental philosophy. My main focus will be on Derrida's reading of Husserl. I will argue that it is Derrida's fidelity to the Husserlian concepts of 'intentionality' and 'reduction' which leads to the formulation of deconstruction as a procedure that begins with transcendental questions. But while Derrida regards transcendental questions as necessary and essential to philosophy, he also insists that such questions must always rely on 'quasi-transcendentals'. Such quasi-transcendentals themselves provoke 'deconstructive' questions regarding the limits of philosophy: these are questions of the empirical determinations of transcendental projects. I will conclude by arguing that Derrida's deconstruction provides a new way of thinking the relationship between philosophy and the human sciences. Derrida's extension of transcendental phenomenology into what he refers to as 'deconstruction' will be explored by way of the following five claims that are pertinent to all of Derrida's work, but which will be examined here in his early work on Husserl. For it is in Husserl's late work on the relation between philosophy and the positive sciences that Derrida identifies a transcendental movement essential to metaphysics in general.

1   There is a transcendental imperative in the very structure of experience. We can recognize this structure when we consider the nature of language, but the implications extend beyond language to consciousness in general.

2   The thought or concept that we might form of this transcendental impera-
    tive always occurs from within experience or meaning, despite the fact that it
    refers to 'conditions' which are anterior to meaning.
3   In Western philosophy this *necessary* logic of the transcendental has always
    been understood in terms of time. However, this understanding of a tran-
    scendental temporality that is the condition for all appearances requires an
    empirical determination of space. A certain notion of space has tied the
    Western understanding of transcendental time to an ethics of activity as
    opposed to passivity.
4   The thought or representation of transcendental temporality always takes
    place from within a specific epoch. There is always a specific or determined
    way in which time 'in general' is abstracted from the worldly representations
    of time. Any articulation of transcendental logic can only be quasi-
    transcendental, for it borrows from the finite figures it seeks to explain. We
    therefore need to look at the etymological conditions that enable any language
    to theorize the possibility of language in general. (Philosophy is not just one
    language game among others, but its capacity to think the 'opening' of any
    language is itself an event of language.)
5   Transcendental questions are only possible with a non-empirical notion of
    history. We can only think of a specific epoch if we have some general sense
    of human history, which is then instantiated in any historical period. Any
    positive science requires a transcendental 'horizon'. But the condition for
    thinking this transcendental horizon is some concept of human life in
    general, or a concept of subjectivity that is different from its empirical or
    'human' forms. Such a notion of the unity or horizon of subjectivity
    depends upon determined spatial conditions. This means that we can ask
    about the philological, historical and textual conditions that make transcen-
    dental questions possible. But this also means that we can ask about the
    conditions that enable the very project of 'human' sciences. (This was the
    project of Michel Foucault, whose work, alongside Derrida's, can be read as
    a transcendental study of transcendental philosophy.)

1 The transcendental imperative

According to Derrida, who throughout this chapter I will be reading through his
work on Husserl, the transcendental project is 'announced' in experience.[2]
(Experience is only possible, Husserl argues, if something like a transcendental
Idea is already in operation.) Philosophy, in its transcendental forms, only brings
to explicit articulation a structure that necessarily governs all experience or
consciousness. This can be understood if we consider the Husserlian theory of
intentionality, a theory to which Derrida rigorously adheres, both in his reading
of Husserl and in his much later engagement with John Searle and speech-act
theory.[3]

   Consciousness is intentional because it is always consciousness-of. In fact,
consciousness is nothing other than directedness towards some sense. The

experience of a spatio-temporal object is coherent because of the sense-bestowing activity of consciousness. The various perspectives cohere only because experience aims at presenting the thing fully; some full presence must be anticipated in order to provide an idea of unity that organizes and renders experience as the experience *of* what is other than itself. There is, then, in all experience an aiming for the fulfilment of presentation. If this were not so, no world or objectivity would be possible at all. There can only be a world or experienced empirical reality through intentionality. (Intentionality is not just apperception; it is not just the synthesis of perceptions, for it synthesizes perceptions through *sense*, which is reducible neither to the thing itself, nor its aspects, but is an anticipated fulfilment of perception.) This is disclosed in the 'eidetic reduction', the analysis of the very structure of experience if it is to be experience at all. (Derrida follows Husserl in seeing the eidetic reduction as distinct from, and prior to, the transcendental reduction. The eidetic reduction is *static* – describing the very structure of experience – while the transcendental reduction is *genetic* – accounting for the possibility of such a structure.) If we look at any experience and describe it faithfully then we recognize that all experience is guided by sense. Consciousness must intend or anticipate some object such that all its experiences may be experienced *as* experiences *of* some world. This *telos* in experience applies even if the guiding sense undergoes modification, is initially vague, or remains unfulfilled or 'empty'.

The ideal object is, for Husserl according to Derrida, the privileged object from which this notion of experience will be explicated. For while a spatio-temporal object is essentially always open to further modifications, the sense of the ideal object is, properly, fully present to consciousness. We can manipulate mathematical and geometrical symbols in an empty or unfulfilled manner, mechanically combining the terms as if by rote. But it is the very essence of the ideal object to be capable of full presentation. A sense is strictly idealized or formalized only when it is 'freed' from any determination outside consciousness. We don't have the full sense of a truth of logic until we recognize its validity regardless of any of its specific instances. The mathematical ideal object is only *ideal* when it can be thought and presented as a *pure* sense; it is at once objective – not reducible to a psychological event – but nevertheless immanent to consciousness in general. Its meaning is essentially available to any possible consciousness, and this meaning can be fully presented. Regardless of the empirical origin and regardless of the signs or tokens used to convey its sense, once it is constituted within a formal language any consciousness whatever must be capable of retrieving the original sense of the ideal object. If this were not possible then we would merely be dealing with a local or 'factual' sense. The sense of the ideal object has freed itself from the facts and specific regions that are nevertheless required for its constitution.

The eidetic reduction takes the experience of an object – such as the ideal object of mathematics – and inquires into its structure and sense. In the case of the ideal object or ideal truth, its very *meaning* is that it is not reducible to consciousness or an event within the world. To say that a mathematical theorem

is *true* is to say that it is valid for any possible history and for any possible culture: 'Pure truth or the pretension to pure truth is missed in its *meaning* as soon as one attempts … to account for it from within a determined historical locality.'[4] Like the spatio-temporal object, the very experience of the ideal object already presupposes, or 'intends', the possible existence of other experiencing subjects, or what Derrida refers to as a 'transcendental community'.[5] Such a truth *would also* be valid in the future. The eidetic analysis of the spatio-temporal object, however, also reveals an entirely different mode of intentionality and sense; for such an object is always given as anticipated, as open to future revision *and* as part of a specific 'life-world' or horizon of meanings. Once the meaning of the intended object has revealed a certain structure, the transcendental reduction can question how such a sense is possible. The transcendental reduction, as opposed to the eidetic reduction, takes the experience of worldly being – the world given as a region of objects, both natural and ideal – and asks how being at all is possible. How is the intentional aiming for presence that is essential to all experience possible? According to Husserl and phenomenology, the transcendental reduction discloses the absolute status of consciousness, and this is where phenomenology distinguishes itself from Kantian transcendental idealism. Transcendental questions inquire into the conditions for possible experience. Kant demonstrated that any experience whatever required the *a priori* forms of time and space; it makes no sense to think of knowledge or experience outside such conditions. Phenomenology, on its own account, goes one (transcendental) step further. We cannot simply describe the *a priori* structures of experience; we need also to account for how such *a priori* structures are possible. (This is not just the demand to account for the very nature of consciousness; it is also a requirement to explain the possibility of the very *idea* of the *a priori*.[6] How is it that we ask the question of what must be valid for any possible consciousness? Where does this idea of consciousness in general come from? Derrida refers to this question as the 'opening to infinity'.[7]) If time is a necessary condition for experience, how is time possible, and what is its genesis?[8] Time is not just the form that knowledge must take; time is absolute life. Time is not the synthesis *by* the subject *of* intuited data; subject and object are constituted within the absolute flow of time that is also nothing other than the life of consciousness. Time is intentionality and, according to Derrida, meaning and sense. For, without the intentional aiming towards a world and presence there would be no connection of time into a *recognizable* unity. (Recognition or self-presentation is, for Derrida, the idea, *telos* and ethic of transcendental phenomenology.) It is the flow of consciousness itself which produces a 'world' as a unified horizon within which any single experience is possible, including the experience of the experiencing subject or 'ego'.

All experience is intentional; this can be demonstrated if we describe any experience with fidelity (as in the eidetic reduction). The spatio-temporal object 'intends' a future fulfilment of perspectival perceptions; the ideal object intends a truth and validity above and beyond any specific instance. Intentionality, as disclosed in the transcendental reduction, is nothing more than the *meaningful* flow of time, a time that is always directed towards the presentation of sense.

The experience of any thing as present, existing, or as located within the world requires a transcendental horizon of the world in general.[9] The transcendental reduction reveals that any givenness presupposes a belief or positing of the world. (Such a 'belief' or acceptance is not a psychological event, but is required to think of *any* thing, including the 'psyche'.) This *sense* of the world is temporality: a unified order of appearances that aim at or are directed towards some presence while retaining previously intended appearances.

Derrida draws two interpretive consequences from this structure of intentionality. The first of these is that the Idea of presence is essential to the structure of experience.[10] *To a certain extent* Derrida's own quasi-transcendental method is critical of this Idea in so far as he challenges what he refers to as the *telos* of philosophy which establishes the full presence of sense as its ideal. (Why, for example, do philosophers of language take the successful act of communication as the norm, rather than considering the 'structural possibility' of non-presentation that resides in the very condition of language?) In his reading of Husserl Derrida argues that Husserl takes as his 'model' the ideal object of mathematics and geometry.[11] (Indeed, Husserl criticizes Descartes' dependence on geometry as a given set of rules or method, rather than seeing geometry as an ideal and intuitable *sense*.[12] Husserl, Derrida argues, must dismiss any merely empirical understanding of space in favour of a space that can be experienced by consciousness in general.[13]) Unlike the perspectively given spatio-temporal object which, necessarily, always remains to some extent presumed, the mathematical object *can* be fully presented. Indeed, according to Derrida, it is this re-activation of ideal sense which governs the project and ethics of Husserl's phenomenology. Ideal objects are neither real nor psychological; their ideality requires that even though they have been constituted by some consciousness within history, their *sense* can always be re-presented.[14] If geometry is valid, this is because its sense is not merely received; it is always possible to repeat the founding and justifying sense. Sciences may operate with constituted systems, but the ideal truths of science are only possible if the constituted system can be repeated and re-activated independently of its factual or empirical origin. Derrida refers to this as a transcendental history or historicity, which needs to be distinguished from empirical history and historicism.[15] He also identifies this phenomenological method of transcendental history with the transcendental project as such and with metaphysics. Truth, he insists, is nothing other than this *telos* of pure presence, this requirement for that which will remain the same regardless of any 'worldly' event. Philosophy must be critical of any merely constituted, received or worldly sense: *once constituted*, the sense of truth must transcend any of its constituting acts. If something is true, then it must be capable of being validated, brought to presence and comprehended. The ideal of truth is the ideal of presence. But this philosophical ideal of truth is 'announced' in experience, for there is no experience of a world without this sense of a presence to be fulfilled and a world that is there for others. Philosophy, as phenomenology, is essentially transcendental. It does not accept the constituted facts of a science, system or language, but enquires into the sense or possibility of any worldly system. Philosophy must, then, have an

Idea of truth that is not *within* any constituted language or system; such a truth must be and will have been available for representation from within any language whatever.[16]

   This is why Derrida frequently uses the phrase 'in general'. Gathered from Kant, it performs a transcendental function in Derrida's work. The historian can describe the history of geometry or literature, listing various facts, but the philosopher – if she is really doing philosophy – must ask: what is geometry in general? (How is the ideal or formal character of space possible?) What is literature in general? (What, in all these cases, is the *concept*[17] of the literary that organizes a factual study?) More importantly, as in the transcendental reduction, the philosopher can ask: what is history in general? (The very fact that we can ask such a question demonstrates an Idea that intends some sense beyond any single fact.) For Derrida this question of history in general is *the* transcendental question precisely because being or any presence is only possible through history. Only if there is some *sense*, a meaning which remains the same through time, can there be a unified 'world'. More importantly, only with a *teleological* sense of history can there be truth. It is only if we imagine what would be the case for any possible epoch or culture that we can have the idea and project of strict scientific truth. The very *meaning* of a scientific proposition posited as true is that it must be capable of being restored to the full presentation of its original formulation. For Derrida, following Husserl, *if* we accept the intentional nature of all experience[18] – its aiming towards presence – then the philosophical commitment to pure truth is 'announced' in experience. Further, the phenomenological commitment to a transcendental reduction that re-activates the very sense of the world is the fulfilment of philosophy, for metaphysics is only possible as the idea of a truth above and beyond any factual or empirical history.

   So, the first consequence of the intentional nature of consciousness is that the idea of presence governs meaningful experience, and this idea is also the *telos* of metaphysics. The second consequence that Derrida draws regarding the structure of intentionality concerns the nature of language, especially concepts. In his long-running debate with John Searle, Derrida reaffirmed his commitment to intentionality and did so through an argument regarding the relation between concepts and contexts. A concept only works or has meaning if it intends some sense. The condition for a context – you and I speaking together – is that we posit some sense which is not just what I want a word to mean but which must carry across a community of speakers. According to Searle, this necessary expectation is best explained through context: what a word means depends upon the conventions of a context. Without such a context, where conventions of exchange determine what we can and can't do with words, words would have no meaning at all. The mistake Derrida makes, Searle argues, is to think that because a concept has no necessary, essential and fully present sense its meaning is then indeterminate. Nothing in the *concept* determines sense, admits Searle, but contexts have a determining function. It makes no sense to ask what a concept means in general, free of any particular context, for meaning is only possible through shared recognition, mutual exchange and convention (or a specific

context). Transcendental questions – at least the sort employed by Derrida – rely on a misguided commitment to the *ideality* of concepts; they posit some sense independent of contexts and then fall into despair when no such sense is presented.[19]

According to Derrida, however, a concept can only work and there can only be contexts if concepts do *intend* (if not possess) such an ideality. Once a concept is articulated within a context, it is possible for it to be repeated outside that context. Further, in order for us to recognize a context, such as a conversation, a lecture or a stage-play, we must already have some sense of just what such a context is. Derrida is quite prepared to admit the determining function of contexts. But he insists that such determinacy is only possible *because* concepts are undecidable. There can only be shared communication if meaning has been freed from any specific speaker and given a repeatable form or sense that allows it to be circulated throughout a context.[20] In order for what I say to be meaningful it must be possible for it to function in my absence.[21] And if this is *possible*, then it is also possible that an utterance might detach itself from a context. It is possible to read Shakespeare according to the context of Elizabethan England, but this contextual location is only possible and recognizable because it is also possible to repeat Shakespeare in other contexts. We might argue that to do so is less valuable and that *Richard III* is a richer text when *not* read as a comment on Nazi Germany. But we would have to make an argument for such a contextual location; the context itself cannot decide on what counts as a legitimate and illegitimate use. If something can be articulated and meaningful within a context, then it bears all the features of repeatability that allow it to be repeated beyond that context.

A concept, Derrida insists, is meaningful only if it refers to a sense that transcends my specific or singular intention. It is always possible, therefore, that I might ask, 'What is justice in general?' or 'What does justice really mean?'. Now it is true that this question of the ideal sense of a concept must begin from a determined context. (We can always choose not to ask such a question precisely because, like Searle, we will insist that such a disengaged or pure sense can never be presented. Or we can, like Derrida, say that the question itself, while never capable of presenting a concept's pure sense, can produce an Idea of a sense that *would* exceed any contextual determination.) If a concept works and can be repeated in a variety of conversations *within* a context, then it can also, necessarily, be questioned *as if* it were to apply to no particular context. Searle is quite right to maintain that there are no ideal meanings that are already there, only to be articulated within contexts. But Derrida contends that while no such ideal meaning may be *present*, and that concepts are always contextually located or 'decided', there is also a future sense or intention that transcends a context. This is a *possible* sense, the possibility of future repetitions that render a concept 'undecidable'. Indeed, a context can only determine or decide a concept because a concept is undecidable; if it did not have the *possibility* of being repeated with another sense that is not present and activated in this context, then its exchange within the original context would also not be possible. This is intrinsic to the

function of *any* concept: that it intends some *sense* above and beyond the specific instances of its use. In so-called 'normal' cases, of course, we *do not* ask about what a concept means *in general*, or what its essential sense or intention is independent of its uses. For Derrida, however, the *possibility* for a concept to be meaningful across contexts or to *not* be stabilized by a context tells us about the structure of language and the structure of experience.[22] There must be some idea of presence or a *telos* in any act of meaning. A language necessarily harbours the possibility of a transcendental question – of sense in general – but this is also the possibility of the non-presence or non-fulfilment of sense. It is only when a concept or sense has been formalized into some iterable sign that it can be meaningfully exchanged *and* corrupted or misused. It is only because a concept is not fully determined by its context that it can be repeated in an 'empty', 'parasitic' or even unintended manner. (Analogously, Husserl argues that the ideal objects of geometry can only be transmitted in a meaningful history if they are inscribed in a system of signs, but this is *also* what allows for the 'fall' of science into empty repetition and the loss of foundations.) In the debate with Searle this 'structural possibility' of concepts means that any pragmatic commitment to remaining within contexts and *not* asking transcendental questions depends upon a prior decision that privileges the successful speech act over the always possible unfulfilled use of a concept. This is a privilege that both characterizes the transcendental project (which aims to bring the conditions of sense to presence and comprehension) and is also undone by the transcendental project. It is always possible to appeal to the sense of a concept beyond its contextual determination. However, while Derrida follows Husserl in arguing that there is an Idea, ideal or *telos* of sense in experience and language, and that this Idea is recognized in the transcendental inquiry into the very structures of meaning in general, Derrida also asks how the Idea of the transcendental itself is possible. Much of his own work is a transcendental investigation into the Idea of presence or sense which operates as the *telos* of philosophy, language and meaningful experience.

2 Quasi-transcendentals

It is often noted that Derrida's deconstruction operates by a 'double method'. Like Kant and Husserl, Derrida does not see metaphysical striving as an activity imposed by philosophers on everyday experience and language. Reason has a structure which necessarily 'opens to infinity'. The very synthesis of the world into an ordered unity requires the Idea of presence. In *Limited Inc* Derrida stresses this necessary opening of contexts. Ethical questions can never be answered from within contexts precisely because it is always possible to ask the question of a concept's sense above and beyond any contextual determination. It is because concepts have a necessary 'undecidability' or because concepts are necessarily capable of freeing themselves from their ground or origin that we must attend to, and be responsible for, the *decision* of concepts. In the absence of any foundation for language, responsibility for the determination of language is

heightened. Any appeal to contexts as that which decides or contains the force of a concept is, Derrida suggests, a moralism that evades the always-possible transcendental question. The transcendental question expands responsibility in two directions, and these are brought out in the double method of deconstruction. First, it is always possible to ask the sense of a concept – for example, what justice is in general – above and beyond any of its contextual instances. We might say, as Derrida has done, that there is a 'justice-to-come' or a 'democracy-to-come': the Idea of a justice or democracy which is promised by the concept but which is also belied by any of the concept's given determinations. The very Idea of justice, for example, is that which would remain above and beyond any empirical determination of justice, always capable of being appealed to in a dispute or dialogue about justice. We may only have determined cases of justice that are always *decided*. But there is also a necessary undecidability of a concept that promises a justice of the future.

On the other hand, and this is the other 'side' of the double method, the transcendental question can also operate in the other direction: not towards the sense of a concept in general, or to the Idea of the concept, but to the conditions for the possibility of the concept. This brings us to Derrida's notion of iterability or quasi-transcendentals. (He also refers to 'aconceptual' concepts or non-concepts.) A concept only works if there is an intended sense that can be repeated and re-activated or appealed to through time and across contexts. This repeatability requires some recognizable system of differences as its support, such as the phonemes, inscriptive marks or signifiers of a language. (For Derrida, the 'trace', strictly speaking, is the event of inscription or marking which allows for, or produces, identifiable marks, and so the trace remains absent from the system it conditions.[23]) Thought is only possible after the tracing of a system, and so the trace itself must remain *unthought*.[24] Conceptuality or sense – while intentionally directed towards a fulfilment or presence – relies upon a system of *differential* marks. Thought is conditioned by a system: a system whose terms are produced through difference or relation. The structure of an iterable system is not determined by what each mark *is* but by its differential relation to all other marks. The letters of an alphabet or the phonemic differences of a language are never meaningful in themselves but only through reference to each other; nor is their differentiation or tracing an event whose sense can be retrieved or comprehended. The iterable mark is 'created' (or, rather, effected) through opposition and is therefore anterior to sense, intention and presentation. Iterability is itself never capable of being presented; it is what allows the intentional structure of presence and presentation to operate. Intentionality – the process of a meaningful connection of experiences into an ordered unity – necessarily relies on absent differential or iterable differences. Derrida argues that there will always be some graphic 'remainder' in the production of sense. However, any attempt to think or conceptualize this differential process that allows the conscious synthesis of sense to emerge can only do so by 'borrowing' from an already determined system.[25] There may be a transcendental imperative to think the very emergence of sense and meaning, but we can only do so from within

meaning, supported by a system or 'syntax' prior to all meaning. There are two responses we might make to this circularity or inability for the transcendental question to be fully self-grounding. The first would be the Heideggerian notion of the circle. We use the word 'being', necessarily, because we live in a world to which we are always directed as something other than ourselves. We can ask, *from our position within the world and beings*, what *Being* is: a Being not to be ostensively defined by any single being. It would be a mistake to think that this question is like any other and might be presented with an objective answer, such as 'Being is … God, mind, matter, spirit or consciousness'. Rather, such a question can only disclose the *meaning* of Being, the sense of Being that enabled us to have beings, a sense that we never really brought to light. From our natural or everyday understanding of beings we ask a transcendental question – what is Being? – and are brought back to where we were all along. The meaning of being, what is hidden in all our articulations of being, is time. For in order to say that anything *is*, that it remains *present*, we are already deploying projections and retentions of time. The question of Being does not take us outside our world of sense and presence; it interprets the very meaning of presence.[26]

Derrida's quasi-transcendentals are an attempt to break this circularity, a circularity that he identifies with time and meaning. Beyond the *meaning* of being – the concept or sense from which our world is given – there are forces, traces or differences which effect meaning but which are not comprehended by meaning. We can use a term within meaning to try to think that which is not brought to presence, meaningful or presentable. Derrida refers to these as aconceptual concepts or non-concepts or remarks that *différance* is 'not a concept' and that it 'is not'.[27] The minute we have named or referred to transcendental *différance* or 'tracing', it has been returned to repeatability and sense. We cannot *name* those unintended, singular, lost or 'anarchic' differential movements that produce and disrupt sense, for to name a singular event is to conceptualize it, refer it beyond itself and include it within temporal comprehension and relation. Derrida agrees with Heidegger that any attempt to think what is other than time – say, as condition, *a priori* or what lies before time – must both use temporal concepts *and* rely on temporal synthesis in order to *mean* anything at all. The challenge to the circle of time lies, for Derrida, in a method that is quasi-transcendental. Time may be the limit of thought as sense and meaning, but the capacity to *think* this limit is derived from spatial events. Such events can be named *quasi*-transcendentally as spatial because metaphysics has defined time as inner sense and the synthesis of unity, in opposition to outer sense, simultaneity and dispersion of spatial points. The points of time are always points of 'now' or 'presence': points *from which* the past and future are projected and retained. They are only 'points' in so far as they have been separated from the prior unity of time as an unpunctuated flow. Metaphysics has always, Derrida insists, defined itself against spatial concepts of time, and this is because space has been understood as outside the comprehension of sense and meaning. A quasi-transcendental method can only think the other of time and sense from within the figures of time and sense. The first step is to demonstrate the figures through

which the transcendental has been thought; the second is to destabilize those figures by demonstrating their limit.

Far from the transcendental critique returning to the meaning or sense from which the unity of the world is possible, Derrida's quasi-transcendentals attempt to name forces at work in language which do not emerge from consciousness, intention or presence. According to Derrida, there are ethical as well as formally rigorous reasons for a transcendental project which can only yield quasi-transcendental and non-final 'answers'. Derrida's 'aconceptual concepts', such as the trace, '*différance*', writing or *grammé*, are attempts to disrupt what he interprets as a Western ethics of recognition and onto-theology: an ethics that bases decisions on some ground of being outside the decision. If time forms a transcendental horizon, and time is the active self-synthesis and recognition of consciousness, then a certain privilege or decision is granted to the active and self-comprehending modes of *human* life as opposed to those of passivity, affect and loss. The idea that all being emerges from the temporal synthesis of sense posits a consciousness or humanity in general which functions as the world's transcendental or retrievable horizon.[28] The idea of a time which differs from itself in order to produce concepts or a meaning which allow it to return to sense and recognition brings with it a specific notion of ethical and political agency.[29] There is a privileging of a self-determining, active and non-affected subjectivity:

> in spite of all the themes of receptive or intuitive intentionality and passive genesis, the concept of intentionality remains caught up in the tradition of voluntaristic metaphysics – that is, perhaps, in metaphysics *as such*. The explicit teleology that commands the whole of transcendental phenomenology would be at bottom nothing but a transcendental voluntarism.[30]

By contrast, Derrida's own work looks at all the passive forces in language and philosophy which have an ethical force and for which we may need to bear responsibility. Our concepts may operate in ways that we do not intend, or may have a force that is not reducible to contextual origin or pragmatics.[31] To think forces beyond those of active comprehension and temporal self-genesis is both a more rigorous transcendentalism and a way of thinking ethics and politics beyond decision and agency.

3 The Western epoch

It is in his reading of Husserl, especially Husserl's *Origin of Geometry*, that Derrida demonstrates how the transcendental project of phenomenology is made possible through a specific determination of space. To begin with, Derrida draws attention to Husserl's transcendental criticisms of Descartes and Kant. Descartes correctly begins philosophy by doubting all received opinions regarding the being of the world and attends only to appearances. However, according to Husserl, Descartes locates appearance within a worldly region (*res cogitans*) and assumes that the subject is a different type of worldly thing or substance.

Transcendental phenomenology, by contrast, suspends or brackets all claims to the status of being and asks how any being or region comes to appear, including the being of the subject and the 'immanent' region of consciousness. An inquiry is only rigorously transcendental, then, if it frees itself from any specific region of being, especially the being of man or the subject. This is also what separates phenomenology from Kantian criticism, for the latter stops at the region of the understanding and the *a priori* without investigating the sense and genesis of the *a priori*.[32] The task of phenomenology, in contrast with a critical or Kantian transcendentalism that describes necessary conditions, is to explain the 'opening to infinity' or the 'passage to the limit': how an empirical and factual experience of space can yield an ideal spatiality (geometry) that is not attached to any specific region:

> the culture of truth is itself only the possibility of a *reduction* of empirical culture and is manifested to itself only through such a reduction, a reduction which has become possible by an irruption of the infinite as a revolution within empirical culture.[33]

The difficulty of the phenomenological project, according to Derrida, lies in this extremely rigorous transcendentalism. Husserl refuses to halt the transcendental question at any specific region – such as the subject or understanding – in order to account for the emergence of regionality in general *and* the philosophical question of this pure region. Husserlian phenomenology is, for Derrida, the fulfilment of the circular *telos* of all metaphysics. Philosophical or scientific truth begins with the Idea of a truth of the world in general: that is, what is true not just for this or that epoch or culture, but true for the very epoch of human life. Science posits this truth in a naïve or unreflected manner; it searches for universal truths. Philosophy is capable, even in its Greek infancy, of bringing this Idea of truth to articulation; philosophy defines the ideal of truth as that which must remain the same or true for any epoch or subjectivity. In phenomenology, however, Husserl accounts for the genesis of the Idea of the world in general, or truth, and does so from within the concrete life of the world. He does this, Derrida argues, by producing a distinction between an empirical or factual history and a transcendental or ideal history. And it is no accident, Derrida insists, that Husserl's privileged example is geometry.[34] For the very idea of the transcendental must posit something like a world *horizon*, or a unified space within which all concrete life and empirical experiences of space are possible.[35] While the ancient Greek inauguration of science and geometry is a factual origin – there must have been some in-worldly inscription of geometrical axioms – these axioms enable, and require the idea of, space in general. On the one hand, inscription and factual origins – specific geometers within an epoch – are required to constitute the sense of this ideal region. On the other hand, the very sense of these ideal objects is such that their meaning can operate even when all *actual* traces of the origin are erased. We may well never actually know the psychological empirical history of Euclidean geometry; but the very *sense* of the

axioms referring to any space whatever can always be reactivated in an ideal or transcendental history. Seeing an axiom *as valid* is nothing other than a capacity to reformulate its sense. It must always be possible in any positive science – if it is a *science* – to retrieve the genesis of sense. Now, according to Derrida, it is this Idea of science or an ideal history that is crucial to the Western epoch of time as meaning and meaning as time. The very project of transcendental reactivation and comprehension, the project of returning to the opening of the Idea of the unity of the *world in general*, rests upon an idea of the Western epoch. For it is only in the self-representation of Western science,[36] and through the Greek 'opening to infinity', that there is an idea of truth freed from any given region. Husserl takes all experience of specific beings 'back' to the very sense of a 'world' or unified horizon, which is there for me, for others, has been there for the past and will be there for the future. Even the non-comprehension or untranslatability of other cultures requires the recognition of them *as cultures* and therefore as within the same 'life-world'. Husserl's inclusion of time, being and sense within the general horizon of concrete life is, according to Derrida, *the* ethic of a necessarily transcendental tradition of philosophy. It is only with the notion of life in general, freed from any determined image of man, that there can be a) the ideality of mathematics and geometry and b) the transcendental phenomenology that accounts for how such ideal objects are constituted. For Derrida, though, this transcendental horizon of absolute consciousness as the history of all sense, or the transcendental history, which thinks of a truth in general, must always bear the traces of a determined, empirical, factual or singular space.

This has two broad consequences for Derrida's own philosophy of deconstruction, a 'method' that can be seen to extend the transcendental claims of phenomenology beyond phenomenology. If the transcendental/metaphysical question is only possible with the idea of a region or community in general,[37] what are the singular forces that allow for the production of this idea? (This is the etymological dimension of deconstruction, which I will explore in the next section.) Second, and finally, how do we think the historical and geographical emergence of the notion of this *Ur-region* of transcendental inquiry? (This is the philological dimension of deconstruction, which will be the focus of the conclusion.)

4 The etymological reduction

The transcendental reduction describes the appearance of any region – such as natural objects, other persons, my own conscious life, the ideal objects of science – and then asks about the sense, meaning or intention which enables such a region to appear. Ultimately, there must be the Idea of presence or sense in general which grounds the world, the idea of a unified horizon that is there for any consciousness whatsoever. However, according to Derrida, Husserl never asked the question of the genesis of this sense of the living present. He brought the *telos* of philosophy to self-recognition but never inquired how this logos or life

in general produced the sense of the present upon which its own recognition depends. In order for Husserl to posit a transcendental horizon within which life comes to presence he must differentiate between the world as experienced and the genesis of that world; but this transcendental soul or life, if it is to be truly transcendental, must not be represented as a substantial thing. We use the language of consciousness, soul or 'man' but these terms must be disengaged from their everyday use, employed only as analogies or metaphors. *Without* this function of metaphor or analogy we would always remain within our determined language and life-world. We must think consciousness as *other than* any of its determined figures, but also not as another thing. Its difference from the world must not be an actual or spatial separation but a transcendental determination. According to Derrida:

> If the world needs the *supplement of a soul*, the soul, which is in the world, needs the *supplementary nothing* which is the transcendental and without which no world would appear … we must, if we are attentive to Husserl's renewal of the notion of 'transcendental,' refrain from attributing any reality to this distance, substantializing this nonconsistency or making it be, even merely analogically, some thing or some moment of the world. If language never escapes analogy, if it is indeed analogy through and through, it ought, having arrived at this point, at this stage, freely to assume its own destruction and cast metaphor against metaphor … It is at the price of this war of language against itself that the sense and the question of its origin will be thinkable. This war is obviously not one among others. A polemic for the possibility of sense and world, it takes place in this *difference*, which, we have seen, cannot reside in the world but only in language, in the transcendental disquietude of language. Indeed, far from only living in language, this war is also the origin and residue of language. Language preserves the difference that preserves language.[38]

There can only be sense if it is *other than* the concrete or empirical signs of a language; but this difference from language, this sense *of* the world, is only possible through language. For Derrida, Husserl never questioned the linguistic support or medium of the philosophical logos. Such a question would go beyond the linguistic systems within which concepts are articulated to consider the transcendental conditions of language, conditions that are 'spatial' in so far as they lie outside the self-genesis of consciousness and the comprehension of sense.[39] Derrida contrasts deconstruction with the hermeneutic circle of temporality. The privileging of time as sense or as the way in which life differs from itself in order to synthesize itself through history, and then know itself *as time*, relies on a prior, unstated and ethical distinction between two types of space and two types of line.

Derrida frequently refers to a 'decision' which inaugurates the very idea of philosophy as transcendental self-comprehension but which philosophy itself cannot master (precisely because philosophy always begins from an idea of active

self-mastery). It is in his early essay on Heidegger that he draws attention to two notions of the line or *grammé*. Aristotle, no less than Heidegger, distinguishes the line that we might use as an analogy for time from the line of space. Time can only be thought as a line *by analogy* because a spatial or mathematical line has simultaneous points. It's possible to occupy a point in space while other points are present, simultaneous, different and unrelated to each other, not present to each other. The 'nows' of time, by contrast, are always present; any other 'now' can only be thought from the present now and as another now. The nows of time are not strung indifferently together and alongside each other in simple relations of presence and absence; the now is the present through which all past and future 'nows' will flow. The 'line' of time is not a series of points, dispersed beyond the point of the present, but is only thinkable from the present as a series of past nows and future nows. This is, Derrida concludes, a privileging of self-presence and self-comprehension that places time as a transcendental origin beyond any of its determined or punctuated figures, for time is a flow and a unity and must not be confused with any of its synthesized constitutions. The philosopher must rigorously point out that the line of time is *only analogous* to the line of space.

Derrida draws two points from this. First, the transcendental is produced through this function of analogy. Second, the function or 'distance' of analogy must itself be thought through analogies and metaphors. (The transcendental subject is not to be confused with the psychological subject; time is not to be confused with the spatial images we have of it; sense must be distinguished from any of its tokens; transcendental history or the genesis of meaning lies before any empirical history; and the horizon of the 'world' must be strictly separated from the 'earth' as a natural object.) Derrida is not simply critical of the transcendental as analogous to the empirical but strictly separate from it. Indeed, he regards this capacity for metaphor and analogy as the very 'opening' of philosophy. But it does mean that the transcendental is marked by its point of departure and that we would do well to recognize the determined figures from which the transcendental is effected: including the figures of 'distance', 'passage', 'transport' and 'exchange' which we use to think metaphor and analogy (the analogies of analogy or the metaphors of metaphor).

This leads to the second point regarding the privileging of a certain notion of line in Aristotle. The analogy of the line of time as a circle that traces itself in order to return to and comprehend itself is not an innocent metaphor or analogy but privileges, or rests upon, the hierarchy of *energeia* over *dynamis* (that is, an 'energy' that realizes and actively expresses itself, as opposed to a movement or power without sense).[40] The mathematical points of space are dispersed through the line and are not comprehended by a single point. If we were to think time in this 'mathematical' way, then time would not be the flow of self-constituting becoming and sense within a single unity. It would be marked by absence, discontinuity, non-comprehension and affect from without (points beyond inclusion or active relation).

This, indeed, is how Derrida wants to think the history of philosophy and transcendental questions. Despite its self-definition, philosophy is not the active

passage of self-comprehension through time that can turn back and recognize its origin in the production of meaning. Philosophy has been determined from without by 'factical', contingent, undecidable and errant figures from which its positing of transcendental justification is launched. This claim distinguishes Derrida's etymological emphases from Heideggerian *Destruktion*, although Derrida also recognizes that Heidegger at times thought that we might think beyond the epoch of the *meaning* of Being towards that which effects Being. A Heideggerian etymology, following on from Husserl's phenomenology, insists upon the possible reactivation of sense. 'Logos', for example, originally referred to a 'saying-gathering'. Before we constituted some simply self-present system of 'logic' there was an active and purposeful relation to the world. Logos was not an imposed formal system but a discourse of the world dynamically produced through exchange, disclosure and meaningful action.[41] Derrida, by contrast, does not approach etymology or the textual basis of philosophy to bring 'us' back to an earlier sense.[42] On the contrary, it is often the case that a 'trace' or *grammé* produces a difference upon which philosophy rests but which cannot be justified from within a philosophy. In his essay on Heidegger's critique of the tradition of time Derrida shows how Aristotle must rely on the *aporia* of the word *hama* (together, at the same time): without this figure that refers both to spatial and temporal simultaneity the very analogy that Aristotle draws to *differentiate* time from space would not be possible.[43] Furthermore, and more importantly, we can only think analogy and metaphor because of certain figures. What would the idea of metaphor be without the reference to exchange, substitution, carrying-over, vehicle or transport? What would analogy be without the spatial figures of difference, distance, or being alongside? More specifically, what would the notion of sense or meaning be without a certain figure of the *voice*? If we cannot think of an intelligible sense or intention 'behind' the signifier – if we don't have the signifier of *meaning* – then no single mark could be read as intended or meaningful. The question, for Derrida, is the linguistic and material/empirical production of those figures which enable us to think the intelligible and the transcendental. For Husserl, it is the figure of the living voice that enables a difference between any given signifier and its prior sense, but Derrida also looks at the figure of the mouth in Kant,[44] the word *Geist* in Heidegger,[45] and the word 'communication' in speech-act theory.[46] There must always be some word or 'supplement' that is used, within a text, to signify the ground or origin of the text. Without such a supplement, without the production of an origin of sense, the text could not produce the depth of meaning or intention that is essential to all 'saying'.

5 Philology of philosophy

Derrida is largely in agreement with the Husserlian transcendental project. We are presented with the experience of ideality, the sense of space in general, number in general or truth in general. Phenomenological responsibility lies in

accounting for the genesis of this sense. We need to explain the very possibility of the metaphysical question. How is it that we can think consciousness in general, irreducible to any of its determined, psychological or empirical figures? Such a project, Derrida argues, requires the thought of a unity: a human consciousness in general capable of recognizing itself in the Greek 'opening' of the idea of science and of fulfilling this project in the phenomenology of absolute consciousness. A transcendental intersubjectivity that allows for the very thought of different cultures and relative epochs itself relies on the general horizon of a 'world': a unity within which 'we' are variously located and which allows for the possibility of translation, understanding and even the recognition of misunderstanding or difference. It demands a 'pure and precultural *we*'.[47]

Like his near contemporary, Michel Foucault, Derrida can be seen as following in the tradition of Nietzsche's philological approach to philosophy's emergence. Nietzsche had provided an explicitly moral account of the genesis of philosophical truth. It is only those who lack the strength to deal with the forces of chaos and life who invent a higher world of truths and justifications that will enslave the power of this world.[48] But Derrida is more Kantian than Nietzsche. Whatever the lowly origin of the transcendental question and the thought of the supersensible, once I *can ask* about truth in general, or once I *can think the possibility* of what is not reducible to the empirically given, then this produces and demonstrates an Idea of freedom. It is the *sense* of what is not reducible to context that 'opens' philosophy. Derrida's own project affirmed *both* the necessary possibility of transcendental questions *and* their philological or 'geological' emergence (their locality, determination or 'decision').

This opens up a new relation between the human sciences and philosophy. First, we can always ask how – from certain historical, philological or ethnographic sources – it becomes possible to think human life as a general unity. How does the transcendental tradition of philosophy and its self-realization become possible? This would issue in a history of philosophy that is not so much a history of ideas as a history of what Foucault referred to as the 'middle region' or 'historical *a priori*'.[49] If philosophical or transcendental questions require the unity of thought in general, how is the medium or milieu of this unity produced in the various forms of subjectivity, culture, spirit, consciousness, language or 'man'? In the eighteenth century it was various projects in the positive sciences that enabled the notion of both human life in general and a unified human history.[50] The idea of 'man', as both Foucault and Derrida have argued, has been crucial to the transcendental project *and* to the critique of the transcendental project. For it is always possible to find a residual 'anthropologism' in determinations of the transcendental subject. 'Man' is just that being who is capable of thinking his existence as *other than* any determined image of man, but this empirical-transcendental understanding always risks being normalized into yet one more moral image of humanism. So, on the one hand, philosophy can be interrogated from a philological perspective, looking at the ways in which transcendental questions are opened from specific figures and regions. Foucault wrote a history of how 'man' was formed from the general space of 'life', language and labour enabled

by the disciplines of biology, linguistics and economics. Secondly, and at the same time, there can also be a transcendental critique of the human sciences. For all claims to examine human life in its relative contexts of 'history', 'culture', 'discourse', 'signification' or 'context' can only do so through an already decided general space or horizon. In this case it is always possible to ask, say, 'what is culture in general?' or 'what is history in general?' (The latter is precisely the question Derrida directs to Foucault's 'history of reason': the very idea of a history of reason must be buttressed by some already determined rational unity *within which* the specific determinations of reason might be described and criticized.) Derrida suggests, on some occasions, that the metaphysics of presence is inescapable and that we can only interrogate its determined figures. For the very project of meaning or sense will necessarily presuppose some unified horizon within which difference can be understood: 'Horizon is the always-already-there of a future which keeps the indetermination of its infinite openness intact (even though this future was announced to consciousness). As the structural determination of every material indeterminacy, a horizon is always virtually present in every experience; for it is at once the unity and the incompletion for that experience – the anticipated unity in every completion.'[51] In so far as we speak and think, we do so with the necessary *telos*, or intentionality, of a shared horizon of sense and a present world that is there to be disclosed. On the other hand, Derrida no less frequently also suggests that new modes of writing might enable us to think beyond a self-recognizing community of philosophy to a politics that focuses on the errant, non-meaningful and passive forces at work in thinking: 'A writing exceeding everything that the history of metaphysics has comprehended.'[52] His own work has sustained both sides of the transcendental question and project: a recognition of the essential possibility of thinking a sense that lies beyond any empirical instance *and* an interrogation into the non-sensical conditions for such thinking.[53]

Notes

1 Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction by Jacques Derrida*, trans. John P. Leavey, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1989, p. 153; hereinafter abbreviated to *Introduction*.

2 Derrida claims that deconstruction is not a 'method', but he is able to make this claim precisely because his work usually begins by reading a philosopher faithfully in order to follow their own arguments to a point of decision: a point where the meaningful arguments of the text rely upon some unargued and received distinction. Derrida's point is not to criticize such gaps in the argument, but to demonstrate a necessary structure of all metaphysical arguments. His procedure is to follow an argument through in order to show its necessary dependence *and* its necessary attempt to free itself from such dependence. In the case of Husserl, the fact that there is a movement of reason 'announced' in experience is an idea Derrida finds *both* in Husserl and in Western metaphysics. By following Husserl's specific understanding of reason, we can understand the structure of any possible articulation of reason. Most of what Derrida says in his work on Husserl is written by adopting the voice or position of Husserl, only to show the way in which Husserl ultimately partakes in the very structure of metaphysical arguments as transcendental arguments which he had sought to explain.

 3 It could be argued that Derrida's adherence to intentionality and the premises of
    phenomenology is in fact more rigid than Husserl's own. There has been much recent
    work on Husserl that would insist that his late work on time-consciousness and
    meaning challenges the earlier definitions of intentionality as a direction of
    consciousness aiming at full sense and presence. (Merleau-Ponty had, early on, argued
    that Husserl's concept of intentionality leads out of metaphysics and the primacy of
    consciousness to a sensible understanding of the world. See, especially, Maurice
    Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, trans. Richard C. McCleary, Evanston, Northwestern
    University Press, 1964. More recently, and with a far more challenging re-reading of
    Husserl, Donn Welton has explained the origins of meaning, from intentionality,
    without the privilege to full presentation which Derrida regards as the hallmark of
    Husserl's philosophy. See *The Origins of Meaning: A Critical Study of the Thresholds of
    Husserlian Phenomenology*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1983.) Throughout this
    chapter I will be considering Derrida's reading of Husserl. According to Derrida, it is
    the strict commitment of intentionality that is the very essence not just of transcen-
    dental phenomenology, but of any possible metaphysics.
 4 Jacques Derrida, '"Genesis and Structure" and Phenomenology', *Writing and
    Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, p. 160.
 5 Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 92.
 6 Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 117.
 7 Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 131.
 8 In his reading of Husserl, Derrida makes much of Husserl's requirement for an
    explanation at the levels of structure *and* genesis. On the one hand, as opposed to
    psychologism or historicism, there are universal structures of logic and validity. On
    the other hand, as opposed to the Platonizing gestures of a Frege, such structures
    must have their genesis within conscious life and must come to recognition in the
    history of consciousness even if they transcend any specific historical epoch.
 9 Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 83.
10 Derrida continually refers to Husserl's essential dependence on the Idea in the
    Kantian sense: we require a concept of full presence that structures experience but
    which is not presented within experience: 'It is not by chance that there is no
    phenomenology of the Idea. … If there is nothing to say about the Idea *itself*, it is
    because the idea is that starting from which something in general can be said.'
    (Derrida, *Introduction*, pp. 138–9). Derrida also, however, regards the key difficulty of
    phenomenology to lie in the dependence on this Kantian notion. While the Idea, for
    Kant, is a feature of a transcendental subject who provides the limit of what can be
    known, the Husserlian project seeks to explain and account for the being and possi-
    bility of the subject, and therefore of the Idea (Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 42).
11 Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 27.
12 Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 33.
13 'The world, therefore, is essentially determined by the dative and horizontal dimen-
    sion of being perceived [*l'être-perçu*] in a gaze whose object must always be able to be a
    theorem.' (ibid., p. 83).
14 'The ultimate form of ideality, the ideality of ideality, that in which the last instance
    one may anticipate or recall all repetition, is the *living present*, the self presence of tran-
    scendental life.' (Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's
    Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison, Evanston, Northwestern University Press,
    1973, p. 6.)
15 Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 87.
16 Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 77.
17 Derrida, in his debate with Searle which I will examine further on, insists on the
    ideality of concepts: a concept can only be meaningful if it intends some general
    sense and cannot just be a generalization from already given cases.

18 Much of Derrida's own work challenges this conditional. In his later work, especially, he suggests that there are forms of 'experience' or life that are not structured by the aims of intentionality; such events of non-fulfilment occur in art, literature, error, chance, corruption, death (literally and metaphorically) and passive affect. At this stage, though, Derrida is following through the premises and requirements of Husserl's philosophy. He will always remain committed to the idea that metaphysics is necessarily a commitment to truth as presence *and* that there is a structure to thought (as meaningful) that ties experience to the goal of presence. What he will continue to question is whether we might think or write outside the epoch of presence.

19 John Searle, 'Literary Theory and Its Discontents', *New Literary History*, 1994, vol. 25, pp. 637–67.

20 Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1988, p. 119.

21 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 54.

22 Derrida's emphasis upon transcendental possibility is both an extension and a critique of Heidegger's critique of the metaphysics of presence. Heidegger had argued that (initially and inauthentically) we tend to think of the world as something present and *then* that certain things are possible. But the reverse is the case; possibility conditions the actual world. Our present world depends on possibility, or what is *not yet* present: I can only experience this world as existing if I have some project of meanings and a future that will be given. The object before me is experienced as a thing in so far as I can approach it, use it and place it meaningfully within the life that I am always directed towards. Derrida shifts the emphasis, however, away from a possibility of activity and actualization to a possibility of loss, non-fulfilment and even death (Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 54). This will be explored more fully further on in Derrida's remarks on time.

23 'There may be a difference still more unthought than the difference between Being and beings. We certainly can go further toward naming it in our language. Beyond Being and beings, this difference, ceaselessly differing from and deferring (itself), would trace (itself) (by itself) – this *différance* would be the first or last trace if one could still speak, here, of origin and end. … Such a *différance* would at once, again, give us to think a writing without presence and without absence, without history, without cause, without *archia*, without *telos*, a writing that absolutely upsets all dialectics, all theology, all teleology, all ontology.' (Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1982, p. 67.)

24 This assumes, of course, that thought here refers to meaningful thought. As far as Derrida is concerned, metaphysics has never defined thought or consciousness in any other way than as meaningful, or as capable of representing and repeating its own sense to itself.

25 This is already admitted within the Husserlian project. We can think transcendental subjectivity and sense only in its difference from empirical subjectivity. We must use the same 'worldly' language in order to refer to the very origin of the world. 'This ambiguity concerns the unavoidable expressions: "belief in the world," "acceptance," and so forth, which originally possess a psychological meaning but which nevertheless enter into the theory of the reduction as transcendental concepts. These terms must therefore not be taken in their usual sense, but first take on their integral philosophical meaning from the performance of the reduction itself. This ambiguity, which encumbers every one of the phenomenological *epochê*'s self-interpretations, is caused by the unavoidable "falsity" of its point of departure within the natural attitude. The countless misunderstandings which Husserl's philosophy had to suffer are caused by the fact that one retains and works with primarily "psychological" concepts within the familiar ease of their worldly meaning, thus failing to participate in their decisive modification by performing the reduction.' (Eugen Fink, 'The Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Contemporary Criticism', in R.O. Elveton (ed.),

The Phenomenology of Husserl: Selected Critical Readings, Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1970, p. 117.)

26 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York, Harper & Row, 1962.

27 Derrida, *Margins*, p. 6.

28 Both Heidegger and Husserl try to define Da-Sein or consciousness against any normative notion of human life. Consciousness must not be confused with any in-worldly anthropologism. But it's this transcendental manoeuvre which is just the issue for Derrida: the securing of a ground of consciousness in general that is other than any empirical notion of 'man' will always be supported by, or derived from, a figure of the human. It could be argued that Heidegger's move away from Da-Sein and the meaning of Being to Being as Time anticipates Derrida's own criticism. (Indeed, in his book on Heidegger's politics Derrida suggests that Heidegger also criticizes a history of self-comprehension, suggesting a way out of the Greek epoch of presence.) Even in *Being and Time* Heidegger had argued that there is no time in general; the syntheses of time or existence are 'equiprimordial' with located (and therefore spatial) syntheses.

29 Many writers have regarded this connection between transcendental recognition and ethical activity as a *good* thing. If we realize that there is no foundation for our decisions other than ourselves, then we have to be responsible for our decisions; we can no longer posit a law outside ourselves. Derrida is critical of this phenomenological ethic of responsibility precisely because he believes that responsibility can go further: if we acknowledge the role that unintended events have on thought – such as, but not exclusively, the textual events of a language – then we may need to consider forces or 'decisions' that are not ours but which nevertheless structure our thinking.

30 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 34.

31 Both deconstruction and, perhaps more explicitly, feminist criticism have looked at the ethical consequences of the errancy of concepts. No one, or at least not everyone, may have intended to use the concept of reason to institute a sexual hierarchy. (Interesting cases for feminist theory are not really those of conscious oppression or prejudice but concern all those 'oppressions' within the language we speak and the structure of our thought.) The concept of reason has an inscriptive history which no speaker or writer can fully control. 'Reason' translates the Latin 'ratio', which describes some grounding logic or order through which the world is given. And this concept relies on certain figures – of a world that possesses its own order awaiting representation in consciousness. This also gives certain norms for thinking: of an active subject who is rational in so far as he reflects and uncovers a world that is not in itself capable of giving forth its own sense. According to Luce Irigaray, it is just this 'scene' of thinking which produces the normative notion of the active, rational subject alongside a passive and mute world; and this scene is contaminated with the force of a sexual hierarchy or 'scenography' (Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985). Derrida undertakes a similar analysis of many concepts to see whether they can, with all the efforts philosophers make, be disengaged from certain metaphysical determinations that are not autonomously intended or decided. In *Limited Inc* he argues that the concept of 'communication', for example, is intertwined with the concept of metaphor, and that both concepts determine a certain order of thought: 'because the value of displacement, of transport, etc., is precisely constitutive of the concept of metaphor with which one claims to comprehend the semantic displacement that is brought about from communication as a semio-linguistic phenomenon' (Derrida, *Limited Inc*, p. 2).

32 '[T]he inaugural mutation which interests Kant *hands over* geometry rather than creates it … Kant's indifference to empirical history is only legitimated from the moment that a more profound history has already created nonempirical objects. This history remains hidden for Kant' (Derrida, *Introduction*, pp. 39–42).

33 Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 59.

34 Much of the critical force of deconstruction is directed towards the function of 'exemplarity', or the ways in which certain cases (such as the successful speech-act, formal languages or conscious intention) provide the ground for explaining consciousness and language in general. The task of quasi-transcendentalism is to show how the marginalized case (writing, error and misinterpretation) is an essential possibility that structures the original. There could be no successful speech, for example, if there were not a system of signs that also opened the possibility for speech to be misunderstood.

35 For Derrida, 'the privileged position of the protentional dimension of intentionality and that of the future in the constitution of space in general must be acknowledged' (*Introduction*, p. 135).

36 This is not to say that other cultures have no truth or science. But, for Derrida's Husserl, it is the Western idea of truth that is also tied to a certain self-understanding of Western history, for it is in the West that the idea of human life in general is explicitly thematized.

37 'Only a communal subjectivity can produce the historical system of truth and be wholly responsible for it' (Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 60).

38 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, pp. 13–14.

39 'It is rather significant that every critical enterprise, juridical or transcendental, is made vulnerable by the irreducible factuality and natural naiveté of its language.' (Derrida, *Introduction*, pp. 69–70).

40 Derrida, *Margins*, p. 51.

41 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H34–5.

42 Indeed, he refers to such a determination of origins as 'etymologism': an activity that asserts the continuity of sense rather than its necessary unreliability. Derrida regards his own attention to etymology as prior to phenomenology (and therefore prior to sense and experience). He repeatedly refers to 'the need for a certain renewed and rigorous philological or "etymological" thematic, which would precede the discourse of phenomenology' (Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 69).

43 Derrida, *Margins*, p. 56.

44 Jacques Derrida, 'Economimesis,' trans. R. Klein, *Diacritics*, 1981, vol. 11, p. 4.

45 Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989.

46 Derrida, 'Signature, Event, Context', in *Limited Inc*, p. 1.

47 Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 81.

48 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, Walter Kaufmann (ed.), New York, Vintage, 1967.

49 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, London, Tavistock, 1970.

50 André Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, trans. Anna Bostock Berger, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1993, pp. 4–19.

51 Derrida, *Introduction*, p. 117.

52 Derrida, *Margins*, p. 67.

53 In response to Richard Rorty's question, 'Is Derrida a Transcendental Philosopher?', I would argue that it's not, as Rorty suggests, a possibility of two competing readings of Derrida. There's not a transcendental Derrida and a pragmatic Derrida; his transcendentalism and his pragmatism depend upon the specific determinations of each other. Derrida's 'pragmatics' no longer refers to human and conscious intent, and his transcendentalism no longer refers to a general *a priori* that can be thought outside any of its determined figures. See Richard Rorty, 'Is Derrida a Transcendental Philosopher?', in *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers, Volume Two*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 125.

9 Noam Chomsky's linguistic revolution

Cartesian or Kantian?

Bruce W. Fraser

Noam Chomsky has characterized linguistics in both Cartesian and naturalistic terms in an effort to suggest the conceptual distance between modern linguistics and American structuralism, on the one hand, and to characterize the methodology and status of linguistics in robustly scientific terms on the other. Cartesianism in linguistics attests to the willingness of contemporary linguists to embrace innate structure as a necessary component of any theory that addresses itself to the complexities of language and attempts to account for the speed at which language acquisition takes place, while philosophical naturalism highlights the role of a formal grammar as a *bona fide* empirical theory, subject to confirmational tests (and hence revision) in light of empirical evidence. But as suggestive as these characterizations may be, there is a serious and largely unrecognized incompatibility between the two, an incompatibility that culminates in a difficulty in explaining how innate capacities interact with the data to which a speaker is exposed. In what follows, I argue that this difficulty (known as the 'semantic bootstrapping problem')[1] is indicative of a fundamental incongruity between the Cartesian and naturalistic visions of Chomsky's linguistic programme, and that combining the two can only lead to scepticism about the possibility of explaining language acquisition in terms familiar to the linguist. It is this incongruity that suggests the need of a more fruitful historical analogy than the one Chomsky has provided, and here Kant's transcendental idealism suggests itself as an appropriate alternative. In the final pages of the chapter I argue that a transcendental characterization of the linguist's claims about innate structure should supplant both the Cartesian and naturalistic pictures of linguistics, as such a move offers the potential to fortify the field against the sceptical challenge.

To a great extent the Cartesian and naturalistic characterizations of linguistics are traceable to the historical antecedents of Chomsky's work. As Chomsky himself recognizes, the early to middle part of the twentieth century was witness to an austere form of empiricism in psychology and linguistics. During this period linguists and psychologists alike, in response to the philosophical indulgences of an earlier generation, strove to eliminate appeals to meaning and intentionality in their respective fields by focusing attention on overt behaviour. In linguistics, this trend begins with Leonard Bloomfield, whose mature work

demonstrates an informed scepticism about the possibility of incorporating more traditional notions of meaning into a science of language.[2] That scepticism led to a construal of meaning in terms of the circumstances of utterance, a move that effectively pushed the study of meaning beyond the domain of linguistics and into the realm of psychology. In the interest of a scientific study of language, Bloomfield and his followers focused their attention on the phonetic structure of a language, attempting to develop a set of procedures that would take the linguist from the observations of unparsed segments of sound to the phonological, morphological and syntactical categories of a language.[3] What resulted was a view of the data to which a linguist is exposed that embraced the physical form of the utterance over its grammatical structure and placed an enormous methodological burden on the linguist to account for the syntactic structure of an utterance in terms of distributional patterns of strings of phonemes. The rigorization of linguistics during the 1940s and 1950s was, in part, an attempt to make this concept of analysis precise and to provide a set of discovery procedures for the grammar of a language.[4]

Concomitantly, B.F. Skinner and other psychologists were working towards a behavioural analysis of language modelled on the studies of animal behaviour in the laboratory. Skinner's ambitious venture into this frontier, *Verbal Behavior*, was published in 1957 and represents the first attempt at a comprehensive study of grammar and meaning in terms of the principles of operant conditioning (a form of analysis Skinner termed 'functional'). As one would expect of such a work, important linguistic concepts such as synonymy and reference were related to stimulatory conditions of the utterance and patterns of reinforcement. The success of behaviourism in the laboratory gave Skinner's analysis an initial plausibility, to be sure, but the work was far too ambitious and fraught with conceptual difficulties.

With respect to Chomsky's early work, conventional wisdom holds that the inauguration of transformational linguistics is predicated on the rejection of both the structuralist and behaviourist visions of linguistics, and that it was the very process of rigorization in linguistics and psychology that was their undoing.[5] The publication of *Syntactic Structures* in 1957 is viewed as a seminal event in the history of modern linguistics, as that text exposes the conceptual limitations of structuralist methodology, while the 1959 publication of Chomsky's review of Skinner's book on language maintains a similar status in the history of psychology for its decisive analysis of the limitations of behaviourism. Indeed, the introduction of transformational linguistics is seen as a reaction to the limitations associated with the methods of Chomsky's forebears, a corrective to the narrow conception of science that informed attempts to explain language in distributional or behavioural terms. Chomsky's characterization of linguistics in Cartesian terms reflects his move against the ideas of his contemporaries, emphasizing as it does the need to appeal to the creative contribution of the language user. Cartesian linguistics emphasizes the need to introduce an intermediary between stimulatory input and verbal output, an intermediary that defies explanation in terms of the behavioural antecedents of speech:

> [M]an has a species-specific capacity, a unique type of intellectual organiza-
> tion which cannot be attributed to peripheral organs or related to general
> intelligence and which manifests itself in what we may refer to as the
> 'creative aspect' of ordinary language use – its property being unbounded in
> scope and stimulus-free. Thus Descartes maintains that language is available
> for the free expression of thought or for appropriate response in any new
> context and is underdetermined by any fixed association of utterances to
> external stimuli or physiological states (identifiable in any noncircular
> fashion).[6]

Chomsky, too, maintains that language is available for the free expression of
thought *and* for appropriate responses in new contexts.

What conventional wisdom fails to acknowledge, however, is the debt
Chomsky owes to his predecessors – the assumptions that he adopts from struc-
turalism and behaviourism in the articulation of his own linguistic programme.
Contrary to popular belief, Chomsky's revolution in linguistics is not a call to
overturn structuralism in its entirety; much of what the structuralists had hoped
to achieve was misguided, certainly, but the desire to establish linguistics as a
fully fledged empirical science is a vision Chomsky shares with earlier thinkers.
More to the point, the push by linguists and psychologists to eliminate uncritical
appeals to a speaker's intuitive understanding of a language in justifying claims
about grammatical structure is something Chomsky embraces wholeheartedly
and deeply influences his own characterization of the data that constitute the
evidential foundation of linguistics.[7] It is no exaggeration to say that Chomsky
accepts his predecessors' characterization of the *evidence* available to a speaker, if
not the overriding methodology to be employed in explaining the evidence. His
early papers on semantics bear this out, as does the distinction between the
descriptive and explanatory adequacy of grammars.[8] Chomsky is too good a
scientist to reintroduce mentalism back into linguistics, and to contrast his
programme with structuralism on this issue is to do him a disservice.[9]

This point is not obvious, I grant, so let us dwell here for a moment in an
effort to make matters more transparent. In their concern to eliminate scientifi-
cally unrespectable concepts from the linguist's repertoire, I repeat, structuralists
characterized the evidence available to the linguist in terms of a sentence's
physical   properties   (normalized   through   phonemic   representation).
Morphological and syntactic categories were not to be attributed to sentences
right from the start, as to do so was to give ontological status to what appeared
to be mentalistic notions. Consequently, structuralism sought to expose the cate-
gories of a language in relational terms, by comparing the distributions of
strings of phonemes across a corpus of utterances and grouping those strings
into classes. Chomsky's criticism of structuralist methodology involves the claim
that one cannot reconstruct a language on the basis of the phonemic structure
of sentences in this fashion, but he accepts the assumption that an utterance is
an element of the physical world and thus should be characterized in terms of
its phonemic structure (at least initially).[10] Chomsky's great insight was that

morphological and syntactic categories must be *superimposed* on the data rather than extracted from them, and it is just this austere view of an utterance as a physical object that suggests the need of this imposition.[11] In a sense, Chomsky's linguistic programme was initiated by the attempt to make linguistics scientific and the recognition that structuralists had failed to see the import of their own characterization of the evidence. As grammatically undifferentiated strings of phonemes, sentences to which a speaker is exposed cannot reveal the underlying complexity of a language, no matter how tortuous the linguist's method of analysis.

How seriously should one take this characterization of the evidence? At least as seriously as one takes Chomsky's commitment to study language scientifically. Chomsky's position on evidence and methodology is intimately bound up with his commitment to philosophical naturalism, namely, the idea that the study of language and mind is to be contextualized within a broader scientific framework – a framework in which the methodological and evidential standards of the natural sciences provide a backdrop for the activities of the linguist. In his 1995 article 'Language and Nature', Chomsky terms this attitude 'methodological monism', characterizing it in the following way: 'A naturalistic approach to linguistic and mental aspects of the world seeks to construct intelligible explanatory theories, taking as "real" what we are led to posit in this quest, and hoping for eventual unification with the "core" natural sciences: unification, not necessarily reduction.' He goes on to say: 'By "naturalism" I mean "methodological naturalism", counterposed to "methodological dualism" [i.e.] the doctrine that in the quest for theoretical understanding, language and mind are to be studied in some manner other than the ways we investigate natural objects, as a matter of principle.'[12] The idea that language and mind should be studied naturalistically involves the recognition that the methodological and evidential standards of the natural sciences serve to constrain more provincial disciplines like linguistics and psychology. This is the point of Chomsky's characterization and rejection of methodological dualism: the study of language and mind should be pursued in the same spirit, and using the same methods, as the study of the physical world. To adhere to the principles of philosophical naturalism is therefore to acknowledge a normative standard for linguistics in virtue of the methodological connection between the special and the 'core' sciences – not an absolute standard, as our understanding of physics is subject to change in light of experience, but a relatively stable standard nonetheless.

Chomsky's mention of eventual unification of linguistics and the natural sciences, *vis à vis* reduction, is indicative of a willingness to grant ontological status to entities the natural scientist might find objectionable, but this should not be confused with a willingness to construe the evidence available to a speaker in terms of such entities. His remark reflects the idea that theoretical constructs employed in scientific theories are granted ontological status as a matter of course, not that those constructs are evident in the data being explained. And while the linguist will surely posit theoretical entities in the explanation of language acquisition, the data to which a speaker is exposed must be construed

in terms of the physical characteristics of the utterance. For although one is free to extend the ontology of the natural sciences, to usurp that ontology would be to risk stripping linguistics of its scientific status. At the very least, unification with the core sciences involves a compatibility of ontological assumptions, and one of those assumptions is that human beings are physical objects governed by the same laws that govern all natural phenomena. This is not to insinuate that linguistics and psychology are constrained to acknowledge only the physical denizens of the scientists' universe; rather, it is to suggest that the option of introducing a new class of entities must be weighed against the standards of scientific legitimacy currently in place and rejected if there is too great a divergence with the concepts of the science of the day. It is to say, albeit indirectly, that in addition to the methodological connection between the special and core sciences, there exists an ontological connection that informs the linguist's standard of evidence. This connection is what provides the inspiration for the confessions of W.V.O. Quine's well-known epistemological subject:

> I am a physical object in a physical world. Some of the forces of this physical world impinge on my surface. Light rays strike my retinas; molecules bombard my eardrums and fingertips. I strike back, emanating concentric airwaves. These waves take the form of a torrent of discourse about tables, people, molecules, light rays, retinas, air waves, prime numbers, infinite classes, joy and sorrow, good and evil.[13]

As a physical object in a physical world, cues about what goes on around an individual must be represented in physicalistic terms. Whether one's interest is epistemological or more broadly scientific, standards of evidence must be construed in terms of impingements at one's sensory surfaces, since science sanctions appeals neither to telepathy nor to intellectual intuition in the justification of its claims. And because empirical psychology and linguistics are to be pursued naturalistically, the same constraints on evidence apply to accounts of language acquisition and translation. Evidence as to how a language functions comes from stimulations at one's sensory surfaces, and those stimulations are, qua physical, inherently particular. Accordingly, abstract theoretical notions like *wordhood*, *termhood*, *grammatical function* and *semantic content* are out of place in characterizations of the evidence available to the language learner. Where language acquisition is concerned, words, terms and other grammatical particles emerge only after significant headway has been made into ascertaining how a language functions. In reconstructing the process by which a person comes to take a foreign language as his own, one must therefore begin from a basis which makes no appeal to theoretical distinctions the mature speaker takes for granted. The mature speaker interprets the flow of speech in terms of the syntactic and semantic features of his language, not the phonemic structure alone, but this is the very phenomenon (that is, linguistic competence) the linguist is attempting to explain. To insist that those elements of speech familiar to the competent language user constitute part of the data would be to reject the idea that the data

are composed of physical constituents, and to strain the analogy between linguistics and the natural sciences.

Interestingly, the compatibility of this idea and Chomsky's own understanding of the evidence is suggested by the nature of his attack on both structuralism and behaviourism. Central to Chomsky's critiques of both programmes is the idea that the data to which a speaker is exposed are insufficient to explain how knowledge of a language is acquired, that is, that the evidence itself lacks the content necessary to extract grammatical constructions, syntactic categories, and so forth. Were this not the case, Chomsky's polemics against his predecessors could not get off the ground, since a characterization of the evidence in terms of higher-level syntactic and semantic properties would establish the possibility of an adequate analysis of language without any reference to a speaker's innate endowments. In other words, were Chomsky to adopt a view of the evidence that gives ontological status to syntactic parts of speech, he would be rejecting the very idea that motivated his criticism of his predecessors, namely, that the data to which a speaker is exposed are hopelessly impoverished. The austere, physicalistic characterization of the evidence – the idea that utterances are morphologically and syntactically underdetermined by the evidence – is a necessary component of Chomsky's critique, and justifies the introduction of an alternative model for linguistics.

Chomsky's critique of B.F. Skinner's work is particularly informative in this regard. Central to Skinner's proposal is the idea that stimulations of a speaker, along with various schedules of reinforcement, can be used to explain language acquisition without reference to complex theoretical notions not evidenced in the data. In other words, Skinner took the naturalist's characterization of the evidence to heart and attempted to provide a workable theory of language acquisition consistent with that characterization. Chomsky's review of Skinner's tome on language, *Verbal Behavior*, is predicated on the assumption that this is an adequate characterization of the evidence, but it exposes Skinner's analysis as a fraud. Chomsky points out that the controlling variables of which behaviour is purportedly a function cannot be identified without implicitly appealing to a speaker's linguistic competence, so while Skinner had hoped to analyse language in terms of use, and use in terms of stimulatory conditions, there is an inherent circularity in the enterprise (knowledge of a language is itself a prerequisite for learning a language). The upshot of Chomsky's criticism is that Skinner was quietly employing the very notions to which he had objected in the work of others, namely, knowledge of linguistic structure and meaning. As Chomsky notes in his consideration of how Skinner might account for a subject volunteering any of the indefinite number of possible responses to sensory stimulation:

> Skinner could only say that each of these responses is under the control of some other stimulus property of the object. If we look at a red chair and say *red*, the response is under the control of the stimulus 'redness'; if we say *chair*, it is under the control of the collection of properties (for Skinner, the object) 'chairness', and similarly for any other response. This device is as

> simple as it is empty. Since properties are free for the asking (we have as many of them as we have nonsynonymous descriptive expressions in our language, whatever this means exactly), we can account for a wide class of responses in terms of Skinnerian functional analysis by identifying the 'controlling stimuli.' But the word 'stimulus' has lost all objectivity in this usage. Stimuli are no longer part of the outside physical world; they are driven back into the organism. We identify the stimulus when we hear the response. It is clear from such examples, which abound, that the talk of 'stimulus control' simply disguises a complete retreat into mentalistic psychology. We cannot predict verbal behavior in terms of the stimuli in the speaker's environment, since we do not know what the current stimuli are until he responds. Furthermore, since we cannot control the property of a physical object to which an individual will respond, except in highly artificial cases, Skinner's claim that his system, as opposed to the traditional one, permits the practical control of verbal behavior is quite false.[14]

Chomsky here talks of properties of the external world rather than a speaker's intuition about linguistic structure, but the point is the same in either case: appeals to entities such as properties (or their linguistic correlates, *terms*) is inconsistent with a scientifically respectable characterization of the data available to a language learner. Indeed, appeals to such notions in accounting for how to break into a new language are characteristic of the 'complete retreat into mentalistic psychology', an idea that Chomsky obviously finds objectionable. While syntactic categories can be introduced to linguistics as theoretical constructs, it is illicit to give ontological status to such notions at the outset. Skinner is therefore guilty of reifying mental entities in accounting for how one acquires both lexical and syntactic knowledge of a language. If Chomsky were to accept the idea that the data to which a speaker is exposed determine the grammatical structure of a language, this characterization of Skinner's work would betray an inconsistency in his own thinking.

It is this insistence on construing the evidence in physicalistic terms that suggests the pertinence of the following question: How does a child break into a language, an inherently abstract system, on the basis of such impoverished evidence? The Cartesian element of Chomsky's philosophy, his espousal of rationalism, is suggestive of his proposed answer to this question: innate capacities must be operative in the acquisition of a language, as the evidence available to the speaker is too impoverished to account for a speaker's linguistic competence. Chomsky's linguistic programme attempts to account for the formal structure of a speaker's innate endowment and explain how that structure is brought to bear on the evidence available to a speaker. Again, the purpose of drawing a connection between modern linguistics and the work of Descartes is to contrast Chomsky's own theoretical enterprise with those that would attempt to explain language acquisition without reference to the internal structure of the agent.

But it is at just this point that the linguist's shoe begins to pinch, as postulations of innate structure alone can serve no explanatory function when it comes

to addressing the question of how a child learns a language. This is a point more sophisticated behaviourists like Quine clearly recognize, and motivates a certain scepticism regarding the fruitfulness of Chomsky's enterprise.[15] Ironically, this scepticism stems from the very characterization of evidence that Chomsky himself accepts, and is a function of the attempt to reconcile a more traditional form of philosophical rationalism with the scientific investigation of language and mind. For the characterization of the evidence imposed on the linguist by his commitment to naturalism, namely, that utterances must be understood as semantically and syntactically undifferentiated strings of phonemes, suggests that there is no evidential basis for arguing for one representation of a speaker's linguistic competence over another. Whatever the nature of a speaker's innate endowment, overt behaviour remains unaffected in so far as a speaker's linguistic competence is measured against the production of sentences in appropriate contexts (where sentences are understood in this evidential sense). And if this is the case, the scientific study of language would appear incompatible with the idea that formal grammars can be used to represent the essential features of natural languages.

Cognoscenti will recognize that this argument is at the heart of Quine's thesis of the indeterminacy of translation, but one need not look to Quine for an illustration of the difficulty. Chomsky is aware of the problem,[16] but where Quine believes the problem is entirely intractable, he is hopeful that there exists an empirical solution. The problem facing Chomsky is that any innate schematism introduced to account for language learning must be applied to the data to which the child is exposed if it is to account for a child's ability to project from the available information to a full understanding of linguistic structure. But that application presupposes the identification of the significant units of speech along grammatical lines before the schematism can be applied. For example, if a child is endowed with a rule Φ that dictates the way certain noun phrases in English combine with verb phrases to form sentences, then in order to apply the rule the child must have identified noun and verb phrases in the flow of speech. But noun and verb phrases are distinguished on the basis of their grammatical function, so in order to apply Φ the child must already know how noun phrases and verb phrases function grammatically, making Φ redundant. That is to say, in order to apply an innate schematism to linguistic data, one must already have a developed knowledge of the grammatical structure of the data, and this threatens to undermine the explanatory role played by appeals to innate capacities of the sort that interest the linguist. Steven Pinker succinctly expresses the problem as follows:

> The universal properties of linguistic rules and their parameters of variation concern highly abstract symbols such as noun and verb, subject and object, constituent structure, branching geometry, and so on. The child must be sensitive to the behavior of just those symbols in the parental input in order to fix the parameters of variation in his or her universal rule schemas. However, such linguistic entities are not marked in the linguistic input to the

prelinguistic child in any way. Nouns, for example, do not appear in any single serial position in the world's languages, do not have a universal pitch or stress level, and do not contain a universal identifying affix. In any particular language, to be sure, nouns have a characteristic distribution: they appear in particular phrase structure positions and are marked with particular affixes, or both. However, this cannot be much help to the child, since the particular phrase structure rules and affixes that signal the presence of nouns in language are part of what the child has to learn in the first place.[17]

In a schema-plus-parameters approach to the study of a speaker's competence, it is assumed that a child brings to bear on the language acquisition process knowledge of the grammatical schemata of the sentences of a language, that is, the formal structure of grammatical utterances, including the permissible combinations of constituents, but not the linear order of those constituents. For example, a child will know that a noun phrase has constituents 'det' (determiner) and 'N' (noun), but no knowledge of the serial order in which these components appear in the flow of speech. In order to correctly fix the parameters of the language, the child must somehow learn the grammatical roles of the various subsentential components, and it is here that an appeal to innate structure is problematic. Pinker's proposed solution to the problem is suggestive but inadequate; he attempts to explain the application of the speaker's innate schematism by appealing to the existence of semantic markers indicated by features of parent–child discourse:

> Although grammatical entities do not have semantic definitions in adult grammars, it is possible that such entities refer to identifiable semantic classes in parent–child discourse. That is, it is plausible that, when speaking to infants, parents refer to people and physical objects using nouns, that they refer to physical actions and changes of state using verbs, that they communicate definiteness using determiners, and so on … Presumably, such notions as physical object, physical action, agent-of-action, and so on, unlike nounhood, verbhood, and subjecthood, are available to the child perceptually and are elements of the semantic representation that I propose as part of the input to the language acquisition mechanism. If the child tentatively assumes these syntax–semantics correspondences to hold, and they do hold, he or she can make the correct inferences [about the linear order of the language's constituents] … The categorization of words can be inferred from their semantic properties, and their grammatical relations can be inferred from the semantic relations in the event witnessed.[18]

So where the grammatical function of stretches of speech cannot be determined observationally (for example, where the identification of abstract nouns and verbs in the flow of speech cannot be made on the basis of parent–infant discourse), the language learner must appeal to sentential contexts that contain the unidentified unit along with other subsentential components that have

already been identified in terms of primitive semantic markers. By applying the rules the child has learned on the basis of simpler sentences, unfamiliar words can, Pinker believes, be classified in terms of the relation to already acquired sentences. If the child has grasped the meaning of 'the boy is drinking milk' through observation and parental feedback, then when she is witness to the expression 'the circumstances of utterance vary widely' she can exploit her understanding of the first sentence to characterize the second correctly. Recognizing that 'the' is a determiner, and being endowed with the knowledge that determiners precede nouns in English, she will correctly infer that 'circumstances' is a noun. This process, it is assumed, can be exploited in isolating other grammatical particles on the basis of this semantic-syntactic rule interrelation.

The problem is that from an evidential standpoint fixing the parameters of a sentence even as simple as 'the boy is drinking milk' is not as easy as it may first appear. On the basis of the available evidence, a child will not know whether the word *the* in *the boy* functions as a determiner, an adjective like *red*, an indefinite article, an affix indicating plurality, or an expression of generality like *all* or *some*. Talk of a semantic basis for applying a grammar glosses over the fact that even these apparently obvious semantic notions are themselves up for grabs, a point that leads to a serious problem: rules cannot be applied without first determining the grammatical function of the constituents, and as the function of the grammatical constituents is indeterminate relative to behaviour, one cannot isolate their grammatical function without reference to a system of rules. Consequently, the very notion of a grammatical schematism underlying language acquisition is in danger of becoming vacuous.

As noted above, this point is not novel; it forms the basis of Quine's views on translation and language acquisition, and variants of the objection appear in the history of philosophy (perhaps most notably in Aristotle's argument against the idea that Platonic forms can play an explanatory role in accounts of the natural world).[19] What is surprising is that Chomsky, although he recognizes the problem, has failed to appreciate its seriousness. This failure is all the more surprising given that the very argument Chomsky employs against Skinner can be used to expose the inadequacy of solutions that appeal to features of the physical world to explain a speaker's burgeoning understanding of the grammatical particles of speech. Recall that Chomsky charges Skinner with a retreat to uncritical mentalism as a result of the fact that there is no way to identify the features of a situation that are relevant to sentence meaning without first understanding the meaning of the sentence. Chomsky cannot very well criticize Skinner for making this move and then accept a possible solution to the problem of explaining how a child fixes the parameters of a grammar by the same method. Consistency would demand that the characterization of the evidence available to a speaker that Chomsky uses to indict Skinner – a notion of evidence that stems from his commitment to naturalism – works against the attempt to address the semantic bootstrapping problem as well. Just as the critique of Skinner's work demonstrates that knowledge of a language is a precondition for interpreting the data available to a speaker, here too we recognize that a solution

to the problem of how to identify the grammatical particles in the flow of speech requires a developed knowledge of just what the linguist is trying to explain. And if this is the case, one gets the sense that the semantic bootstrapping problem is intractable within the Chomskyan framework.

If the preceding analysis is correct, there is a prima facie incompatibility between philosophical naturalism and the use of formal grammars as explanatory devices in an account of language acquisition. However, the empirical problem described above is symptomatic of a deeper conceptual difficulty, a difficulty endemic to philosophical naturalism and one that reinforces the sceptical attitude about the possibility of developing a science of language along Chomskyan lines. That problem arises as a result of the fact that the naturalist imbeds the metalanguage of science, that is, epistemology, within science itself, a move that eliminates the *a priori* restrictions on using the truths of natural science in the investigation of mind, evidence, and methodology. With respect to linguistics, this move requires that one characterize knowledge of a language as an object of scientific investigation, an entity on a par with bosons and black holes. But to do so is to commit a category mistake: knowledge, to a significant extent, is a *precondition* for the objective validity of our claims about the world, that is, it is an *epistemic condition*[20] that plays an essential role in determining the structure of experience itself (this is the very point Chomsky makes in his criticism of Skinner). By giving knowledge an ontological status, by *naturalizing* linguistics, one effectively eliminates the possibility of construing a speaker's innate endowment as a precondition for language use. Such a move confuses conceptual preconditions with the objective experience that results from interaction of those preconditions and sensory stimulations, and it is this confusion that leads to scepticism. Taken in the ontological sense, knowledge is construed by the naturalist as an independent entity or substance, and the objective becomes one of explaining how this entity can be related to the physical world. The semantic bootstrapping problem is the manifestation of the conceptual difficulty facing a system of ideas that takes mind and matter as distinct substances, and there is no more reason to be optimistic about an empirical solution in this domain than there is about reconciling mental and physical substances in Descartes' philosophy. Chomsky's characterization of linguistics in Cartesian terms is, in this regard, apropos.

The solution to this problem is suggested by an analogy not to Descartes' philosophy, but to Kant's transcendental idealism. What is lacking in Chomsky's account is the investigation into the *a priori* preconditions of a speaker's knowledge of a language, of the epistemic conditions that underlie linguistic competence. Chomsky's attempt to combine the study of the epistemic conditions of a speaker's competence with philosophical naturalism is the result of confusing what amounts to the transcendental account of the structure of knowledge with a psychological one, a charge that Kant made of Hume with respect to the concept of causality. A psychological or genetic account of knowledge is capable only of answering the *quaestio facti*, not the *quaestio juris*,[21] and Kant's critical philosophy is designed with the question of how the objective

validity of knowledge is possible clearly in mind. To speak of Kantian rather than Cartesian linguistics is to suggest that a more promising way of contextualizing and interpreting formal grammars lies in understanding the conceptual structure depicted by a grammar as a component of a transcendental account of knowledge of a language.

This should not be taken to suggest that characterizing linguistics in explicitly transcendental terms is unproblematic: to do so raises serious questions regarding the relation between knowledge of language and what are considered distinct conceptual/intentional systems in the mind. Presumably, a transcendental reading of the linguist's enterprise would require that linguistic knowledge be more closely tied to the conditions that account for the objectivity of knowledge in general, a move that may have serious implications for various theses about the structure of the mind. One such thesis is the idea that language, thought and the world are distinct, and that language in some way provides a representation or expression of the other two. But whatever the answers to this and other questions, it is clear that the transcendental move requires a radical reinterpretation of the metalanguage of linguistics. For it is the naturalist's insistence that one interpret the metalanguage as an extension of the language of natural science that leads to scepticism about the status of the linguist's claims, and the transcendental solution requires that one return to a more traditional view of the status of epistemological questions. Specifically, claims about the epistemic conditions of a speaker's competence should be understood as part of an *a priori* investigation into the preconditions of knowledge, not, as the naturalist would insist, as synthetic *a posteriori* propositions on a par with those about the physical world. Whether or not such a position is palatable to those interested in drawing parallels between contemporary linguistics and the history of philosophy remains to be seen, but the consequences of philosophical naturalism for linguistics suggest the need of some such revision. No one denies the objective reality of a speaker's linguistic competence, and if the naturalistic turn in linguistics and epistemology is incapable of accounting for the possibility of this knowledge, then so much the worse for philosophical naturalism.

Notes

1 For discussions of this problem, see J. Macnamara, *Names for Things: A Study of Human Learning*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1983, and J. Grimshaw, 'Form, function, and the language acquisition device', in C.L. Baker and J.J. McCarthy (eds), *The Logical Problem of Language Acquisition*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1981.

2 L. Bloomfield, 'A Set of Postulates for the Science of Language', *Language*, 1926, vol. 2, pp. 153–64. Reprinted in C.F. Hockett (ed.), *A Leonard Bloomfield Anthology*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1970, pp. 128–38; L. Bloomfield, *Language*, New York, Henry Holt, 1933.

3 Bloomfield's rejection of meaning was not complete, given the reliance on meaning in identifying phonemes, but the general vision of a linguistic science unfettered by mentalistic notions began with Bloomfield nevertheless.

4 See Z. Harris, *Methods in Structural Linguistics*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951.

 5 See P. Postal, *Constituent Structure: A Study of Contemporary Models of Syntactic Description*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1964.
 6 N. Chomsky, *Cartesian Linguistics*, New York, Harper & Row, 1966, pp. 4–5.
 7 For an interesting account of the connections between Chomsky's early work and American structuralism, see D. Hymes and J. Fought, *American Structuralism*, The Hague, Mouton, 1975. See also B. Fraser, 'Syntax, Semantics, and the Justification of Linguistic Methodology: An Investigation into the Source and Nature of the Disagreement between Noam Chomsky and W.V.O. Quine', unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston University, 2001.
 8 See N. Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1965.
 9 I have argued elsewhere that the very notion of a formal evaluation procedure for grammars – an idea that is central to Chomsky's early views on the nature of explanation in linguistics – makes sense only if one recognizes his commitment to the structuralist account of the evidence, namely, that the language learner and linguist have no epistemic access to the syntactical or semantic units of speech, given the purely physical nature of an utterance. Of course, Chomsky's appeal to the idea of a phonemic universal distinguishes his views on phonology. But with respect to the higher-level categories of language, Chomsky and his predecessors agree that an utterance is a syntactically and semantically undifferentiated string of phonemes. In the interest of making linguistics scientifically respectable, appeals to our intuitive sense of meaning and grammatical function are illicit in explanations of the initial stages of language acquisition and translation.
10 This is not to suggest that Chomsky accepts structuralist phonology. Rather, it is to suggest that the starting point of inquiry is determined by the physical form of the utterance.
11 N. Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures*, The Hague, Mouton, 1957; 'Review of B.F. Skinner', *Language*, 1959, vol. 35, pp. 26–58.
12 N. Chomsky, 'Language and nature', *Mind*, 1995, vol. 104, no. 413, pp. 1–61.
13 W.V.O. Quine, *The Ways of Paradox and Other Essays*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1966, p. 228.
14 N. Chomsky, 'Review of B.F. Skinner', *Language*, 1959, vol. 35, pp. 31–2.
15 W.V.O. Quine, 'Methodological Reflections on Current Linguistic Theory', in D. Davidson and G. Garman (eds), *Semantics of Natural Language*, New York, Humanities Press, 1972.
16 See N. Chomsky, *The Minimalist Program*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1995, pp. 31–2.
17 S. Pinker, *Language Learnability and Language Development*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1984, pp. 37–8.
18 Pinker, *Language Learnability and Language Development*, pp. 39–40.
19 See Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, trans. W.D. Ross, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1928, Book I, viii.
20 The term is Allison's. See H. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1983.
21 For an interesting discussion of this point, see Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*.

10 Non-rational grounds and mind-transcendent objects[1]

Mark A. Wrathall

The objects of perception transcend the mind in the sense that, while they are available for thought, they are also independent of thought. This independence is manifest, for instance, in the way that not every feature of a perceived object is presented in perception at once. It is also manifest in the way that no single thought or series of thoughts we have about the object could exhaust all there is to be thought about it. As Merleau-Ponty notes:

> each aspect of the thing which falls to our perception is still only an invitation to perceive beyond it, still only a momentary halt in the perceptual process. If the thing itself were reached, it would be from that moment arrayed before us and stripped of its mystery. It would cease to exist as a thing at the very moment when we thought to possess it. What makes the 'reality' of the thing is therefore precisely what snatches it from our grasp.[2]

But there is no small tension between these two features of mind-transcendent objects, at least for certain ways of conceiving of an object's concurrent availability to and independence of thought. For example, on the transcendental idealist position that an object is available for thought precisely because we constitute it in thought, it is hard to see how it could be independent of thought. But, of course, such a position is given impetus in the first place by the sense that, if the object is *not* constituted in terms of our concepts, it is equally hard to see how it could be available for thought.

Recent work by John McDowell[3] has suggested that one way to eliminate this tension is to reject an unnecessary exclusivity between causal and logical structures – between the 'space of reasons' and the 'realm of law', in McDowell's terminology. While accepting in modified form the traditional distinction between the conceptual structure of the space of reasons and the structure operative in the realm of law (that is, of natural objects and their impingements on our natural bodies), McDowell proposes that perceptual experience can be understood in terms of conceptual powers permeating and being operative in operations of sensibility characterized in terms of the realm of law. Such a view would, it seems to me, resolve the tension outlined above. But it would do so by giving a phenomenologically inaccurate account of perception.

In this chapter I want to consider another alternative. Where McDowell seeks to dissolve the tension by suggesting that perceptual experience is conceptually articulated, phenomenologists like Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty maintain that 'natural' perception – the kind of perception in which we are absorbed while engaged in our natural, everyday course of affairs – is most properly and accurately characterized in non-conceptual terms. In particular, natural perception is neither conceptually articulated nor governed by deterministic laws, but rather organized according to the practically articulated structure of bodily being-in-the-world. The independence of objects from thought, on the phenomenological picture, is understood in terms of the objects' non-conceptual presence in perceptual experience. But this leaves the problem of explaining how such objects can be present to thought. The phenomenologists' answer is to say that the meaningful (but not conceptual) structure of natural perception makes it possible for us to think about objects by motivating particular thoughts about the objects as they present themselves in perception. This allows us to see that the non-conceptual experience of natural perception grounds our thoughts by 'arrang[ing] around the subject a world which speaks to him of himself, and gives his own thoughts their place in the world'.[4]

The phenomenologists, in short, would see McDowell's position as driven by an unnecessarily dichotomous way of thinking that can't do justice to perceptual experience. To make the case for the phenomenologically inspired account, it will be necessary to explain how a phenomenology of pre-propositional manifestness differs from what Sellars labelled the 'Myth of the Given', or the view that propositional states can be rationally supported by non-propositional contents. McDowell has, rightly to my mind, followed Sellars in criticizing as untenable the idea of a given that rationally supports our beliefs. This has led McDowell to argue that perceptual experience should be thought of as conceptually articulated through and through, for only if it is can it stand in any sort of grounding or justificatory relationship to other intentional states. Similar considerations have led philosophers like Davidson to argue that the world as causally constituted can cause, but not rationally support, our beliefs about the world. These seem like the only plausible alternatives as long as there is no non-myth-of-the-given way of characterizing the relationship of thoughts to non-logical and non-causal perceptual contents. Thus, if the dichotomous account of spaces and realms is to be rejected, and the phenomenological observation is to be vindicated, one would need to distinguish it from the myth-of-the-given account.

To be more precise, a complete vindication would require that one show both (1) how perceptual content is not necessarily propositional, and (2) how non-propositional contents can in some sense ground propositional states and attitudes. Rather than offer an argument on the first issue, however, I will to a large extent simply accept Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological description of perception as non-conceptually articulated.[5] I believe that the description is correct. But I will not be trying to justify it here, because I would like to focus on articulating the phenomenological answer to the second question.

Before doing this, however, I want to explore briefly the way that McDowell's approach to the problem is driven by a dualism of logical and causal structures. I think this point is helpfully illustrated by reviewing the idea of intentional content, and the development of McDowell's argument as a response to Davidson's account of intentional content.

1 The problem of intentional content

I want to begin by taking a more detailed look at the tension between the presence of objects to thought and the independence of objects from thought. One traditional, and I think correct, way of cashing out the notion of 'presence' to thought is in terms of success in directing our thoughts at objects in the world. Whatever else we say about directedness towards the world, we can be sure that our thoughts, our propositional attitudes, are not directed towards objects in the world if satisfaction of those attitudes does not depend (at least to some degree) on the state of the world. Thus, any complete explanation of our relationship to the things around us must be able to provide an account of how intentional attitudes derive their content from the objects themselves. Without such an account, our ability to think about, desire, entertain beliefs about (etc.) mind-transcendent objects seems magical.

The obvious source of intentional content is the world itself as we encounter it in our everyday activities. The propositions we entertain and the concepts we employ seem to be responsive to our experience of the world. It is natural to think, then, that content finds its way into our intentions as we form and revise concepts in the light of our interaction with the world. There is undoubtedly something right about this thought. But given that our perceptual interaction with the world is seemingly an interaction between material bodies, and thus is best characterized in causal terms, the problem becomes: how can a causal interaction give rise to conceptually contentful states?

In the empiricist tradition of thought, the content of our thoughts is more or less directly 'keyed', as Quine says, to causal stimulations of our sensory surfaces. 'Two cardinal tenets of empiricism remain unassailable', according to Quine: 'One is that whatever evidence there *is* for science *is* sensory evidence. The other … is that all inculcation of meanings of words must rest ultimately on sensory evidence.'[6] In Quine's case, the content of our observation sentences is tied to 'the temporally ordered class of receptors triggered during the specious present'.[7] Thus, even though his attack on the 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' undermined the idea of any tight connection between sentences or thoughts on the one hand, and particular causal interactions with the world on the other, his philosophy is nevertheless party to the empiricist view that content is bestowed on our intentions by a causal interaction with the world.

There is, however, a problem with any view that sees the content of intentional states as consisting in merely sensory stimulations – namely, explaining how sensations give rise to properly propositional contents. It is not clear how sensations can contribute to either fixing the content of our thoughts and

utterances, or providing rational justification for them. Adding sensations or other intermediaries to the mix adds a new problem – explaining how sensations can be grouped together in such a way as to correspond to the familiar objects of the world we inhabit, for it is to these familiar objects that our thoughts and words (at least for the most part) are directed. More importantly, adding sensations as intermediaries between our thoughts and the world serves to undermine the idea that we are in direct contact with a mind-transcendent world. This is because, as Davidson notes,

> patterns of stimulation, like sense data, can be identified and described without reference to 'what goes on around us'. If our knowledge of the world derives entirely from evidence of this kind, then not only may our senses sometimes deceive us; it is possible that we are systematically and generally deceived … . The familiar trouble is, of course, that the disconnection creates a gap no reasoning or construction can plausibly bridge. Once the Cartesian starting point has been chosen, there is no saying what the evidence is evidence for, or so it seems. Idealism, reductionist forms of empiricism, and skepticism loom.[8]

Moreover, Davidson argues that any theory that attempts to ground our thoughts in such intermediaries must be able to explain 'what, exactly, is the relation between sensation and belief that allows the first to justify the second?'[9] The problem is that 'the relation between a sensation and a belief cannot be logical, since sensations are not beliefs or other propositional attitudes'.[10] If Davidson's argument is correct, we're left with two potentially incompatible assumptions: first, that our perceptual encounter with the world is a causal transaction; and, second, that thoughts, being propositional in content, are rationally responsive only to other propositional entities. The assumptions are incompatible if we can see no way to move from a causal transaction to a propositional content. Their incompatibility is a problem if we want to tell a convincing story about how our thoughts can be in contact with mind-transcendent objects – hence, the tension observed in the introduction.

One obvious way to avoid the incompatibility is to see the causal transaction as generating in us a propositional state – a belief about the world. And this, in fact, is Davidson's view: 'What then is the relation? The answer is, I think, obvious: the relation is causal. Sensations cause some beliefs and in this sense are the basis or ground of those beliefs.'[11] Once we've acquired a language, Davidson claims, the world can cause us to have beliefs. Davidson calls this kind of interaction with the world 'propositional perception'. With language, he argues, comes the capacity for propositional thought. In virtue of this capacity, the world can cause us directly to have perceptual beliefs. But then there is no need to give perceptual experience itself a justificatory role in relation to those beliefs:

> Of course, our sense-organs are part of the causal chain from world to perceptual belief. But not all causes are reasons: the activation of our retinas

does not constitute our evidence that we see a dog, nor do the vibrations of the little hairs in the inner ear provide reasons to think the dog is barking. 'I saw it with my own eyes' is a legitimate reason for believing there was an elephant in the supermarket. But this reports no more than that something I saw caused me to believe there was an elephant in the supermarket.[12]

Thus, on Davidson's view, we are, as physical organisms, interacting causally with the world, and this interaction bears no information with a propositional content. But it does, in virtue of our linguistic capacities, causally give rise to perceptual beliefs.

This is a coherent story to tell, but it does have one fateful consequence for the idea of intentional content. Because the world acts only causally in the production of our beliefs, and causes cannot serve as reasons for holding beliefs, it follows that we can be indifferent about which causes we correlate with which beliefs. The result is an indeterminacy of reference – that is, an inability to find any unique correlation between a particular object as causally constituted, and a particular belief.

The consequence of this indeterminacy, as McDowell is quick to point out, is that we can put down no fixed linkages between our beliefs about the world and the particular features of the world. As Quine explained:

> the total field [of beliefs] is so underdetermined by its boundary conditions, experience, that there is much latitude of choice as to what statements to reevaluate in the light of any single contrary experience. No particular experiences are linked with any particular statements in the interior of the field, except indirectly through considerations of equilibrium affecting the field as a whole.[13]

But without fixed linkages, McDowell argues, we put at risk the idea that our ideas are about the world at all:

> we can make sense of the world-directedness of empirical thinking only by conceiving it as answerable to the empirical world for its correctness, and we can understand answerability to the empirical world only as mediated by answerability to the tribunal of experience, conceived in terms of the world's direct impacts on possessors of perceptual capacities.[14]

As McDowell explains:

> if we do not let intuitions stand in rational relations to [thoughts], it is exactly their possession of content that is put in question. When Davidson argues that a body of beliefs is sure to be mostly true, he helps himself to the idea of a body of beliefs, a body of states that have content. And that means that, however successfully the argument might work on its own terms, it comes too late to neutralize the real problem.[15]

McDowell thus, by contrast to Davidson, argues that the idea of intentional content is only coherent if we can see our way to attributing to things in the world a more-than-causal role. McDowell proposes that we avoid the incompatibility between the causal structure of perceptual interactions with objects and the rational relations between perceptions and beliefs by supposing that, in causally interacting with us, the world draws on our conceptual capacities. Thus, the world is presented at the outset as being propositionally articulated. The difference is thus that for McDowell, and not for Davidson, in our experience of the world itself, we can see the world as bearing the kind of content to which our thoughts can be responsive. In other words, McDowell's approach would redeem the idea of intentional content by explaining how our thoughts can be directly responsive to experience.

The interesting point is, however, that despite their differences McDowell and Davidson are both in agreement that if the content of perception is not conceptually articulated, then it can stand at best in a merely causal relationship to intentions. They differ only on whether the world presents itself to us in perceptual experience as conceptually articulated.

Phenomenologists in the tradition of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, however, are convinced on the basis of the phenomenology of perception that our propositional states and attitudes are grounded, not caused, in our experience of the world, and that our experience lacks, for the most part, a propositional structure. Before turning to a discussion of this 'grounding' relationship, however, I want briefly to review the phenomenological basis for the claim that most experience is not conceptually articulated.

2 Natural and propositional perception

A central feature of both Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's accounts of perception is an insistence that intentional modes of comportment depend on pre-conceptual modes of being-in-the-world. This is because, both argue, intentional modes of comportment are directed towards their objects via propositional contents, and propositional contents can only have an object in virtue of a pre-propositional manifestness of the objects of our intentions. Heidegger's insistence on this point seems to be motivated by the following observation: our ability to make assertions about things or have explicit thoughts about things – that is, our ability to be in states or attitudes characterizable in terms of a propositional content – seems to depend on removing ourselves from a fluid practical involvement with those things, and in removing ourselves from a fluid practical involvement, our experience of the situation itself seems to change.

In 'natural perception' – our perception of things in the course of our everyday commerce in the world – Heidegger notes that what we perceive is not readily available for thought. Indeed, he argues that the very idea that we can grasp our natural perception of something in thought is a 'constructivist violation of the facts'. This is because 'we never think a single thing in our natural comportment towards things, and whenever we grasp it expressly for itself, we take it out of

a context to which it belongs according to its content'.[16] The context to which Heidegger is referring is 'the *equipmental* context', in which things are articulated according to our 'practical everyday orientation'. 'The contexture of things as they surround us here stands in view, but not for the contemplator as though we were sitting here in order to describe the things.'[17] Heidegger calls the kind of seeing we perform in natural perception 'circumspection'. In circumspection, the objects around us 'stand at first, completely unobtrusive and unthought'. Indeed, we do not propositionally apprehend things at all in circumspection: 'When we enter here through the door, we do not apprehend the seats, and the same holds for the doorknob. Nevertheless, they are there in this peculiar way: we go by them circumspectly, avoid them circumspectly, stumble against them, and the like.'[18]

Similarly, Merleau-Ponty argues that in our dealings with familiar situations, 'just as we do not see the eyes of a familiar face, but simply its look and its expression, so we perceive hardly any object'.[19] He explains: 'in the natural attitude, I do not have *perceptions*, I do not posit this object as beside that one, along with their objective relationships, I have a flow of experiences which imply and explain each other both simultaneously and successively'.[20] Acts of explicit perception – perception in which we see determinate objects in determinate relationships to one another – only emerge from 'ambiguous perceptions'. By this, I take it, Merleau-Ponty means that a perceptual experience gets articulated in a way that would lend itself to discovering rational relations only when a particular need arises – such as when the ambiguity of the situation resists any ready response, and thereby prevents us from continuing in the 'flow of experiences'. As a consequence, such derived forms of perceptual experience should not be taken as paradigmatic: 'they cannot be of any use in the analysis of the perceptual field, since they are extracted from it at the very outset, since they presuppose it and since we come by them by making use of precisely those set of groupings with which we have become familiar in dealing with the world'.[21]

Thus, both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty are committed to the view that much of our perceptual experience of the world is articulated according to the 'groupings' of our familiar, practical dealings with the world. As I have already noted, I don't intend to offer an argument to show that these practical groupings are incommensurate with conceptual articulations. The argument here is restricted, instead, to establishing that, if natural perception *is* non-conceptually articulated, then it can nevertheless ground propositional perceptions and thoughts.

This hypothetical claim should be of interest not just in its own right, but also because its denial is itself part of McDowell's argument against non-conceptual content. McDowell's argument turns on two claims: first, that it is always possible to articulate a proposition precisely as detailed as the content of perception,[22] and second, as we have already seen, that if the content of perception were not already conceptually articulated, then it could only stand in a causal relationship to our propositional attitudes.

With regard to the first claim, it does at least fend off a certain brand of argument in support of the view that perceptual experience is not conceptual –

namely, the argument that experience can't be conceptually articulated because concepts are too crude a way of dividing the world to do justice to the detailed nature of our experience of it. But, of course, there is a difference between being describable as … , and being already articulated in terms of … . Thus, McDowell's observation will not, by itself, undermine the phenomenological account of the content of natural perception. Nevertheless, if we believe that our thoughts need to be supported in some way by our natural perception of the world, and we accept the second claim – that they cannot be supported in the right way unless our perception is conceptually articulated – then this would be enough to throw the phenomenological account into doubt. And so, it is to the second claim that I now turn.

As I have noted, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty are both committed to a denial of this claim. But what can be said in their favour? First, I think it is important to see that the Davidson/McDowell line of argument does teach us something about the way to construe a pre-conceptual experience of the world, and the relationship such an experience has to propositional thoughts about the world. In particular, the relationship cannot be an inferential or justificatory relationship – such a relationship could only hold between relata with the same kind of content (namely, a conceptual content). But nor can a pre-conceptual experience of the world be an experience of something that cannot possibly be picked out conceptually. We can see this without accepting McDowell's argument that demonstratives in point of fact make language flexible enough to pick out anything that can be experienced (although I am inclined to accept McDowell's argument on this point). It also follows directly from that fact that if the objects of our perceptions so completely resisted description in conceptual terms, it would make it impossible to see how being directed to them could inform or ground the content of a propositional attitude.

What we need, then, is a way to think of the content of our natural perceptions as describable in conceptual terms, but not articulated in conceptual terms. Now, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty both hold that once we break out of the flow of experiences, we can come to see the same things that were previously articulated pragmatically as being conceptually articulated. Heidegger describes the distinction in content between a pragmatic and conceptual articulation as a distinction between different kinds of 'as' structures – the hermeneutic 'as' of circumspective understanding versus the apophantic 'as' of assertion.[23] That is, in simply pragmatically coping with something, I am treating it *as* something. But I am not yet necessarily taking it *as* something that can figure in thoughts, be expressed in words, etc. Of course, once the change-over from the hermeneutic to the apophantic 'as' occurs, there is no mystery how our experiences, now conceptually articulated, could rationally connect with our thoughts. But this is, of course, no solution at all since we would still need to say how natural perception, being non-conceptually articulated, could stand in a grounding relationship to propositional perception, being conceptually articulated. And so we need to focus directly on the way that a non-conceptually articulated experience could non-rationally ground, rather than cause, a conceptually articulated thought.

What we first need to consider is how a relationship of non-rational grounding differs from a relationship of rational grounding. An experience is able to provide rational grounding to the extent that it is available for use in inference and justification. Thus, we can conclude that if the experience that gives rise to the thought is not available for use in inference and justification, then the thought is not rationally grounded. This is, of course, precisely McDowell's (and Davidson's) objection to seeing the relationship between thoughts and perceptual experiences as a causal relationship – a belief cannot be inferred from or justified by a cause (although, of course, it might be inferred from or justified by a belief about the cause).

3 Motivations

If there were some features of our perceptual experience which are not available for use in inference or justification, but which nevertheless dispose us (rather than cause us) to have the thoughts that we do, then we could say that the perceptual experience stands to the thought in a non-rational grounding relationship. Merleau-Ponty calls such relationships 'motivational', and explicitly distinguishes them both from relationships of 'objective cause' and from rational relationships. Non-phenomenological approaches to perception, he argues,

> can choose only between reason and cause … . On the other hand, the phenomenological notion of *motivation* is one of those 'fluid' concepts which have to be formed if we want to get back to phenomena. One phenomenon releases another, not by means of some objective efficient cause, like those which link together natural events, but by the meaning which it holds out – there is a *raison d'être* for a thing which guides the flow of phenomena without being explicitly laid down in any one of them, a sort of operative reason.[24]

To get a handle on this 'fluid' concept, let's review briefly a couple of the examples Merleau-Ponty adduces in illustration of it. I will then conclude by saying a word or two by way of explaining how this would constitute a way out of the dichotomy between reasons and causes that traps even McDowell, despite his best efforts to show that the realm of law and the domain of reasons are not mutually exclusive.

Let's first distinguish motivation from rational grounding by looking at some examples meant to show how something can be present in perceptual experience, can dispose us to having a thought or propositional perception, but can nevertheless not be available for inference or justification. Merleau-Ponty illustrates this by noting that:

> Only after centuries of painting did artists perceive that reflection on the eye without which the eye remains dull and sightless as in the paintings of the early masters. The reflection is not seen as such, since it was in fact able to

remain unnoticed for so long, and yet it has its function in perception, since its mere absence deprives objects and faces of all life and expression. The reflection is seen only incidentally. It is not presented to our perception as an objective, but as an auxiliary or mediating element. It is not seen itself, but makes us to see the rest.[25]

Suppose, in other words, that I see that there is a live person standing in front of me. My seeing this, it turns out, is grounded in part in the fact that the reflection of light on the eye of the person is a part of what I see, but not present in such a way that it is available for use as a *reason* for my seeing that there is a person there. The fact that the reflection remained unnoticed, even in the face of centuries of effort to faithfully capture what it is that we *do* see, provides prima facie evidence that what we saw was not available to thought, and thus could not ground an inference (from the fact that I see a reflection on the eye to the conclusion that I see a person, for instance), or could not serve to justify the belief that I see a person. The role the reflection plays, instead, is to dispose me to seeing a person there in front of me (rather than, say, a mannequin).

Generalizing on such examples, Merleau-Ponty argues that all our conceptually articulated perceptual experiences are motivated by the existential grasp we have on the world around us – that is, by a preceding familiarity with the world and how to act in it. Because this familiarity with the world is itself the condition of our ability to see that anything is the case and, hence, of our ability to reason, it is not itself generally available for use in inference and justification. To take another example, our ability to see objects in the world is motivated by our experience of space. 'A poplar on the road which is drawn smaller than a man,' Merleau-Ponty notes, 'succeeds in becoming really and truly a tree only by retreating towards the horizon.'[26] That we see it as a tree (and thus as instantiating a concept) depends, in other words, on our ability to situate it spatially. But there is no *reason* for situating the tree spatially in the way that we do, we can appeal to no conceptually articulated feature of our experience of the drawing which justifies the spatial orientation we give it, if only because everything we see in the picture is equally a consequence of, and thus not a basis for, the spatiality into which it gets organized. If there is no reason for seeing the tree as receding towards the horizon, and hence as a tree, then what makes us see it in this way? It is motivated by the fact that seeing it in that way gives us the best practical grip on the scene. Our way of being in the world is one in which we are ready for objects to be situated at varying depths. This readiness, no doubt, is ingrained into our bodies by the fact that the world itself is arrayed about us in three dimensions. As a result, our mode of being in the world motivates us to see objects as arrayed three dimensionally. This mode of being, in other words, grounds our perception by motivating our seeing of the object at the appropriate depth.

A motivational relationship is, then, one in which the environing world, in virtue of the practical significance that its various quarters hold for us, operates on us by drawing us into a particular kind of readiness. This readiness, in turn,

by projecting into the world a determinate kind of activity, 'polarizes' our experience of the world, bringing certain elements of the environment into salience, and concealing others.[27] Because our involvement in the world is geared to particular elements of the environment, when that involvement gives rise to thoughts, we can see those thoughts as responsive to, and bearing on, particular objects.

But now, to complete the story, we need to be able to say something about why the motivational story doesn't simply collapse into a variant of Davidson's account – why, that is, we don't simply say that our bodily disposition *causes* us to situate the object spatially in the way that we do. The response is to be found in the way that the particular readiness for the world that we have in our prethematic involvement with the world is a direct response to specific features of the world.[28] We saw already that the heteronomy of reasons and mere causes means that we can be indifferent about the way we correlate particular thoughts with particular objects causally defined. 'No appeal to causality can affect the determinacy of reference,' Davidson notes, 'if the only significant effects are responses to whole sentences'.[29] This is because sentences can only be interpreted within the context of a whole pattern of beliefs which, in turn, is given content only by being mapped on to truth conditions. The current pattern of causal stimulations of the agent being interpreted are, of course, important features to take into consideration while carrying out the mapping. But they will be much too sparse as points of reference to fix the whole context of beliefs. As long as different mappings are equivalent in terms of preserving the overall truth and coherence of the beliefs being mapped, there is no basis for distinguishing between them.

But the world as experienced in natural perception and the bodily readiness that motivate both natural and propositional perceptions are not indifferent to each other in the same way. A bodily readiness, while not necessarily responsive to conceptually delineated features of the world, nevertheless operates in a meaningfully ordered world, and, as a consequence, will only respond to a meaningfully rather than causally delineated object. Because a particular kind of being ready is always a current involvement with particular things in a particular context, it can't be mapped arbitrarily on to whatever feature of the environing world we choose. A particular readiness will only be motivated by particular situations, and will only uncover particular features of the world to us. Thus, it follows that motivational relationships are not merely causal influences on perception. Instead, they serve in an important sense as a ground of propositional thoughts.

4 Conclusion

If we return, now, to the problem of the transcendence of the objects of perception, we can see that the notion of motivation allows phenomenology to offer a fuller account of the way in which objects are present to, but independent of, thought.

For Davidson, the object's independence of thought is understood in terms of its causal constitution. But, as McDowell objects, this means that mind-independent objects cannot possibly have any direct rational bearing on thought at all, and thus threatens to put the mind out of contact with a transcendent world altogether. 'We need to conceive this expansive spontaneity [of thought] as subject to control from outside our thinking,' McDowell complains, 'on pain of representing the operations of spontaneity as a frictionless spinning in a void'.[30]

What McDowell can't account for, on the other hand, is the way that mind-transcendent objects present themselves in perception as in some way irreducible to all the things we could say or think about them. For McDowell, it is enough to make an object transcendent that 'the spontaneity of the understanding can be constrained by the receptivity of sensibility'.[31] He argues that our 'craving for a limit to freedom' can be satisfied, that is, simply by seeing that 'in experience one finds oneself saddled with content'.[32] Indeed, to demand any more, McDowell believes, would force us once again into putting the mind-transcendent world beyond the reaches of our thought.

The phenomenologists, however, have proposed a third way of understanding the mind-transcendent object. The object transcends thought in that its presence in perception is not articulated conceptually. But this doesn't force us into seeing thought as cut off from any direct relation to the mind-transcendent world, so long as we see the world as motivating a bodily disposition which, in turn, motivates the thoughts we can bring to bear on the world. At the same time, the phenomenologist can do justice to the observation that there is a distinction between seeing that such and such is the case, and the way perceptual experiences tend towards a maximal grip on the world.

Notes

1   I would like to thank Hubert Dreyfus for his comments on earlier drafts of this chapter, and for our numerous discussions of these issues. I would also like to thank Dennis Packard for helping me make a number of corrections.
2   Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, London, Routledge, 1962, p. 233.
3   John McDowell, *Mind and World*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1996.
4   Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 132.
5   Others have begun offering a defence of the phenomenological view of non-propositional and non-conceptual contents. See, for example, Sam Todes, *Body and World*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2001, and Sean Kelly, 'What Do We See (When We Do)?', *Philosophical Topics*, 1999, vol. 27, 107–28.
6   W.V.O. Quine, 'Epistemology Naturalized', in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1969, p. 75.
7   W.V.O. Quine, *From Stimulus to Science*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 17.
8   Donald Davidson, 'Myth of the Subjective', in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2001, pp. 42–3.
9   Donald Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2001, p. 141.
10 Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 143.
11 Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 143.

12 Donald Davidson, 'Seeing through Language', in J.M. Preston (ed.), *Thought and Language*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 15–27.
13 W.V.O. Quine, 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism', in *From a Logical Point of View*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1953, pp. 42–3. See McDowell's discussion of this and the indeterminacy thesis in *Mind and World*, pp. 129ff.
14 McDowell, *Mind and World*, p. xvii.
15 McDowell, *Mind and World*, p. 68.
16 Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982, pp. 162–3 (translation modified).
17 Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 163.
18 Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 163.
19 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 281.
20 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 281.
21 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 281.
22 'In the throes of an experience of the kind that putatively transcends one's conceptual powers – an experience that ex hypothesi affords a suitable sample – one can give linguistic expression to a concept that is exactly as fine-grained as the experience, by uttering a phrase like "that shade", in which the demonstrative exploits the presence of the sample' (McDowell, *Mind and World*, pp. 56–7).
23 See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York, Harper & Row, 1962, H158.
24 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 49–50.
25 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 309 (translation modified).
26 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 262.
27 'For the normal person his projects polarize the world, bringing magically to view a host of signs which guide action, as notices in a museum guide the visitor.' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 112).
28 In fact, as Hubert Dreyfus has pointed out to me, our bodily readiness often pulls us towards beliefs that we know are wrong. And yet, we still feel pulled to see things in a particular way. As examples of such a phenomenon, Merleau-Ponty discusses perceptual illusions like the way that the moon looks bigger when low on the horizon than when directly overhead, or Zöllner's illusion. Although we can demonstrate to ourselves that the moon is always the same size, still the 'various parts of the field interact and *motivate* this enormous moon on the horizon' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 31). Likewise, we can easily convince ourselves that the lines in Zöllner's illusion are in fact parallel, but the overall configuration of lines 'motivates the false judgement' by producing a bodily readiness that disposes us to the contrary beliefs (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 35).
29 Davidson, 'Reply to Felix Mühlhölzer', in Ralf Stoecker (ed.), *Reflecting Davidson: Donald Davidson Responding to an International Forum of Philosophers*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1993, p. 55.
30 McDowell, *Mind and World*, p. 11.
31 McDowell, 'Précis of *Mind and World*', in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 1998, vol. 58, pp. 365–8.
32 McDowell, *Mind and World*, p. 10.

11 Transcendental or epistemological?

McDowell's justification of empirical knowledge

Anita Leirfall

I

John McDowell's book *Mind and World* opens with the statement that the overall topic of the lectures contained therein is 'the *way* concepts *mediate* the relation between mind and world'.[1] Inasmuch as the book promises a fundamental rethinking of the way we conceive of the relation between mind and world, it is philosophically extremely ambitious. Moreover, in presenting the main focus of the book in this fashion, McDowell seems to suggest that his orientation is, in a Kantian sense, essentially transcendental.

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*,[2] Kant describes his use of the term *transcendental* as follows: 'I call all cognition *transcendental* that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*.'[3] In other words, our cognition is transcendental when it is occupied not so much with objects, but with our *a priori* concepts of objects in general. Against the background of this Kantian conception of the transcendental, McDowell's argument in *Mind and World* can be seen as itself transcendental in character inasmuch as it is concerned with the modality of our thinking of objects, namely, with the *way* concepts mediate the relation between thought and object, between mind and world.

In this chapter my main objective is to examine McDowell's method of argument concerning the relation between mind and world – or between spontaneity and receptivity, as it is more frequently put – especially in the first three lectures of *Mind and World*. I interpret McDowell's initial intention as a kind of meta-reflection articulated as a search for the *conditions of the possibility* of having warranted judgements of experience.[4] McDowell's frequent references to Kant's distinctions between spontaneity and receptivity, concepts and intuition, and understanding and sensibility, support the assumption that he intends to give a *transcendental* justification of the relation in question. In the course of his argument, however, McDowell's apparent transcendental justification seems to collapse into an epistemological account. He ends up maintaining that our conceptual capacities are always already actualized in our receptivity. In other words, there does not seem to be anything left of the intended explanation of *how* our concepts come to mediate between mind and world, only an insistence

that they do. The transcendental question as to how our concepts mediate between mind and world thus seems to be left unanswered.

The sequence of my discussion will be as follows: I will first examine the main line of analysis that McDowell presents in Lectures I–III of *Mind and World*. I will set out what I think is his *intended* analysis, and then go on and mark out at what point or points, and why, he departs from his original intention. Instead of following his argument in favour of a re-enchantment of nature, I will stay with his initial analysis and show how an alternative, and more viable, (Kantian) answer to the question concerning the necessary relation between our concepts and the world could be formulated inside this very same framework – this will involve looking to Kant's own conception of spontaneity as an original synthetic unity and as the common unifying function of sensibility and understanding.

II

McDowell's argument takes as its initial point of departure the criticism of two alternative construals of the way perceptual judgements are to be justified – those of the coherentist and the foundationalist (the latter in the form associated with the 'Myth of the Given'). These two positions are suggestive of a dilemma that seems to haunt theories of perceptual knowledge. The first horn of this dilemma allows that there is something experientially given; however, since the given falls outside the space of concepts, it cannot provide justification and can therefore have only a causal, external influence on our judgements. The other horn of the dilemma allows for justification through locating that which justifies within the space of concepts,[5] and in doing so it entails some form of coherence theory of knowledge, but the price it thereby incurs is that empirical thinking is left unconstrained by the world and so seems not to be properly empirical at all.

According to McDowell, the arguments given by neither coherentism nor foundationalism can justify our perceptual judgements. We are indeed caught in a dilemma – one that seems to rest on a common assumption to the effect that the justification of judgements of experience must look either to what is already conceptual or to what is experientially given. But from this assumption, and regardless of whether we look to concepts or to some perceptual 'given', the impossibility of justified judgements of experience would seem inevitably to follow.

In the first three lectures of his book, McDowell emphasizes that only the *co-operation* between concepts and the experientially given can give us justified judgements of experience. And this clearly parallels Kant's own strategy in the *Critique*. Against this background, we might expect that McDowell's solution to the dilemma would consist in a reformulation – or clarification – of the problem at issue, by appeal to another level of description, so as to open up an alternative to the either/or axis along which each of the lemmas are formulated. Without such a reformulation of the terms in which the problem that gives rise to this dilemma is presented, the original transcendental question will be reduced to a purely epistemological or empirical issue, and any transcendental solution to the dilemma will appear irrelevant.

The idea that a problem can be resolved through reformulation of the terms in which the problem is presented along transcendental lines can be seen in Kant's discussion of the antinomies in the 'Transcendental Dialectic' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The antinomial situation forces Kant to define a new foundation, or ground, for the proofs in question here, namely, the proofs concerning the limit of the world in time and space. In Kant's antinomial presentation, the thesis that the world is limited in time and space, and the antithesis that the world is not limited in time and space, are assumed to represent exhaustive alternatives to the question about the limits of the world. Since the initial alternatives (the world considered as *either* limited *or* unlimited) are represented as universally exhaustive positions, and by presenting a valid indirect *reductio* proof for the *thesis*, on the one hand, and for the *antithesis*, on the other, we end up with a (logical) contrariety where the proof *for* the thesis simultaneously is a proof *against* the antithesis, and the proof *for* the antithesis is a proof *against* the thesis. By way of this analysis, and given the ground on which each of the proofs is constructed, Kant diagnoses the dialectical situation at issue as one that lacks a proper solution and that is indicative of the need for a redefinition of the ground of proof.

McDowell seems to criticize an analogous, antinomial position in connection with the dilemma concerning judgements of experience. In contrast to Kant, however, McDowell appears not to recognize the possibility of reconfiguring the problem at another level of description from that adopted in the conflict between coherentism and foundationalism. Instead of asking on what common (and mistaken) assumptions the dilemma rests, McDowell allows the analysis to remain on the same level of description as that of the original formulation of the lemmas.

McDowell approaches the dilemma by referring to Kant's distinction between spontaneity and receptivity. He realizes that, in order to resolve the dilemma, he needs to find a way to establish the required co-operation between receptivity and its experiential intake, on the one hand, and spontaneity as it operates within the logical space of concepts, on the other. However, there are several problems that surface in connection with McDowell's arguments for the co-operation at issue here. First, the Kantian idea of spontaneity is simply equated with the understanding, and, in turn, with the conceptual or discursive. Second, receptivity as such is never accounted for, on McDowell's approach, but only presupposed as that in respect of which our conceptual capacities are applied – in other words, the *autonomous* contribution from receptivity diminishes. In contrast to this, Kant emphasizes that no preference may be given to either of the faculties of intuition or of the understanding. Third, as a consequence of the problems mentioned above, the announced co-operation between concepts and intuition, or spontaneity and receptivity, becomes platitudinous.

The problematic points above can be put in a sharper perspective if we keep in mind that Kant, among other things, conceives of spontaneity as a *faculty of rules*. Considered in this way, spontaneity is a kind of rule that is more than either intuition or concepts. It embraces both these faculties, but, at the same time, it also goes beyond what each of them contributes by giving the rule for their unity. By understanding spontaneity in this fashion, Kant is able to explain how intu-

ition is *immediately* given with unity, and how the concepts are *mediately* representing, and determining of, the manifold given within an intuition. As a faculty of rules, spontaneity does not serve a purely epistemological or ontological role. Instead, it transcends this dichotomy and becomes a principle of *the condition of the possibility of experience*. Considered in this way, spontaneity operates as a unifying function of both sensibility and understanding.[6]

In contrast to this, McDowell's identification of spontaneity with understanding creates the problem that the discursive must serve the function as the justifying principle of all judgements of experience. The consequence is that McDowell's main justifying argument turns into an epistemological, or empirical, argument. The reason why he does this is very clearly articulated by McDowell himself. In his effort to secure the claim that our conceptual capacities are involved in experience, he addresses the question of the scope of the logical space of concepts *vis-à-vis* experience. This is essentially the dilemma with which his book opens: neither may experience extend the space of concepts, nor may the space of concepts remain self-contained. McDowell's solution is to reconceive experience so that it is seen to be, essentially, conceptually structured. This is one solution of the dilemma – McDowell's solution. But, with Kant in mind, we see that McDowell begs the question here by assuming that the only way for experience to rationally constrain conceptual activity is for experience itself to be conceptual: *if spontaneity is the unifying function of both sensibility and understanding, then both sensibility and understanding can be distinct, yet also unified*. It is important to note that the discussion is about cognition, not discrimination. McDowell acknowledges that discrimination without concepts, in the sense of differential response, is possible, but he claims that cognition without concepts is not. His reason for this is that any non-conceptual cognition would relate to conceptual activity in a merely external way and hence would not be cognition at all. However, we have already seen that the relation between such a cognition and the conceptual need not be merely external. Since McDowell apparently is blind to such a possibility, experience is made conceptual all the way out.

On my view, this conception of the relation between the concepts and experience displays one of the main weaknesses in McDowell's argument in the first part of the book. It is also what makes him defend aspects of many different, and partly incompatible, philosophical positions (i.e. a transformed 'Platonism', 'Aristotelianism' and 'Hegelianism').

III

Let me begin the discussion of the three points mentioned above with a brief elaboration of Kant's conception of spontaneity. In the *Critique*, as already mentioned, spontaneity is given different functions. One of the most relevant ones in this context is the one Kant presents in §10 of the *Critique* in the 'Analytic of Concepts'. In this section, the function of spontaneity is specified such that: '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 understanding.'[7] Spontaneity, expressed via the pure concepts of understanding, is that which gives unity to the manifold in our intuitions and which also gives unity to the different representations in a judgement. Given that the intention is to give a *transcendental* justification of judgement – in the sense that what is to be shown is *how* the concepts and the experiential manifold stand in a necessary relation to each other – it seems that the procedure of justification must be continued until one reaches a level where a common grounding principle can be found.[8] It is questionable whether one can find such a common principle through a purely epistemological, or empirical, analysis of our judgements of perception. In Kant, the common grounding principle is spontaneity understood as the condition of a synthetic unity in both the concepts and intuition, although in different ways: concepts present the synthetic unity with which intuition is given, but they do not *re*present intuition as such.[9]

In contrast to this, McDowell's argument remains at the same level as that on which the judgement of experience is constituted. When it comes to the discussion of the function of the receptivity and the spontaneity in judgements, McDowell's argument is twofold. First, he makes the negative statement that 'receptivity does not make an even notionally separable contribution to the co-operation'.[10] Then he continues the argument with the following positive statement: 'The relevant conceptual capacities are drawn on *in* receptivity.'[11] There is an obvious tension between these two formulations: it seems difficult to understand how the conceptual capacities are drawn on in receptivity, given that receptivity cannot be considered as even notionally separable from the conceptual capacities. Another way to pose the problem is to say that in this case no explanation is given, but, instead, receptivity is presented merely as something *in* which conceptual capacities are applied. This stands in sharp contrast to Kant's argument concerning intuition and concepts. As Kant writes (in a passage to which McDowell himself is fond of referring):

> Our nature is so constituted that our *intuition* can never be other than sensible; that is, it contains only the mode in which we are affected by objects. The faculty, on the other hand, which enables us to *think* the object of sensible intuition is the understanding. *To neither of these powers may a preference be given.* Without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.[12]

Kant thus characterizes both intuitions and concepts as unified entities that make an *equal* contribution to our empirical knowledge. The unity concerns the form of the intuitively given and the conceptually determined, and they are both rooted in a common justifying ground. This ground is the unifying function of spontaneity.

Given this common unity, what criteria do we have for distinguishing between the discursive and intuitive contributions to experience? McDowell is right when

he claims that intuition *per se* does not contribute anything *conceptually* separable in experience. On the other hand, it contributes *something* (for instance, something does appear *as* something to us even if it is not yet conceptualized) and this something is what is given as *thinkable*. For Kant, the thinkable is given as synthesized and unified. In his terminology, this is expressed as the (given and unified) manifold *within* the forms of intuition. On this level, the manifold is not represented *as* a manifold. Such a reflection is described through Kant's conception of *synthesis* (the synthesis of apprehension and of reproduction).

When it comes to the thinkable, this must be given within the sensible forms of intuition, namely space and time. In the Kantian context, what is *outside* the thinkable would be the *thing in itself*, that is, that which is not captured by our forms of experience. In connection with the justification of our judgements of experience, however, the only objects which count as relevant are only those that are thinkable, that is, those that *are* captured by our forms of experience, namely space and time. So, the thinkable is that in experience which has a certain form such that it *can* (possibly) be thought as an object. Being such an object of (possible) thinking requires that, already at the level of 'givenness', there must be a certain 'forming' of the representation such that it can count *as* a representation for us. This form is what Kant names intuition and this intuition is, as already mentioned, given with a manifold in it, a manifold that is already unified.[13]

What McDowell lacks in his description of the receptivity of human experience is, besides its purely assumed presence, an account of its determinate form containing a united and thinkable manifold within it. The only things left in McDowell's conception of receptivity are the so-called 'relevant conceptual capacities'. These are characterized as passive and as elicited from us by the world. For instance, in the case of perception, the relevant conceptual capacities are drawn from us by the object perceived. But what might this expression 'conceptual capacity' mean here? It is to McDowell's use of this expression that I will turn in the next section.

IV

McDowell's account of the function of conceptual capacities as they are drawn on in receptivity is quite ambiguous. One interpretation is that the concepts as such are empty and therefore need to look to receptivity to get their content. This would mean that the concepts are nothing besides their application *in* receptivity. Clearly McDowell wants to distance himself from the abstractionist picture of the formation of concepts associated with the Myth of the Given and so, according to McDowell, it is *not* the case that 'in order to form an observational concept, a subject would have to abstract out the right element in the presented multiplicity'.[14] McDowell's anti-abstractionist sentiments would seem to support the first interpretation noted above. An alternative interpretation, however, would take McDowell's view of concepts, or conceptual capacities, to be such that concepts are not themselves empty. They must also be considered

with respect to their possible application within receptivity. This would also be the way the concept acquires its content. If this latter interpretation is right, it would seem that McDowell ends up with a position where the concepts themselves must be considered as *given*. This would imply that there is a *conceptual givenness within receptivity*. If we look back at the initial comments concerning McDowell's worry that empirically detached concepts would end up 'spinning in the void' (the danger of coherentism), it is plausible to assume that he considers concepts already to contain experiential content (compare the first interpretation). The following comment seems to support this approach: 'In the view I am urging, the conceptual contents that sit closest to the impact of external reality on one's sensibility are not already, qua conceptual, some distance away from that impact. … The conceptual contents that are most basic in this sense are already possessed by impressions themselves, impingements by the world on our sensibility.'[15] The concepts thus cannot be a general presentation, as they are according to Kant.

If we compare McDowell's claim here – that the conceptual contents are not some distance removed from the impact of the external reality – with what Kant says about concepts, then it seems as if McDowell's view actually relates to what Kant calls the *synthetic unity of the concept*. According to Kant, when we represent a concept, we represent its synthetic unity, that is, its content. The question is whether conceptual content understood as synthetic unity in Kant converges with McDowell's conception of conceptual content.

There seems to be at least one clear difference between Kant and McDowell here. Kant's conception of the representation of a concept as a representation of its synthetic unity points to another level of description, namely, that which has to do with the search for conditions of the possibility of experience. In the previous section, we saw that the common unifying function of the unity of intuition simultaneously served as the unifying function of the unity of the concept. In Kant, the represented concept *represents the synthetic unity* with which the intuition and its manifold are *given*. In other words, the originally given unity is reflected *as* a synthetic unity, *as* a manifold, through the concept. Through such a reflection the concept acquires its content in Kant. The way the concept acquires content in McDowell's account is radically different from the way the concept represents synthetic unity, or content, in Kant. McDowell's concepts seemingly acquire their conceptual content already at the level of intuitive, or experiential, givenness. In contrast, Kant's solution implies that the question of whether the concepts necessarily apply to the perceptually given becomes irrelevant. The common unifying function guarantees that whatever the judgement of experience may contain, however fallible it is, the necessary connection between the two autonomous contributions to knowledge is secured.

A concept cannot function as a concept, that is, as a constituent in a judgement, if it lacks content. Concepts without content are empty. As McDowell frequently emphasizes, this is not just a trivial tautological claim stating merely that what is empty is empty. Instead, this well-known Kantian phrase reminds us that our concepts would be purely illusionary if they were devoid of content.[16]

From such an understanding of our concepts we could infer objects, but there would be no possibility of establishing warranted judgements of experience.

V

So far I have argued that there is a gap between McDowell's diagnosis of the dilemma, the two horns of which are constituted by coherentism and foundationalism, and his attempt to arrive at a solution. Initially, he announces what amounts to a transcendental approach to the problem that offers a reinterpretation of experience such that receptivity is understood as always already conceptually structured. But he then provides an analysis of the relation between our concepts, or judgements, and the world that seems to collapse the intended transcendental mode of argument into an epistemological one. I have tried to explain *why* McDowell's argument departs from a transcendental perspective and ends in the epistemological claim that our judgements of experience are simply constituted such that receptivity is always already conceptually structured. Schematically, this can be summed up as follows: the way McDowell uses the concept *understanding* in the first three lectures of *Mind and World* covers what in Kant encompasses both understanding and reason – that is, it covers both the domain of concepts and judgements, and the domain of freedom. McDowell's concern is that the understanding, or spontaneity, when understood in this way, will be empirically unconstrained. As a response to this challenge, McDowell redefines receptivity: it is always already conceptually structured. If this seems like no receptivity at all, the response is that the concepts are articulated *in* receptivity. The problem with this redefinition is that what is outside the logical space of concepts remains unexplained. A *transcendental* justification of our judgements seems difficult to establish in this manner. Moreover, the concepts themselves seem to coincide with what is given, since receptivity is understood as always already conceptually structured. The concepts are apparently given, then, in the same way as the manifold in our experience is given. Simultaneously, receptivity in and for itself does not seem to have any autonomous role in the constitution of our judgements of experience. Instead, receptivity is treated as already embedded by the concept. Thus the Kantian way of expressing the problem of the 'Transcendental Deduction' – how can it be proved that it is always possible to conceptualize (with the help of the Categories) sensible intuitions? – is no longer available. As Kant poses the question at issue here, it is a deep problem *because* intuitions do not *need* concepts in any way.[17]

Kant's concept of spontaneity is, in contrast to McDowell's interpretation above, the idea of an original synthetic unity and as such it functions as the common justifying principle of the different representations, namely the concepts and the intuition. For Kant, there is a very important distinction between spontaneity conceived of as synthetic unity and spontaneity as it is articulated through the understanding. The last concerns the discursive domain, that is, the domain of concepts (categories) and judgements. This is a crucial distinction, since it makes possible a logical discrimination between what is

immediately given in intuition, and what is reflected through our concepts. It also secures a level of transcendental justification which does not coincide with the constitutive level of empirical judgements. Spontaneity as (original) synthetic unity is, as a consequence of this, what mediates between the immediately, and spatiotemporally, given manifold and the determining concepts (and judgements). Simultaneously intuition and concepts stand under the principle synthetic unity in the sense that this principle is what determines the common unifying form which guarantees the necessary connection between our concepts and the spatiotemporal manifold.

Initially, it seems that McDowell's ambition in *Mind and World* is to account for the relation between the knowing subject and the external world. Yet his redefinition of receptivity leads to an account of this relation that effectively eliminates the possibility of giving an account of how this relation is constituted. So far as the relation between mind and world is concerned, one should heed Kant's words in the transcendental deduction: 'The synthetic unity of apperception is therefore that highest point, to which we must ascribe all the employment of the understanding, even the whole of logic, and conformably therewith, transcendental philosophy. Indeed this faculty of apperception is the understanding itself.'[18]

Notes

1 John McDowell, *Mind and World*, Harvard University Press, 1994, p. 3 (my emphasis).
2 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
3 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 25.
4 In this context I do not attribute any technical or specific (Kantian) meaning of the expression 'judgment of experience'.
5 See, for instance, Donald Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2001, p. 141: 'Nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief.'
6 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A126.
7 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B104–5.
8 In Kant, this procedure of search for a justifying principle follows an analytic regressive method, that is, a method of argument from the conditioned to the condition (*a principiatis ad principia*). See Kant's *Logic*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin, Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter & Co. (Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften), 1900– vol. 9, §117.
9 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B161.
10 McDowell, *Mind and World*, p. 9.
11 McDowell, *Mind and World*, p. 10.
12 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A51/B75. The emphasis on the complete phrase is my own.
13 See, for instance, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A25/B39.
14 McDowell, *Mind and World*, p. 7.
15 McDowell, *Mind and World*, pp. 9–10.
16 This is also one of the main conclusions of the 'Transcendental Dialectic' in the *Critique*.
17 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A90–1/B123.
18 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B131n.

12 Davidson's transcendental argumentation

Andrew N. Carpenter

Philosophers commonly associate questions of the form 'what are the conditions for the possibility of X?' with Kant and with Kant's novel philosophical methodology, transcendental argumentation. Kant's genius, however, did not lie in his merely raising questions of this form – many philosophers had asked questions like this before Kant.[1] What was novel about Kant's transcendental methodology was not this question, but the new way Kant raised it about an extraordinarily fruitful new topic. Thus, when confronting sceptical doubts about knowledge and causality, Kant did not directly raise the questions 'how is knowledge possible?' or 'how is causal determination possible?'. He focused instead on a more fundamental question, namely 'how is our experience possible in the first place?'.[2] Kant's predecessors had taken experience for granted. For example, Descartes agreed that we had experience and asked whether it is veridical. Hume's empiricist methodology was based on analysing the contents of experience: Hume's scepticism about causation arose when he concluded that we don't encounter causes in our experience.

Kant's transcendental strategy involved investigating the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience. Constructing a transcendental argument of this type requires three things:[3]

1   Identifying a phenomenon that one's interlocutors agree exists;
2   Investigating the necessary conditions for the possibility of that phenomenon; and
3   Examining the philosophical implications of the resulting 'transcendental analysis' of the possibility of the phenomenon.

In Kant's most celebrated transcendental argument, the transcendental deduction of the categories, Kant identified experience as the phenomena to explore (stage one). He then argued that the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience include the applicability of each of the twelve Kantian categories to every possible experience (stage two). Kant's answers to Cartesian and Humean scepticism were among the many implications of his analysis (stage three).[4]

Davidson's work in the philosophy of language presents a transcendental argument of this form about the possibility of communication. His analysis of

the necessary conditions for the possibility of communication supports and is supported by many of Davidson's most central positions, including his theory of radical interpretation, his doctrine of the essential veridicality of belief, and a novel form of externalism. It is the task of this chapter to explain the form and general features of Davidson's transcendental argumentation.[5] I should emphasize that although I interpret him as working within a Kantian tradition, by this I mean no more than that Davidson's argumentation shares with Kant's the tripartite argumentative schema given above. These contemporary echoes of Kant's brilliance represent an important element of Kant's philosophical legacy, a legacy that is undiminished by pointing out that neither Davidson nor other contemporary philosophers who offer 'Kantian' transcendental arguments of this type are thereby committed to Kant's transcendental idealism or to the substantive premises and assumptions of Kant's own transcendental argumentation.[6]

A preliminary question is whether it is proper to characterize Davidson as writing in this transcendental tradition. An astute Davidson interpreter has pointed out that the 'maximally ambitious' argument for externalism would be a transcendental argument refuting internalism, but he hesitates to attribute such an argument to Davidson.[7] Davidson himself usually resists meta-philosophical characterizations of his own methodology, although he has labelled some of his arguments as 'transcendental'.[8] In this essay I explain why I believe it is fruitful to interpret Davidson as offering an ambitious transcendental argument. A starting point for my investigation is my belief that his major philosophical claims – for example, his account of rationality and thesis of the anomalousness of the mental – all follow systematically from his core theory of radical interpretation. This theory, in turn, must be understood in the light of Davidson's commitment to externalism. Davidson's externalism, and especially its central model of triangulation, represents the heart of his transcendental argumentation.[9]

I Davidson's externalism

Externalists reject the internalist assumption that mental content is entirely determined by the non-relational, internal properties of the mind, brain or central nervous system. Instead, they assert that content is determined, at least in part, by factors external to the mind (or brain or nervous system). Versions of externalism have been offered by, among others, Wittgenstein, Putnam, Kripke and Burge.[10] The two traditional varieties are social externalism, according to which mental content is determined by the social and linguistic normative context in which subjects are situated, and perceptual or causal externalism, according to which causal relations between subjects and objects and events in the world are the content-determining external factors.[11]

Davidson's most original contribution to externalism – discussed in detail in §IV below – is his conception of content-determining 'triangulation' between a subject, an interpreter, and objects and events both perceive. One aspect of this

account is that mental states are supervenient on (among other things) external objects. In the light of the connection between Davidson's externalism and his theory of radical interpretation (see §III below), his externalism is best viewed as a novel hybrid of perceptual and social externalism. On the one hand, Davidson rejects the assumption of many social externalists that social usage and linguistic norms determine mental content. On the other hand, his account of how objects and events in the world determine content presupposes an intersubjective context of interpretation. It is also worth noting that his externalism is supported by a distinctive methodology: Davidson eschews the elaborate thought experiments and counterfactual conditionals offered by Putnam, Burge and Kripke, and instead appeals to facts about the successful communicative acts and simple cases of language learning. Davidson's distinct version of externalism can be attributed to his relative independence from the main contemporary sources of externalist thought, Putnam and Kripke. The main source of Davidson's doctrine is Quine. Thus, Davidson points out that his claim that 'the contents of our thoughts and sayings are partly determined by the history of causal interactions with the environment':

> comes naturally to someone like me who has for some thirty years been insisting that the contents of our earliest learned and most basic sentences ('Mama', 'Doggie', 'Red', 'Fire', 'Gavagai') must be determined by what it is in the world that causes us to hold them true. It is here, I have long claimed, that the ties between language and the world are established and that central constraints on meaning are fixed.[12]

Two crucial consequences of this view are that we cannot 'in general fix what someone means independently of what caused the belief' and 'we can't in general first identify beliefs and meanings and then ask what caused them'.[13] In other words, the internalist assumption that non-relational properties of the mind or brain determine content is mistaken:

> What I propose is a modest form of externalism. If our past – the causal processes that gave our words and thoughts the content they have – had been different, those contents would have been different, even if our present state happens to be what it would have been had that past been different.[14]

If Davidsonian externalism is true, then our mental content is determined (in part at least) by the external objects upon which our mental states supervene; as Davidson puts it, '[this] causality plays an indispensable role in determining the content of what we say and believe'.[15] Specifically, he endorses a causal theory of content, according to which the content of our simplest mental states (approximately equivalent to Quinean occasion sentences) is determined by our perception of the world: 'the stimuli that cause our most basic verbal responses also determine what those responses mean, and the contents of the beliefs that accompany them'.[16]

Davidson also insists that this externalism is incompatible with global sceptical doubts about the external world. Thus he writes that:

> What stands in the way of global scepticism of the senses is, in my view, the fact that we must, in the plainest and methodologically most basic cases, take the objects of a belief to be the causes of that belief.[17]

And again:

> [A]s long as we adhere to the basic intuition that in the simplest cases word and thoughts refer to what causes them, it is clear that it cannot happen that most of our plainest beliefs about what exists in the world are false. The reason is that we do not first form concepts and then discover what they apply to; rather, in the basic cases the application determines the content of the concept … If anything is systematically causing certain experiences (or verbal responses), that is what the thoughts and utterances are about. This rules out systematic error.[18]

Davidson maintains that although any belief can be false, any concept can be misapplied and any putative experience can be deceptive, the totality of our most basic beliefs, concepts, and experiences is immune from massive error. The reason is that, according to Davidson's externalism, the content of these mental states is determined by their causes in the external world.

A crucial problem is understanding exactly which causes in the world are the salient, content-determining, causes. After all, there are many 'causal intermediaries' along the causal path from external objects to our empirical beliefs. Davidson maintains that global scepticism is a coherent and irrefutable possibility under any epistemological intermediary theory, according to which the ultimate source of justification or meaning is some causal intermediary short of the very external objects we take our thoughts to be about.[19] Epistemological intermediary theories take some intermediate cause – experience, sense data, the given, sensory evidence – as the source of justification or meaning. Davidson insists that it is always a salient question what are the causal antecedents of an epistemic intermediary – that is, what external objects or events are earlier in the causal sequence. This is why he concludes that global sceptical doubts must be admitted as intelligible if epistemic intermediaries are countenanced: we can be completely mistaken in our beliefs about the world just in case the causal antecedents of the epistemic intermediaries are not what we take them to be. Thus, if Davidson is right, then scepticism can be refuted only if epistemic intermediaries are eschewed and external objects themselves are held to be the ultimate source of justification and meaning.

Davidson's refutation of scepticism, which attempts to demonstrate the unintelligibility of global sceptical doubts, must be understood in the context of (and as presupposing) both an endorsement of externalism and a rejection of epistemic intermediaries. In opposition to the 'proximal' and 'internalist' positions

built upon what Davidson calls the third dogma of empiricism, Davidson's anti-sceptical argument rises from a distal, externalist theory of meaning.[20]

As an externalist, Davidson rejects the assumption that 'the truth concerning what a person believes about the world is logically independent of the truth of those beliefs'.[21] He argues, on the contrary, that the nature of our beliefs and of the process that determines their content is such that the truth of the totality of our beliefs is logically dependent on their veridicality. This is part of the reason behind his famous doctrine that 'belief is in its nature veridical'.[22] I wish to re-emphasize that this doctrine does not entail that each of our beliefs is true: any particular belief may be false even though one holds it true. What Davidson insists is that this possibility does not entail that all of our beliefs might be false. The epistemic point of his omniscient interpreter argument, discussed in §II below, is precisely that 'it is impossible for all our beliefs to be false together'.[23]

Next I evaluate Davidson's anti-sceptical argument, which is designed to illuminate his thesis about the veridicality of belief. It is unfortunate that Davidson's original presentation of this argument did not make explicit the connections between it and his externalism. This may be why the omniscient interpreter argument has appeared opaque to so many critics; in what follows, I will show that this argument is understood best when it is situated within the context of Davidsonian externalism.

II Radical interpretation and scepticism

The omniscient interpreter argument falls out of Davidson's account of radical interpretation. Radical interpretation, in turn, rests on Quinean methodological presumptions about theories of meaning.[24] Like Quine, Davidson accepts a 'third-person' or methodologically behaviouristic approach to meaning. This position is based on what looks like a truism. It seems obvious that our language bears important logical relations to the content of our thoughts; in short, all meaning is linguistic meaning. Since language can be conceived as a public institution, an attribute of linguistic meaning is intersubjectivity.[25] The Quinean claim follows that a theory of meaning must be behaviouristic in a relatively mild, non-reductionist or methodological sense: linguistic meaning, and therefore the content of all our propositional attitudes, must in principle be derivable from observable behaviour.[26]

An important consequence of the Quinean approach towards meaning is that theories of meaning must be extensional, not intensional. By taking seriously the social character of meaning, this approach takes as its fundamental objective making out meaning on a wholly observational basis, that is, without taking for granted an antecedent grasp of the meaning of any of a speaker's utterances. The central idea is that all meaning is discoverable on the basis of empirical knowledge of extensional relations holding between speakers and their utterances.[27] In Davidsonian terms, the Quinean approach to meaning takes it for granted that meaning is discoverable through a process of public interpretation. Davidson's account of radical interpretation is a description of how one can get

from extensional facts about which sentences a person 'holds true' to intensional facts about what that person means by her sentences and about what she believes. After determining via behavioural evidence which utterances a person assents to and dissents from, an interpreter first tries to create a vocabulary of words by dividing these utterances into constituent parts. Next she tries to find extensions for those words that make true most of the sentences the utterer assents to and make false most of the sentences the utterer dissents from. Interpretation is achieved when enough sentences which the interpreter assents to or dissents from in her language are correlated in this manner with the utterer's sentences. Communication would be possible when interlocutors find each other mutually interpretable.[28]

Since 'holding true' is an extensional relation between people and their sentences, one can know which sentences a person holds true while being wholly ignorant of what that person takes those sentences to mean. It is hard to overemphasize the difficulty of individuating propositional attitudes while remaining faithful to the constraints of an extensional account of meaning. Consider two apparent truisms. First, given meaning, it is a trivial task to determine the content of someone's beliefs. Second, if you know the meaning of one term, you will possess insight into the meaning of many.[29] On the one hand, if you know a sentence someone holds true and you know what she means by that sentence, then you know that content of one of her beliefs; if you take meaning as given, it is an easy matter to move from the extensional 'A holds s true' to the intensional 'A believes that p'. However, since extensionalists can take as given only extensional facts, the problem for the radical interpreter is to reach facts about both meaning and belief from an extensional starting point. The lesson to be drawn from the second truism, on the other hand, is that this can be done only by adopting a holistic approach to meaning, namely, by holding that you know the meaning of a sentence only when you know its place in a large network of sentences. If you know the meaning of one of a speaker's sentences, you will be in a position to know the meaning of many other of that speaker's sentences, just as if you know what you mean by 'that is a rabbit' or 'grass is green', then you must know the meaning of a large number of sentences about rabbits, grass, colours, animals, plants, etc. The moral is that just as extensional interpreters must strive to attain both meaning and belief simultaneously, so they are incapable of determining meaning on a sentence by sentence basis; extensionalists are compelled to adopt a holistic approach to meaning.

Much more can be said about both these features of radical interpretation. However, we have seen enough to understand how Davidson can forge a strong connection between having a propositional attitude and the extensional relation of holding true. In particular, it follows that a doubt can have content only if the doubter holds true many other beliefs. It is impossible to doubt that something is a rabbit without holding true, among others, many beliefs about what a rabbit is. Likewise, the global sceptical doubt has content only if we hold true a host of empirical beliefs. Although I haven't discussed this move yet, at this point I will simply stipulate that, because he applies a principle of charity across the board,

Davidson also is in a position to insist that we all must hold true roughly the same 'total theory' about the world. It follows from this that there is no way to discover that a speaker is largely wrong about the world.

The question to consider is whether this conclusion possesses any anti-sceptical force. Why shouldn't it be interpreted as showing that we must share a common conception of the world, regardless of whether or not our beliefs about it are in fact largely veridical? Thus far the ideas I have sketched seem to suggest only that massive disagreement, but not massive error, is impossible. After all, 'holding true' is not necessarily 'holding-truly'.

III Scepticism and externalism

The objection is that radical interpretation has no anti-sceptical force because it fails to forge a connection between belief and truth.[30] Davidson might complain that a fundamental point has been overlooked, namely, his externalism. When he has discussed this objection, Davidson has appealed to the externalist principle that 'we can't in general first identify beliefs and meanings and then ask what caused them … [t]he causality plays an indispensable role in determining the content of what we say and believe'.[31] It is in the context of discussing this claim that Davidson gives the omniscient interpreter argument:

> Why couldn't it happen that speaker and interpreter understand one another on the basis of shared but erroneous beliefs? This can, and no doubt often does, happen. But it cannot be the rule. For imagine for a moment an interpreter who is omniscient about the world, and about what does and would cause a speaker to assent to any sentence in his (potentially unlimited) repertoire. The omniscient interpreter, using the same method as the fallible interpreter, finds the fallible speaker largely consistent and correct. By his own standards, of course, but since these are objectively correct, the fallible speaker is seen to be largely correct and consistent by objective standards. We may also, if we want, let the omniscient interpreter turn his attention to the fallible interpreter of the fallible speaker. It turns out that the fallible interpreter can be wrong about some things, but not in general; and so he cannot share universal error with the agent he is interpreting. Once we agree to the general method of interpretation I have sketched, it becomes impossible correctly to hold that anyone could be mostly wrong about how things are.[32]

This argument has been widely misunderstood. Appealing to the idea of an omniscient interpreter begs no question against the sceptic; after all, the global sceptical doubt could be characterized in terms of a distinction between lowly, imperfect human beliefs and the necessarily veridical beliefs of an omniscient intelligence.[33] Nor does Davidson's argument presuppose the actual existence of a divine interpreter.[34] The question of whether an omniscient interpreter really exists is of no consequence to this anti-sceptical argument, which relies on the

thought that if our beliefs about the world were generally mistaken, then were there to be, *per impossibile*, an omniscient interpreter, such an interpreter would correctly interpret us as massively mistaken. Finally, there is no fallacy in Davidson's making the omniscient interpreter adopt 'the same method as the fallible interpreter'.[35] To be faithful to his extensionalist methodology, Davidson must hold that even omniscient beings have no choice but to adopt a behaviouristic 'third-person' attitude towards meaning. This explains his view that there is no objective fact of the matter about the content of a person's propositional attitudes independent of what an interpreter can correctly make out.[36] These varied criticisms are all wide of the mark for the same reason: none of them successfully situate Davidson's anti-sceptical claims in the proper context of his externalism and his theory of radical interpretation.

Earlier I alluded to Davidson's claim, which follows from his use of the principle of charity, that 'from the interpreter's point of view … [there is no way] he can discover the speaker to be largely wrong about the world'.[37] On his view, it is impossible that an omniscient interpreter could correctly interpret someone as massively mistaken. Since, on the one hand, the omniscient interpreter necessarily 'finds the fallible speaker largely consistent and correct' and, on the other, the omniscient interpreter is omniscient and thus his standards are 'objectively correct', the conclusion seems to follow that the speaker's beliefs must actually be by and large 'objectively correct', that is, largely true. As long as Davidson can substantiate his claim that successful interpretation requires its application, his use of the principle of charity does not beg the question against the sceptic. Since he also believes that there are no 'facts of the matter' about what someone means beyond what a fully informed interpreter could learn, Davidson concludes that a methodological necessity for interpretation and a necessary condition for our having beliefs is that the principle of charity be employed across the board. Thus if the principle of charity is itself anti-sceptical, so much the worse for scepticism; we now seem to have in hand an argument which has brought to fruition one of Davidson's transcendental ambitions. All is not well in this putative philosophers' paradise, however. It is suspicious that we have found no use for the additions Davidson made to the omniscient interpreter argument in its revised formulation, in particular the explicit claim that the omniscient interpreter 'is omniscient about … what does and would cause a speaker to assent to any sentence in his (potentially unlimited) repertoire'.[38] As of yet, we have had no recourse to Davidson's externalism. The basic problem is that although the need to apply the principle of charity across the board shows why it is impossible for an omniscient interpreter correctly to interpret a speaker as massively mistaken, by itself this seems consistent with the possibility of everyone, mere humans and 'omniscient interpreters' alike, being massively mistaken about the world.

Certainly the application of the principle of charity cannot, by itself, serve to guarantee the general veridicality of our beliefs. I have maintained throughout that externalism is essential to Davidson's anti-sceptical argument. Earlier I cited his externalist claim that 'we can't in general first identify beliefs and meanings

and then ask what caused them'.[39] Why can't we? In 'Empirical Content' he explains that the reason 'our basic methodology for interpreting the words of others necessarily makes it the case that most of the simplest sentences which speakers hold true are true' is that 'the interpreter … must take into account the causal interaction between world and speaker'.[40] Why must an interpreter do this? Davidson offers this explanation in 'Epistemology Externalized':

> If anything is systematically causing certain experiences (or verbal responses), that is what the thoughts and utterances are about. This rules out systematic error. If nothing is systematically causing the experiences, there is no content to be mistaken about. To quote myself: "What stands in the way of global skepticism of the senses is, in my view, the fact that we must, in the plainest and methodologically most basic cases, take the objects of belief to be the causes of that belief". Anyone who accepts perceptual externalism knows he cannot be systematically deceived about whether there are such things as cows, people, water, stars, and chewing gum.[41]

At last we see a connection between meaning and truth. However, although this doctrine seems powerfully anti-sceptical, consider again the question of how we determine which cause it is that our basic thoughts are about. For instance, what cause is content-determining in the case of our thought 'there's a cow'? As Davidson admits, there seem to be many potential content-determining causes, ranging from some 'going back in time before all cows' to those 'spatially closer to the thinker than any cow'.[42] How can perceptual externalism accommodate the fact that our thoughts about cows refer to the 'natural' causes, the bovine animals? If it cannot, the doctrine must be false.

In a phrase, the problem is to understand how the 'objects of thought' are to be identified. Davidson's answer, that 'the identification of the objects of thought rests … on a social basis' is based on an analogy with language learning.[43] It will be useful to quote at length from 'Epistemology Externalized':

> We cannot … resolve the question of the contents of mental states from the point of view of a single creature. This is perhaps best seen by thinking about how one person learns from another how to speak and think of ordinary things. Put in greatly simplified terms, a basic aspect of such learning can be described in this way: the learner is rewarded … when the learner makes sounds or otherwise responds in ways the teacher finds appropriate in situations the teacher classes together. The learner is subsequently caused to make similar sounds by situations the learner instinctively classes together … . Success at the first level is achieved to the extent that the learner responds with sounds the teacher finds similar to situations the teacher finds similar. The teacher is responding to two things: the external situation and the responses of the learner. The learner is responding to two things: the external situation and the responses of the teacher. All these relations are causal. Thus the essential triangle is formed which makes communication

about shared objects and events possible. But it is also this triangle that determines the content of the learner's words and thoughts when these become complex enough to deserve the term …. [W]hat makes the particular aspect of the cause of the learner's responses the aspect that gives them the content they have is the fact that this aspect of the cause is shared by the teacher and the learner.[44]

The language-learning example, and the triangulation model lying behind it, provide powerful motivation to accept the Davidsonian claim that one can be a believer only if one is an interpreter of others. The suggestion is that, as believers and communicators, we are all like the learner and the teacher: others attribute meaning and belief to us by judging certain utterances of ours as similar by correlating them with external situations they judge similar; we attribute meaning and belief to others by correlating those responses we judge similar with external situations we judge similar. The objects of thought, the 'natural' causes, are determined by interpretative triangulation. In the basic cases at least, the content of our own beliefs is determined by just those external situations we, speakers and interpreters who find our utterances mutually interpretable, 'naturally' find similar.[45]

The problem of identifying the objects of thought is a general problem of extreme significance. Certainly when investigating Davidson's 'methodologically basic' occasion sentences all extensionalist theories of knowledge must make some appeal to observable circumstances under which sentences are held true. But which element in the causal path ending in the speaker's mental states fixes the salient circumstances? Consider again the thought 'there's a cow'. Obviously, it is impossible for human speakers and interpreters to share causes 'going back in time before all cows'. The only plausible candidates for intermediate causes 'spatially closer to the thinker than any cow' are either literally on the skin (something like photon arrays on the surface of the retina) or just inside it (perhaps patterns of sensory nerve stimulation). But these things cannot be routinely observed at all; how could they be the salient shared circumstances? This is why Davidson insists that if what a person means can in principle be determined by another person's observations, then the problem of determining the objects of thought shows the truth of a distal theory of meaning supported by 'triangulation externalism'.

IV Triangulation and the possibility of communication

According to Davidsonian externalism, the meaning of our thoughts and our utterances are fixed neither by the micro-structure of our physical environment nor by the practices of our linguistic communities. Rather, Davidson's triangulation theory of externalism asserts that content is fixed (at least in part) by systematic patterns of causal interactions between ourselves, other people with whom we interact linguistically, and objects and events we perceive in the world.[46] These patterns of interaction are not, *pace* conventional perceptual externalism,

determined by the world itself. Nor are they, *pace* social externalism, determined by the conventions or norms of a linguistic community. What matters most on Davidson's account is the systematic causal relationships between a speaker and both her social and her physical environments. In those social settings where triangulation takes place, individuals acquire, manifest and observe in others dispositions to react differentially to shared objects and events in the world. In the simplest case, triangulation occurs when, on the one hand, another observes me reacting in the same way as she does to the same cause and when, on the other hand, I observe her reacting in the same way to that cause. Triangulation – of this simplest type, or one of the more complex versions discussed below – is essential to interpretability and hence to the possibility of communication:

> [Triangulation] is established by causal interaction between people and parts and aspects of the world. The dispositions to react differentially to objects and events thus set up are central to the correct interpretation of a person's thoughts and speech. If this were not the case, we would have no way of discovering what others think, or what they mean by their words.[47]

The point I wish to emphasize is that, unlike traditional perceptual externalists, Davidson does not take one's own causal relations to objects and events as the basic determinant of content. What is basic is the similarity of responses that two or more subjects use to triangulate on a shared object or event.

Davidson uses the notion of shared similarity responses to make explicit the deep connections between his externalism, his theory of radical interpretation, and the central problem of determining the objects of thought. His emphasis on shared similarity responses allows him to synthesize the externalism of the mental and the social character of language:

> What narrows down the choice of the relevant cause is what is salient for speakers and their interpreters. Salience is defined in terms of similarity responses. We respond with the same sentence when presented with various different distal objects and events or the same objects at different times and in different settings … What makes communication possible is the sharing, inherited and acquired, of similarity responses. The interpreter's verbal responses class together or identify the same objects and events that the speaker's verbal responses class together. If the interpreter also classes together the verbal responses of the speaker, he can correlate items from two of his own classes; verbal responses of the speaker he finds similar and distal objects and events he finds similar. To the latter he has his own verbal responses; these provide his translation or interpretation of the speaker's words. Thus the common cause becomes the common subject matter of speaker and interpreter.[48]

By noticing their responses to external stimuli, speakers and interpreters are able to correlate these observed reactions with objects and events in the world. What

counts most are patterns of correlation: meaning is fixed by systematic patterns of stimuli and responses classified as similar, not by an utterance's particular causal history or a specific relation between an utterer and the world or between the utterance and a set of linguistic norms. Davidson's appeal to patterns of correlation places his externalism squarely outside the camps of traditional perceptual and social externalism. Although one must have a history of causal interaction with objects and events in order to have thoughts or to use language, the process of triangulation itself can be described without appealing to causes at all: the central notion of Davidsonian triangulation is the patterns of interaction between two people as they correlate observations of reactions to shared stimuli.

Put slightly differently, triangulation constitutes a history of causal interactions with objects and events in a social setting. The social setting is one where an individual acquires and manifests the dispositions to react differentially to objects and events that constitute the most basic elements of thought and language. Triangulation occurs when these dispositions are ordered by three specific patterns of similarity responses. Consider a case of triangulation involving Quine's celebrated declaration 'Lo, a rabbit!'.[49] First, the utterer of the sentence must find rabbits similar to each other (the utterer must be able to correlate one rabbit with another). Second, the interpreter of the sentence must also find rabbits similar (the interpreter must be able to make the same correlations). Third, the interpreter must find the utterer's utterances of 'Lo, a rabbit!' similar to each other and must be able correlate them with each other and with the presence of rabbits. Suppose, as Davidson often does to illustrate triangulation, that the utterer in this case is a child learning language and the interpreter is his teacher.[50] The teacher and student occupy two vertices of the Davidsonian triangle; objects and events (rabbits, in this case) occupy the third. One line of the triangle goes from the child to the rabbit; this line is established when the child is disposed to find rabbits similar to each other. A second line goes from the teacher to the rabbit; it is established when the teacher is disposed to find rabbits similar to each other. The third line runs between the teacher and the child; it is established when the teacher can correlate the child's utterances of 'Lo, a rabbit!' with the presence of rabbits before the child. To teach the child, the teacher encourages him to utter that sentence in the presence of rabbits. When the teaching is successful, the child and his teacher have used correlations based on the three similarity standards to converge upon a shared stimulus, namely, the rabbit before them.

We have now reached the heart of Davidson's transcendental argumentation. If we could not achieve the triangulation correlations and we did not possess shared similarity responses, then we could not interpret the utterances of others (or ascribe thoughts to them) and others could not interpret us. Davidson's three similarity responses ground the possibility of radical interpretation because without them the problem of locating the objects of thought would be insoluble. By providing this basis for interpretation, triangulation helps make possible communication about shared objects and events. As Davidson writes, 'triangulation … helps fix some of the conditions under which propositional thought can emerge'.[51] Triangulation also explains the social character of language: language,

interpretation and successful communication all require two agents to react to each other's responses to objects and events they both perceive. Davidson writes:

> It takes two points of view to give a location to the cause of a thought, and thus to define its content … [If the two people] note each other's reactions (in the case of language, verbal reactions), each can correlate these observed reactions with his or her stimuli from the world. The common cause can now determine the content of an utterance and a thought. The triangle which gives contents to thought and speech is complete.[52]

To use a Davidsonian slogan, 'communication begins where causes converge', and this occurs via the process of triangulation.[53] This is why Davidson believes that examining the conditions for the possibility of communication shows why his 'triangular externalism' must be true.

The transcendental strategy I sketched at the start of this essay includes three aspects. The first is the selection of an appropriate phenomenon. The second is the investigation of (some of) the necessary conditions for the phenomenon. The third is elaboration of the philosophically significant theses that follow from that investigation. Among the significant fruits of Davidson's investigation of the possibility of communication is his anti-sceptical thesis of the veridicality of belief. Davidson has recently written:

> It should now be clear what insures that our view of the world is, in its plainest features, largely correct. The reason is that the stimuli that cause our most basic verbal responses also determine what those verbal responses mean, and the content of the beliefs that accompany them. The nature of correct interpretation guarantees both that a large number of our simplest beliefs are true, and that the nature of those beliefs is known to others. Of course many beliefs are given content by their relationships to further beliefs, or are caused by misleading sensations; any particular belief or set of beliefs about the world around us may be false. What cannot be the case is that our general picture of the world and our place in it is mistaken, for it is this picture that informs the rest of our beliefs, whether they be true or false, and makes them intelligible.[54]

Davidson's account of triangulation provides his strongest answer to the global sceptic: the reasons for thinking that 'the stimuli that cause our most basic verbal responses also determine what those verbal responses mean' are provided by his analysis of the conditions for the possibility of communication.

V Transcendental arguments and the empirical study of language

We can now return to a nagging concern adumbrated at the start of this essay, namely whether it is really appropriate to understand Davidson as offering a

three-part 'Kantian' transcendental argument. In particular, what are we to make of Davidson's claim that he is trying to uncover just one possible method by which we could interpret each other and has not undertaken an empirical study of our actual interpretative practices? He writes:

> Given the intricacy of any interpretable system of thought and language, I assumed that there must be many alternative approaches to interpretation. I have outlined one; others may well be less artificial or closer to our intuitions concerning interpretative practice.[55]

The problem is this: if Davidson offers only a sufficient – and not a necessary and sufficient – account of the possibility of interpretation and communication, surely it is wrong to characterize him as offering 'maximally strong' transcendental argumentation. Indeed, one might even complain that if this is what Davidson is really up to, then he hasn't even shown us that his theories tell us anything about the way in which we actually understand each other or communicate! We are now in a position to understand why these worries are misguided. Although Davidson's theories, taken together, do indeed provide a theoretical reconstruction of one way that we could interpret each other, several of his arguments also provide important necessary conditions for the possibility of human communication in general. First, his analysis of shared similarity responses provides an account of necessary conditions for the possibility of human thought and communication. Second, his account of triangular externalism provides an account of necessary conditions for us solving the problem of determining the objects of thought. Finally, his account of the veridicality of belief provides a necessary condition for our having mental states. That Davidson does not also provide a complete empirical account of contingent facts about the psychology of communication detracts not at all from the strength of these transcendental conclusions.

In a way, Davidson's arguments are even stronger than Kant's. Kant's transcendental conclusions about the possibility of experience famously applied only to humans and to other creatures with discursive intellects and not, for example, to God, angels, or even to our selves when considered from the noumenal perspective.[56] Davidson's conclusions tell us much about the possibility of communicating with other types of creatures: those creatures can interpret each other only if they possess the appropriate kinds of shared similarity responses, and we can interpret or communicate with them not at all if their similarity responses diverge from ours too greatly.

I have demonstrated that Davidson offers 'maximally strong' transcendental argumentation. This argumentation provides an analysis of some necessary conditions for the possibility of communication and develops from this analysis a number of substantive philosophical conclusions, including an important new version of externalism and an anti-sceptical account of the inherent veridicality of belief. Although I have not shown that these are good arguments, I have demonstrated that a number of common criticisms miss the mark because they

situate Davidson's claims in an inaccurate context.[57] I hope that locating Davidson's arguments within a tradition of transcendental argumentation inspired by Kant provides a better context for future investigations of Davidson's work on thought, language and truth.

Notes

1 For example, Descartes famously concluded that knowledge is possible only if a benevolent God exists.

2 He also considered related questions, for example 'How are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible?'. The exact relations between Kant's various transcendental questions fall far outside the scope of this essay.

3 This minimal characterization of transcendental arguments captures methodological structure important both to Kantian and to contemporary transcendental argumentation. For the purposes of this discussion, my characterization is superior to those that discuss substantive details of Kantian philosophy rejected by contemporary philosophers. For example, W. Maker posits too close a connection between transcendental argumentation and specific Kantian claims in his 'Davidson's Transcendental Arguments,' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 1991, vol. 51, pp. 345–60. That caveat aside, there are some striking parallels between Kant's and Davidson's arguments. After displaying the categories in the Metaphysical Deduction (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, A76–83/B102–16), Kant must prove their objective validity in the Transcendental Deduction (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A95–130/B129–69). Davidson uses a transcendental argument to move from the massive agreement in belief guaranteed by the methodology of radical interpretation to the massive veridicality of belief guaranteed when radical interpretation is understood in the proper externalistic context (see §III Scepticism and externalism, below). There are also interesting parallels between Davidson's anti-sceptical claims and Kant's Refutation of Idealism (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B426–32).

4 For Kant's transcendental deductions, see *Critique of Pure Reason*, A95–130/B129–69.

5 This task involves wrestling with so many argumentative strands that I must take up the critical assessment of Davidson's arguments elsewhere. Even this modest project sheds new light on several of the most prominent criticisms that have been laid at Davidson's feet, and where appropriate I do avail myself of the opportunity to show how the 'transcendental perspective' on Davidson's philosophy exposes important distortions and misinterpretations in the secondary literature.

6 Among the other contemporary philosophers who offer transcendental investigations of the form I described are J. Habermas ('How is communicative action possible?'), L. Wittgenstein ('How is language possible?'), W. Sellars ('How are concepts possible?'), P.F. Strawson ('How is it possible to know what someone else thinks?'), and H. Putnam and J. Searle ('How is it possible for words to refer to objects?'). Many cognitive scientists, for example Owen Flanagan and Paul Churchland, have produced transcendental investigations of how it is possible to represent anything in the mind. See J. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 vols, trans T. McCarthy, Boston, Beacon Press, 1985; Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. D. Pears and B. McGuinness, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961; W. Sellars, *Science, Perception, and Reality*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963; P. Strawson, *Individuals*, London, Methuen, 1959; H. Putnam, *Reason, Truth, and History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981; J. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, New York, Free Press, 1995; O. Flanagan, *Consciousness Reconsidered*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1992; P. Churchland, *Scientific Realism and the Plasticity of Mind*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979.

7 A. Bilgrami, 'Internalism and Scepticism', in M. de Caro (ed.), *Interpretations and Causes: New Perspectives on Donald Davidson's Philosophy*, Dordrecht, Holland, Kluwer, 1999, p. 239. Bilgrami develops no account of the nature of transcendental argumentation and ultimately draws no conclusions about whether Davidson's arguments are maximally ambitious in his sense; regrettably, he neither discusses Davidson's triangulation argument nor refers to any of the articles from the 1990s that most clearly exhibit Davidson's transcendental argumentation. Commentators who have concluded that Davidson offers transcendental arguments include A.C. Genova, R. Rorty, and B. Ramberg. See A.C. Genova, 'The Very Idea of Massive Truth', in L.E. Hahn (ed.), *The Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, Library of Living Philosophers vol. XXVII, Chicago, Open Court, 1999, pp. 167–91; R. Rorty, 'Transcendental Arguments, Self-Reference, and Pragmatism', in P. Bieri, R.P. Horstmann and L. Krueger (eds), *Transcendental Arguments and Science*, Dordrecht, Holland, D. Reidel, 1979, pp. 77–103; B. Ramberg, *Donald Davidson's Philosophy of Language: An Introduction*, New York, Blackwell, 1989.

8 Davidson's characterizations of his own methodology are infrequent and extremely terse. He once characterized the arguments of 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme' and 'The Method of Truth in Metaphysics' as transcendental, although he gave little explanation (see 'In Defence of Convention T', in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, 2nd edn, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2001, p. 72). More recently, in response to an unsympathetic critic, he has replied: 'I don't know if my arguments … are transcendental or not.' See D. Davidson, 'Reply to Andrew Cutrofello', in L.E. Hahn (ed.), *The Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, pp. 342–4.

9 Other commentators have focused on earlier works that do not display Davidson's transcendental argumentation as clearly or deeply as the more recent works discussed here. For examples of attempts to situate his earlier works within a broadly Kantian tradition, see R. Rorty, 'Transcendental Arguments, Self-Reference, and Pragmatism'; C. Rovane, 'The Metaphysics of Interpretation', in E. LePore (ed.), *Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, New York, Blackwell, 1986, pp. 417–29; M. Root, 'Davidson and Social Science', in E. LePore (ed.), *Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, New York, Blackwell, 1986, pp. 272–304; and Maker, 'Davidson's Transcendental Arguments'.

10 See L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*; H. Putnam, 'The Meaning of "Meaning" ', in *Mind, Language and Reality: Philosophical Papers, vol. 2*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp. 215–71; S. Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1980; S. Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1982; T. Burge, 'Individualism and the Mental', in P. French and T. Uehling (eds) *Midwest Studies in Philosophy 4: Metaphysics*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1979, pp. 73–121; and T. Burge, 'Cartesian Error and the Objectivity of Perception', in P. Pettit and J. McDowell (eds), *Subject, Thought, and Context*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986, pp. 117–36.

11 Prominent perceptual externalists include Putnam and the earlier Kripke. Social externalists include Wittgenstein, Burge and the later Kripke.

12 Davidson, 'Epistemology Externalized', in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2001, p. 200. He is even more explicit about Quine's influence in a later work, where he remarks that, when he was developing his arguments in the 1970s and earlier, 'I had long been convinced that a key element in Quine's approach to translation, and hence to interpretation, entailed a form of externalism'. See Davidson, 'Reply to A.C. Genova', in L.E. Hahn (ed.), *The Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, p. 193.

13 Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, p. 150.

14 Davidson, 'Reply to Barry Stroud', in L.E. Hahn (ed.), *The Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, p. 165.

15 Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 150. The quotations discussed here emphasize one aspect of Davidson's externalism; I discuss the other main aspect, the intersubjective aspect, in §IV Triangulation and the Possibility of Communication, below.

16 Davidson, 'Three Varieties of Knowledge', in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, p. 213.

17 Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 151.

18 Davidson, 'Epistemology Externalized', pp. 196 and 201.

19 See, for example, Davidson, 'Epistemology Externalized', pp. 200–201.

20 For Davidson's classic discussion of the third dogma, see 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, 2nd edn, pp. 183–98.

21 Davidson, 'Three Varieties of Knowledge', p. 206.

22 Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 146.

23 Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 153.

24 Discussion of Davidson's omniscient interpreter has largely been unsympathetic; see, for example, C. McGinn, 'Charity, Interpretation, and Belief', *Journal of Philosophy*, 1977, vol. 74, pp. 521–35; E. Craig, 'Davidson and the Sceptic: The Thumbnail Version', *Analysis*, 1990, vol. 50, pp. 213–14; and A. Brueckner, 'Charity and Skepticism', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 1986, vol. 67, pp. 264–8. Unfortunately, most critics have discussed the earlier version of the omniscient interpreter argument in Davidson, 'The Method of Truth in Metaphysics', in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, 2nd edn, pp. 200–201, and not the later version in Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', pp. 150–51. I know of no critic who has thoroughly analysed the later argument in the context of Davidson's perceptual externalism and his articles from the 1990s.

25 It would take us too far afield to examine any arguments for the claim that meaning must be public; I shall proceed by taking this for granted and investigating views that Davidson develops from it. Assuming the intersubjectivity of meaning does not beg the question against traditional scepticism about the external world: even if meaning must be public in the way assumed, the external world could be completely different from how we take it to be. If the Quinean attitude towards meaning ultimately bears any anti-sceptical fruit, the work will be done in the details of a worked-out third person theory of meaning. In Davidson's case, the anti-sceptical labour occurs in his defence of the externalist claim that the meanings of certain sentences are determined by the circumstances that cause a speaker to hold them true.

26 See, for example, W.V. Quine's *Word and Object*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1960.

27 More precisely, Davidson's position is that such evidence suffices for determining meaning, not that it amounts to all the evidence that there is. Davidson adopts a *methodological* behaviourism for the purposes of doing philosophy. This is a point about which Davidson complains he has been 'woefully misunderstood and misread'. See 'Reply to Jerry Fodor and Ernest LePore', in R. Stoecker (ed.), *Reflecting Davidson: Davidson Responding to an International Forum of Philosophers*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1993, pp. 80–81.

28 Much more could be said about these points than I can say here. My intention is to sketch only the barest outlines of radical interpretation necessary for understanding the omniscient interpreter argument. Most steps I summarize without comment and many others I skip. In the last category there are many minor points (for example the reasons why the sentence is taken as the basic observable unit) and some large ones as well. Most notably, I make no mention of any indeterminacies.

29 A classic discussion of these claims is the second chapter of Quine's *Word and Object*.

30 B. Stroud has raised this objection emphatically. See Stroud, 'Radical Interpretation and Philosophical Scepticism', in L.E. Hahn (ed.), *The Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, pp. 139–61. Strong criticisms have also been given by P. Klein, who argues that Davidson's argument is invalidly circular, and by C. McGinn, who argues that Davidson merely assumes that belief is inherently veridical. See Klein, 'Radical

Interpretation and Global Skepticism', and McGinn, 'Radical Interpretation and Epistemology', in E. LePore (ed.), *Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, pp. 356–86. None of these critics explores the connections between radical interpretation, externalism and Davidson's anti-sceptical stance.

31 Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 150.

32 Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 150–51.

33 The most recent critic to charge Davidson with begging the question is A. Cutrofello. See his 'The Transcendental Pretensions of the Principle of Charity', in L.E. Hahn (ed.), *The Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, pp. 333–41.

34 R. Foley and R. Fumerton raise this objection in 'Davidson's Theism?', *Philosophical Studies*, 1985, vol. 48, pp. 83–90.

35 Among others, J. Bennett advances this criticism. See his 'Critical Notice of Davidson's *Inquiries Into Truth and Interpretation*', *Mind*, 1985, vol. 94, pp. 601–26.

36 In Davidson's words: 'what a fully informed interpreter could learn about what a speaker means is all there is to learn … the same goes for what the speaker believes'; his position, of course, is that the same goes for the other propositional attitudes as well. See 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 148.

37 Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 150.

38 Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 150.

39 Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 150.

40 Davidson, 'Empirical Content', in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, p. 174.

41 Davidson, 'Epistemology Externalized', p. 201. Davidson's quotation is from 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 151.

42 Davidson, 'Epistemology Externalized', p. 201.

43 Davidson, 'Epistemology Externalized', p. 202.

44 Davidson, 'Epistemology Externalized', pp. 202–3.

45 See §IV Triangulation and the Possibility of Communication, below, for a discussion of the three specific shared similarity responses required for Davidsonian triangulation.

46 These patterns of causal interaction are only partially constitutive of mental content. In line with Davidson's holism, the content of many of our attitudes is fixed not by direct triangulation, but by their logical relations to other attitudes. As Davidson puts it: 'because beliefs (and other attitudes) are largely identified by their logical and other relations to each other; change the relations, and you change the identity of the thought'. See Davidson, 'Representation and Interpretation', in W.H. Newton-Smith and K.V. Wilkes (eds), *Modelling the Mind*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990, p. 24.

47 Davidson, 'Knowing One's Own Mind', in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, p. 29.

48 Davidson, 'Meaning, Truth, and Evidence', in R. Barrett and R. Gibson (eds), *Perspectives on Quine*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1991, pp. 77–8.

49 See Quine, *Word and Object*.

50 In addition to the quotation from 'Epistemology Externalized' given above, see Davidson, 'The Conditions of Thought', *Grazer philosophische Studien*, 1989, vol. 36, pp. 167–8, and 'Three Varieties of Knowledge', p. 159.

51 Davidson, 'Reply to Dagfinn Føllesdal', in L.E. Hahn (ed.), *The Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, p. 731.

52 Davidson, 'Three Varieties of Knowledge', pp. 212–13.

53 The slogan is from Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', p. 151.

54 Davidson, 'Three Varieties of Knowledge', pp. 213–14.

55 Davidson, 'The Structure and Content of Truth', *Journal of Philosophy*, 1990, vol. 87, p. 325.

56 For example, see the chapter on the distinction between phenomena and noumena in the Analytic of Principles in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A235–50/B294–315.

57 Among the important questions I have not addressed is whether Davidson is vulner-
able to a 'new scepticism': about our access to the content of our own thoughts. For
an example of this objection see S. Bernecker, 'Davidson on First-Person Authority
and Externalism', *Inquiry*, 1996, vol. 39, pp. 121–39. I suspect that Davidson's posi-
tion is immune from this charge, but must make my case elsewhere. The crucial issues
are Davidson's critique of the Cartesian model of self-knowledge and the manner in
which his doctrines of externalism and the anomalous character of the mental repu-
diate part of the externalist slogan 'meanings (and beliefs) just ain't in the head'. For
Davidson's account of first-person authority see 'First Person Authority', in *Subjective,
Intersubjective, Objective*, pp. 3–14; 'Knowing One's Own Mind', 'Myth of the
Subjective' and 'What is Present to the Mind', *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, pp.
15–68.

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