Authentic Historiography:
Heidegger's Project in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*

by

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A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy of
The Australian National University

February 2000
Declaration

This dissertation, except where acknowledged, is the original work of the author.

Richard John Chadwick
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research was supported by an A.N.U. Graduate School Ph.D. scholarship. Much of this dissertation was supervised by Dr Bruin Christensen for whom thanks are due for his critical comments on chapters two, three and four. Following Bruin’s departure from the A.N.U., Professor Richard Campbell took up the role of supervisor for the final stages. Many thanks, Richard, for reading the final draft so quickly and for your valuable comments. Dr Udo Thiel also provided much needed encouragement over the years.

I am grateful to Professor Reinhard Brandt for giving me the opportunity to spend eight months in Marburg. The A.N.U. Faculty of Arts provided financial support for that trip to Marburg.

My fellow Ph.D. students Sarah Bachelard and Fiona Webster were a constant source of encouragement and sound advice.

Thanks also to my partner Wendy Odgers for reminding me of how much more there is to life than philosophy. As always I am grateful to my mother for her love and support.

I would also like to acknowledge the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission for allowing me to take two months off work to complete this dissertation.
This dissertation constitutes an attempt to recover the methodological basis for Heidegger's project in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. In that book, Heidegger attempts to show that Kant's *Critique* is ultimately motivated by the same problem that Heidegger confronts in *Being and Time*. His startling claim is that Kant's transcendental philosophy can be more adequately articulated using the philosophical framework developed by Heidegger himself in *Being and Time*. This results in a particularly "violent" interpretation of Kant's *Critique*. Heidegger's interpretation has been criticised by historians because Heidegger attributes to Kant ideas and arguments that Kant did not and could not have accepted. Conversely, defenders of Heidegger's interpretation like Sherover argue that such criticisms miss the mark because Heidegger's interpretation should be judged according to the philosophical insights that emerge from Heidegger's interpretation without regard to its historical adequacy.

This dissertation is motivated by the belief that the basic terms of this debate in the secondary literature are symptomatic of a failure to grasp, not only the real nature of Heidegger's project in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, but also key aspects of Heidegger's philosophical position as it was developed in the 1920s and presented in *Being and Time*. Throughout the 1920s, Heidegger argued that his approach to philosophy undermined the traditional distinction between systematic and historical research in philosophy. There is, instead, an original unity between the history of philosophy and the enterprise of philosophy; a unity that also brings into question the extent to which the traditional methods of historical research gain access to the reality of history. According to Heidegger, the full problematic of the unity of philosophy and its history must be unfolded from "the unity of the temporality of the philosophising factual Dasein".¹ This dissertation attempts to do precisely that.

The result is an interpretation of Heidegger's account of Dasein's historicity and temporality in *Being and Time* that can be used to demonstrate the

sense in which Heidegger’s account of authentic and inauthentic temporality provides the ultimate methodological basis for his interpretation of Kant, understood as a work of authentic historiography. It also reveals the sense in which authentic historiography constitutes the path to the things themselves and so is integral to the method of phenomenology. This interpretation of Heidegger’s project highlights the problem with the contemporary debate concerning how to understand and judge *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, as well as highlighting problems with the interpretation of aspects of *Being and Time* developed by commentators such as Dreyfus, Olafson, and Schrag. When the full problematic is worked out in this way, the real significance of the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant for Heidegger’s own attempt at retrieving the genuine basis of Kant’s philosophising also becomes apparent. As a consequence, if Heidegger’s interpretation is to be criticised, it is because Heidegger’s interpretation remains within the limitations of a Neo-Kantian age when the possibilities open to philosophy were determined through the interpretation of Kant.
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For Heidegger "the history of philosophy is not an arbitrary appendage to the business of teaching philosophy". Instead, Heidegger argues that "'history of philosophy', as it is called, belongs to the concept of philosophy as science, to the concept of phenomenological investigation". Of course, as Gadamer quite rightly points out, the history of philosophy had been an essential part of theoretical philosophy within the German philosophical tradition since Schleiermacher and Hegel. Given this historical context, the mere fact that Heidegger regards the history of philosophy as belonging to philosophy is hardly surprising. If we are to understand the significance of Heidegger's claim, we must, therefore, clarify the distinctive sense in which Heidegger understands the history of philosophy as belonging to philosophy. By placing "history of philosophy" in scare-quotes, Heidegger draws our attention to the fact that his own approach to philosophy raises fundamental questions about what we mean when we refer to the "history of philosophy". In contrast with traditional methods of historical research, Heidegger characterises his own approach to the history of philosophy as a phenomenological "destruction" which entails a process of "retrieval".

The resulting strategy for doing philosophy by means of a "destructive" interpretation of key texts from the history of philosophy has aroused considerable debate, perhaps nowhere more so than in Heidegger's interpretation of Kant in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. Since it was first published in 1929, Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics has given rise to a considerable

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2 Ibid, p. 23.
body of secondary literature that is testament to fundamental disagreements over how Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is to be understood and judged.

While *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* has been quite rightly treated by some commentators as an important test case for Heidegger’s method of doing philosophy historically, I will argue that much of the secondary material on this book has become trapped in an impasse. This impasse has been created by a conflict between attempts to judge Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant according to the standards of traditional historical research and alternatively attempts to judge Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant according to the philosophical insights made by Heidegger in the course of his interpretation of Kant, without regard to its historical adequacy as an interpretation of Kant. In short, the controversy surrounding *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* has become trapped in a long standing conflict between historical and philosophical approaches to the interpretation of texts from the history of philosophy.

This dissertation is motivated by the belief that the basic terms of this controversy surrounding Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant have been cast in a manner that is indicative of a failure to grasp, not only the real nature of Heidegger’s project in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, but also key aspects of Heidegger’s philosophical position as it was developed in the 1920s and presented in *Being and Time*. The contemporary debate fails to take into account the fact that Heidegger was well aware of this potential conflict between historical and philosophical methods of interpretation. Since at least the mid-nineteenth century, the Neo-Kantians had been discussing the conflict between historical and philosophical approaches to the interpretation of Kant’s *Critique*. These Neo-Kantian debates were for Heidegger a familiar part of the philosophical landscape. As I hope to show in this dissertation, an appreciation of this Neo-Kantian context provides important clues for an understanding of the precise nature of Heidegger’s project in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

When Heidegger was formulating his philosophical position during the 1920s he explicitly presented phenomenology as holding the key to a method of doing philosophy that overcame the apparent conflict between philosophical and historical approaches to philosophy. As early as Heidegger’s review of Jaspers’s *Psychology of Worldviews*, written between 1919 and 1921, Heidegger was suggesting that phenomenology urgently needed to address the sense in which,
the historical is, according to its very sense, originally already there for us right within our philosophical problems, and that accordingly the problem of the relationship between the history of philosophy and systematic philosophy is at bottom a pseudo-problem.  

In the Winter Semester of 1921/22 Heidegger was arguing that:

Philosophy, as a fundamental (prinzipielles) knowing, is nothing other than the radical actualisation (Vollzug) of the historical facticity of life such that the historical and the systematic are equally foreign to it and all the more superfluous as is their separation.

In Heidegger’s lecture course on the history of the concept of time in the summer semester of 1925, which constitutes an early draft of Being and Time, Heidegger maintained that,

the basic question of philosophical research, the question of the being of entities, compels us to enter into an original area of research which precedes the traditional partition of philosophical work into historical (historisch) and systematic knowledge.

And again in the summer semester of 1928:

There is not a historical definition of philosophy and next to it a so-called systematic definition, nor conversely. ... There is really only a single philosophical clarification of the idea of philosophy. This clarification is in itself at once recollective and focused on the present. There is here an original unity, that is, the unity of the temporality of the philosophising factical Dasein itself; the full problematic must be unfolded from this unity.

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Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics provides a particularly important, concrete example of this type of research that is “at once recollective and focused on the present”. It is presented by Heidegger neither as a work of history in the traditional sense nor as simply an attempt by Heidegger to assess in retrospect Kant’s Critique on the basis of Heidegger’s own philosophical position.

Of course, it is one thing to point to these remarks and contrast them with the contemporary debate about Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics; it is quite another thing to demonstrate what Heidegger means when he says that he has established a method of research that undermines the traditional distinction between historical and systematic methods of research in philosophy. What does it mean to speak of this “original area of research” that “precedes” the traditional partition of philosophical work into historical and systematic knowledge? How is this original area of research opened up by the question of the being of entities? How are we to understand philosophy as the “radical actualisation of the historical facticity of life”? How is this problematic to be unfolded from the “unity of the temporality of the philosophising factual Dasein”? And can these arguments be used to resolve contemporary debates over how Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics is to be critically assessed?

Taking the above quotes from the early Heidegger as our clue, the task of this dissertation is to go some way towards answering these questions by demonstrating how the method of destruction and retrieval that Heidegger employs in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics is governed by the structures elucidated by Heidegger in his temporal interpretation of Dasein as care in Being and Time. As Kockelmans points out:

just as hermeneutic phenomenology is the methodological development of what is constitutive of Dasein’s understanding as such (SZ 142-153), so destructive retrieve is no more than the methodical correlate of the retrieve which is constitutive of Dasein’s search for its authentic self (SZ 316-323). 8

More specifically, Heidegger’s account of the structures of temporality that constitute Dasein’s existence, both authentic and inauthentic, provide the philosophical basis for Heidegger’s account of authentic and inauthentic

historiography in the second division of *Being and Time*. Authentic historiography is the term Heidegger uses to refer to authentic retrieval worked out explicitly at the level of historical understanding.

Yet in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* Heidegger does not explain the philosophical basis for his strategies of interpretation. If the above approach to Heidegger’s historiography is correct, it should be possible to demonstrate how Heidegger’s account of Dasein’s temporality in *Being and Time* can be used to re-construct the philosophical basis for Heidegger’s strategies of interpretation in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. This, in turn, will require an interpretation of *Being and Time* that is informed by an account of how the early Heidegger developed his philosophical position in the 1920s and, in particular, an account of the early Heidegger’s critique of Neo-Kantianism and his appropriation of Dilthey. These aspects of the work of the early Heidegger provide the historical context needed to understand the sense in which Heidegger’s fundamental ontology is intended to overcome the traditional distinction between system and history in philosophy. Moreover, the role that Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant plays in Heidegger’s more general critique of Neo-Kantianism provides an important clue for understanding how the method of destructive retrieval is concretely worked out in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

While this dissertation begins with the problem of how to understand Heidegger’s method of interpretation in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, the search for a solution to this problem requires an interpretation that goes far beyond a commentary on the text of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Indeed, it is not the aim of this dissertation to provide a defence of Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant. Heidegger himself came to accept that Kant’s question is foreign to the question raised in *Being and Time*. My aim, instead, is to develop a more philosophically and historically adequate account both of the methodology behind Heidegger’s strategies of interpretation in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* and of Heidegger’s philosophical position in *Being and Time* as it relates to the problematic relationship between philosophy and history. This will enable not only a critique of the contemporary debate over *Kant and the Problem

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9 See Heidegger’s preface to the fourth edition of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* published in 1972 where Heidegger accepts that Kant’s question is foreign to the question raised by Heidegger in *Being and Time*: KPM, pp. xvii-xviii.
of Metaphysics but also a critique of some Anglo-American approaches to the interpretation of Being and Time.

Given the breadth of material covered in this dissertation, the purpose of this introduction is to provide a general overview of the course this dissertation will take.

* 

I begin with an introduction to some of the key aspects of Heidegger's interpretation of Kant in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. I will also draw on Heidegger's lectures from the winter of 1927/28 entitled *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* to clarify some aspects of Heidegger's interpretation. At the most basic level, Heidegger's argument in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is that Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* when properly understood can be read as "placing the problem of metaphysics before us as a fundamental ontology". Fundamental ontology is, of course, a term never used by Kant. Instead, it is a term made famous by Heidegger himself to describe the philosophical project of *Being and Time*. To support this general claim, Heidegger develops a detailed interpretation of Kant's *Critique*. The resulting interpretation appears to be, however, not only breathtakingly anachronistic but it also appears to contradict what Kant actually wrote in the *Critique*.

While Kant argues that one outcome of the *Critique* is that "the proud name of an ontology ... must ... give place to the modest title of a mere analytic of pure understanding", Heidegger argues that Kant's entire *Critique* is motivated by the question of what it means for an entity to be. Despite the fact that Kant's *Critique* begins with the assertion that sensibility and understanding are the two stems of human knowledge and that "to neither of these powers may a preference be given over the other", Heidegger argues that to understand the

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12 A51/B75.
Critique we must recognise that “knowing is primarily intuiting” and that “all thinking is merely in the service of intuitions”. While Kant speculates that these two stems of human knowledge “perhaps spring from a common, but to us unknown, root”, Heidegger argues that the transcendental power of the imagination is this unknown root. Moreover, Heidegger argues that Kant was not entirely unaware of this origin but instead “shrank back from this unknown root”.

Heidegger goes on to argue that the transcendental power of the imagination is rooted in time such that “the I, pure reason, is essentially temporal”. In so doing, Heidegger tries to show that the fundamental philosophical problem of Being and Time is the very problem that motivated Kant’s own philosophy, despite the fact that Kant himself was unable to recognise this. To understand this is, according to Heidegger, to understand what Kant “wanted to say”.

But how are we to understand this attempt to grasp what Kant “wanted to say”? And how can this be used to justify the violence of Heidegger’s interpretation? The central difficulty that must be faced in any discussion of the method of interpretation used by Heidegger in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics is that the nature of Heidegger’s methodological position is only hinted at in this text with a few, highly fragmented statements. Heidegger defends the violence of his interpretation by arguing that the task of his interpretation is not to simply say again what Kant has expressly said. Instead, by using fundamental ontology as a guiding idea, Heidegger’s interpretation aims at making visible in its own right what Kant brought to light in his philosophising over and above Kant’s explicit formulation. Heidegger’s goal is to grasp the “unsaid”, “concealed inner passion” (verborgene innere Leidenschaft) that provides Kant’s philosophical work with its fundamental motivation and to “force it into speech”. This is also described as a “philosophising remembrance” (philosophierende Erinnerung) of the “concealed projection (verborgenen Entwurf) of being upon time” that constitutes the “innermost happening (innerstes Geschehen) in the understanding of being for

13 KPM, p. 15.
14 A15/B29.
15 KPM, p. 112.
16 KPM, p. 134.
17 KPM, pp. 140-141.
18 KPM, p. 141.
ancient and subsequent metaphysics”. In this manner, Heidegger promises to “retrieve” the long-concealed “possibilities” inherent in Kant’s work.

What sort of interpretation is this that concerns itself primarily not with what Kant said but with what Kant did not say; not with what is actually there in Kant’s text, but with the “possibilities” inherent in his work. The ambiguity and at times sheer obscurity of Heidegger’s account of his procedure for interpreting Kant makes it particularly difficult to give a coherent account of how we are to understand and critically assess the substantive claims Heidegger makes about Kant’s Critique. The obscurity of these statements may also help to explain why so many commentators, when trying to assess Heidegger’s position, fall back into using the traditional terms of the well established debate over historical and philosophical approaches to the interpretation of texts from the history of philosophy.

In the second chapter of this dissertation, I provide an introduction to the controversy surrounding Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant. In the first part of chapter two, I provide an introduction to, and critique of, the contemporary debate surrounding Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. When it was first published, however, Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics was part of a much broader conflict between Heidegger and the Neo-Kantians. This Neo-Kantian context is discussed in the second part of chapter two.

The contemporary controversy over how to critically assess Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is in part made up of a debate between historians and Heidegger scholars. Historians like Rudolf Makkreel and Lewis White Beck have criticised Heidegger’s interpretation as bad history because Heidegger appears to use the basic concepts of his own fundamental ontology in a grossly anachronistic way to interpret Kant’s Critique. In so doing, Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant appears, on this view, to constitute an ultimately self-serving distortion of Kant’s transcendental philosophy. In contrast, Heidegger scholars like Charles Sherover have argued that such criticisms miss the mark because, as Heidegger clearly says, he is not attempting to write history at all, at least not “history” as it is traditionally understood. Sherover writes that “the task of a retrieve is not to chronicle the past but to wrest out of it a deeper

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19 KPM, p. 169.
comprehension of our present situation and the possibilities for development it yet offers". Sherover argues that Heidegger’s interpretation must, therefore, be judged according to the philosophical insights that Heidegger achieves through his interpretation.

While I accept that to criticise Heidegger for writing bad history is to simply disregard Heidegger’s arguments for why his interpretation is not to be understood as being historical in the traditional sense, I argue that Sherover fails to give an adequate account of how Heidegger’s interpretation is to be understood. I demonstrate this by showing that his characterisation of Heidegger’s method of interpretation is ultimately indistinguishable from other, more traditional, attempts at a philosophical reading of texts from the history of philosophy. Sherover’s characterisation of Heidegger’s method of retrieval is equally applicable to the method of rational reconstruction used by philosophers such as Bennett and Strawson, although obviously the content of their interpretations of Kant is radically different from that of Heidegger’s. Yet, as I hope to show, Heidegger’s method of destructive retrieval is clearly intended to constitute something quite different from attempts to read the work of past philosophers in terms of contemporary philosophical problems. Sherover, however, glosses over the nuances in Heidegger’s account of the method of a retrieval and so loses sight of the unique character of Heidegger’s method. In particular, Sherover’s account fails to explain the sense in which Heidegger’s interpretation is to be understood as having a fundamentally historical character, such that it aims at being more genuinely historical than traditional historical research. I complete this section with a brief discussion of the approach taken by Martin Weatherston and Daniel Dahlstrom who attempt to capture the sense in which both historical and philosophical criteria must come into play.

It remains correct to say, however, that a critique of contemporary philosophical attitudes is fundamental to Heidegger’s notion of the task of a destructive retrieval of the work of a past philosopher. Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is at least in part driven by a critique of Neo-Kantian claims that the significance of Kant’s Critique is to be found in the way in which Kant places at the centre of philosophy a theory of knowledge that takes its basic direction from the natural sciences. At issue here is not simply a question of how

to understand Kant, but more fundamental questions about the nature of philosophy as such. An appreciation of this Neo-Kantian context is crucial if we are understood what is really at issue in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

I begin my discussion of the Neo-Kantians with an account of the Neo-Kantian conception of philosophy. Confronted with the extraordinary success of the natural sciences and what appeared as the abject failure of German idealism to make any lasting contribution to philosophy, philosophers in the second half of the nineteenth century in Germany were confronted with something of an "end of philosophy" crisis. What, if anything, remains for philosophy once the universe has been subjugated into facts and divided up among the human and natural sciences? The Neo-Kantians attempted to respond to this crisis and restore philosophy by establishing it as the critical study of the very possibility of scientific knowledge. Heidegger struggled against precisely this reduction of philosophy to the theory of knowledge by raising the anew the question of being as the question at the heart of philosophy.

As the name suggests, the return to the work of Kant was a key element of Neo-Kantian philosophy. Ever since the mid-nineteenth century, Kant had taken on an extremely privileged position in German philosophy. As the historian Johann Eduard Erdmann wrote in 1852, "the Atlas who bears the world of German speculation is and remains Kant".21 To understand philosophy, one must, on this view, first understand Kant. It is in Kant’s philosophy that the genuine problems of philosophy are to be found. But the Neo-Kantian catch-cry "back to Kant" was not a call to slavishly adhere to Kant’s doctrines. Instead, Neo-Kantian interpretations of Kant operated under slogans such as Liebmann’s call to separate the real substance of Kant’s doctrine from the impure dross and Windelband’s claim that “to understand Kant is to go beyond him”.22 This meant that it was necessary to grasp Kant’s essential insight and to think through the implications of that insight even more rigorously than Kant himself does.


The Neo-Kantians pioneered the business of doing philosophy through the interpretation of Kant’s texts. Yet the different schools of Neo-Kantianism disagreed violently over exactly what Kant’s real insight was and how Kant’s thoughts were to be developed. Historians distinguish between at least seven schools of Neo-Kantianism and the disagreements between the various schools of Neo-Kantianism prompted one scholar in the late nineteenth century to remark:

Back to Kant. Yes. But to which Kant? ... The philosophy of Kant is not so easily reducible to a simple and comprehensive formula ... Every one interprets it, in the end, as he wishes Kant should have thought.23

Even the Marburg Neo-Kantian Cohen admitted that “one can express no judgement concerning Kant without betraying in every line the world one carries in one’s own head”.24

When *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is read against this Neo-Kantian backdrop, both its content and method of interpretation take on a new light. In content, Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant can be seen primarily as a battle between Heidegger and the Neo-Kantians over the very nature of philosophy. This battle is played out on the field of Kant’s texts. At the same time, a comparison between Heidegger and the Neo-Kantians reveals what appears to be a striking similarity in their attempts to understand Kant by going beyond him so as to set philosophy on a correct path. This similarity was such that Heidegger’s most famous Neo-Kantian critic, Ernst Cassirer, remarked with some degree of dismay that he had “found a Neo-Kantian here in Heidegger”.25 It is by re-discovering the similarities between Neo-Kantian attempts to understand Kant by going beyond him and Heidegger’s destructive retrieval that we are forced to think more precisely about what really is distinctive about Heidegger’s method of destructive retrieval. Merely reading Heidegger as providing a philosophical as opposed to an historical interpretation of Kant is insufficient as a characterisation of Heidegger’s distinctive approach to texts from the history of philosophy.

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25 See “Davos Disputation between Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger” in KPM, p. 193.
Throughout this dissertation, I argue that what is distinctive about Heidegger’s method of destructive retrieval is that it constitutes an attempt to do philosophy in a manner “such that the historical and the systematic are equally foreign to it and all the more superfluous as is their separation.” In chapter three, I provide something of an initial diagnosis for why scholars have generally failed to recognise this remarkable aspect of Heidegger’s method, particularly as it relates to Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. This will be done firstly by means of a critique of Hubert Dreyfus’s commentary on Being and Time which has been enormously influential among Anglo-American Heidegger scholars. I argue that Dreyfus’s approach to Being and Time conceals the essential unity of Being and Time and Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. More importantly, Dreyfus conceals the way in which Heidegger’s temporal interpretation of Dasein provides the philosophical basis for Heidegger’s method for doing philosophy historically. I will argue that Dreyfus’s commentary on Being and Time constitutes, therefore, a stumbling block that must be overcome if we are to correctly understand Heidegger’s project not only in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics but also in Being and Time itself. In the second section of chapter three, I draw on Heidegger’s recently published lectures and writings from the 1920s to provide historical support for my approach to Heidegger.

Dreyfus presents us with an interpretation of Heidegger in which the task of a destructive retrieval of key texts from the history of philosophy appears to play no significant part in Heidegger’s conception of philosophy. The plausibility of this interpretation is, however, dependent upon Dreyfus’s extremely narrow and selective reading of Being and Time. For example, Dreyfus makes no attempt to interpret the published portion of Being and Time from the perspective of Heidegger’s original project. Heidegger originally intended Being and Time to be divided into two parts. The first part was to contain an “interpretation of Dasein in terms of temporality, and the explication of time as the transcendental horizon of the question of being” while the second part was to outline the “basic features of a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology, with the problematic of Temporality as our clue”.

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the Problem of Metaphysics constitutes a draft for the first division of this phenomenological destruction.

By disregarding the importance of Heidegger’s projected destruction of the history of philosophy, interpreted as the history of ontology, for Heidegger’s philosophical project, Dreyfus distorts not only Heidegger’s conception of philosophical method but also the philosophical significance of much of Being and Time. In his commentary on Heidegger’s “methodological introduction” to Being and Time, Dreyfus fails to discuss the very section where Heidegger provides an outline of his argument for why a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology is an essential element of philosophical research. This argument is based on Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein. In essence, Heidegger argues that because all research, including philosophical research, is an ontical possibility of Dasein, the possibilities open to philosophy are determined by the same structures that determine Dasein’s existence. Heidegger’s account of the historicity and temporality of Dasein’s existence provides, therefore, the basis for Heidegger’s account of both the possibility of an authentic understanding of the history of philosophy and the necessity for such an authentic historiography for philosophical research as such.

The key point to note is that the analytic of Dasein worked out in Being and Time constitutes a discourse on method where method is understood, not as a canon of rules of thought, but as a clarification of the structures that determine the way in which philosophy, understood as a way of existing, can be done. This point is, however, entirely missed by Dreyfus with the result that Dreyfus lacks the resources to make sense of much of Being and Time.

The problems with Dreyfus’s interpretation become evident when we consider his approach to the second division of Being and Time. Dreyfus dismisses the entire second division of Being and Time, which contains Heidegger’s discussion of death, historicity and temporality, as little more than an unfortunate existentialist digression. Dreyfus also passes over Heidegger’s account of temporality because, according to Dreyfus, it leads Heidegger so far from the phenomena of everyday temporality that Dreyfus did not feel able to give a satisfactory interpretation of the material.

I will argue, however, that the reason why Dreyfus is unable to give an adequate account of the second division of Being and Time and Heidegger’s
projected phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology is that he has failed to recognise the significance of Heidegger’s account of Dasein’s historicity and temporality for Heidegger’s entire conception of philosophy and philosophical method. For example, an understanding of the methodological significance of Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein enables us to appreciate Heidegger’s use of such notions as “authenticity” and “fallenness” as being far more than merely symptoms of an existentialist digression that is somehow separable from Heidegger’s overall philosophical project. Moreover, Heidegger’s distinction between the everyday understanding of time and authentic temporality can also be concretely worked out once it is recognised that this forms the basis for Heidegger’s distinction between the traditional methods of historical research and authentic historical understanding of the sort attempted in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. These arguments are developed in chapters four and five of this dissertation.

In the second section of chapter three, I draw on Heidegger’s early lectures and writings from the 1920s, interpreted within the context of the work of Rickert and Dilthey, to provide historical support for my approach to the interpretation of Being and Time.

Both Rickert and Dilthey developed their philosophical positions within the context of the problem of how to understand the relationship between the natural sciences and the historical sciences (Geisteswissenschaften). Dilthey tries to clarify the relationship between natural science and history by showing the inner connection between life and thought. According to Dilthey, history is radically different from natural science because history is concerned with life and life is something that is immediately experienced and intuitively known. We understand history because we are ourselves historical. This is then used to develop a critique of traditional philosophy. Dilthey argues that the traditional categories of philosophy have been developed with a narrow focus on the process of thought. According to Dilthey, the traditional categories of philosophy such as the categories of substance and causation are too closely focused on the conceptual structures of the natural sciences and so are inadequate for an understanding of life. To understand life we must go beyond these categories and find new categories that derive from the broader sphere of historical, lived experience. Since, according to Dilthey, thought itself, and with it philosophy, arise out of life, these new categories can then be used as the basis for a new, more complete and richer philosophy.
In contrast, Rickert argues that the difference between natural science and history is one of concept formation. Reality becomes an object of natural science when it is thought in accordance with universalising concepts; it becomes an object of historical knowledge when it is thought in accordance with individualising concepts. Reality itself, however, is, on this view, unknowable. There is no science without conceptual thought, Rickert argues, and it is precisely the nature of concepts that they are distanced from the immediate reality of life. For this reason, any attempt to go beyond the categories of thought and grasp life is, according to Rickert, doomed to fail.

The philosophy of the early Heidegger can be seen as a particularly radical engagement in this conflict between attempts to establish philosophy as a science using the basic concepts of natural science and the so-called “philosophy of life” movement. Heidegger shared Dilthey’s view that philosophy springs from “factual life experience” and took up the challenge to define life categorically in a manner that would enable philosophy to go beyond the limitations of the categories traditionally used by philosophy. In so doing, Heidegger developed a radical critique of Rickert’s account of the distinction between reality as nature and reality as history. Heidegger’s philosophy aims at breaking down the conceptual structures that first divide reality into nature and history so as to reveal reality before it has become an object of either the natural or the historical sciences. Once this original area of research has been attained, the traditional distinction between systematic and historical knowledge in philosophy becomes superfluous. This point of entry into Heidegger’s philosophy will be used in chapters four and five to demonstrate how Being and Time itself can be read as providing the philosophical basis for a method for doing philosophy that supersedes both the historical and the systematic, understood as destructive retrieval. This discussion will focus on two pivotal terms used by Heidegger: “destruction” and “retrieval”.

The term “destruction” was used by Heidegger from the early 1920s to characterise his method for doing philosophy. In chapter four, I provide an introduction to Heidegger’s account of the method of phenomenological destruction. The basic orientation of phenomenology is encapsulated for Heidegger in Husserl’s demand that philosophy return “to the matters themselves”. Heidegger highlights the sense in which this return to the matters themselves involves a struggle against traditional concepts and ways of understanding the world. These traditional concepts and ways of understanding
ultimately block our access to the genuine matters of philosophy. For Heidegger, destruction is precisely the “critical process in which the traditional concepts, which at first must necessarily be employed, are dismantled down to the sources from which they were drawn” and it is “only by means of this destruction can ontology fully assure itself in a phenomenological way of the genuine character of its concepts”. This destruction is essentially an historically oriented process of self-critique aimed at those traditional concepts that have been uncritically taken up from the tradition. As Heidegger clearly states in his early review of Jaspers’s Psychology of Worldviews, destruction is aimed at “the history that we ourselves are”. And it is this historical detour that makes up the path to the things themselves.

Once this is appreciated, we can begin to understand Heidegger’s qualification in Being and Time that the destruction of the history of ontology, of which Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is a part, “does not relate itself towards the past; its criticism is aimed at ‘today’ and at the prevalent way of treating the history of ontology”. Moreover, since Heidegger argues that the basic motivations for philosophy emerge from historical life experience, phenomenological destruction is equivalent to “explicating the original motive-giving situations from which the basic experiences of philosophy have arisen”. The sources for this radical form of historical research are not primarily historical documents but rather the structures of historical life experience itself. That is to say, Heidegger is concerned with history understood not as the totality of public events, but as the mode of happening of Dasein. To understand the basis for Heidegger’s phenomenological destruction we must, therefore, turn to his analytic of Dasein which constitutes the fulfilment of his attempt to set out in a rigorous manner the fundamental structures of the history that we ourselves are, worked out in terms of the historicity and temporality of Dasein.

27 BP, p. 23.
28 Martin Heidegger, “Comments on Karl Jaspers’s Psychology of Worldviews” op. cit., at p. 4.
29 Ibid, p. 5.
31 Martin Heidegger, “Comments on Karl Jaspers’s Psychology of Worldviews”, op. cit. at pp. 3-4 (translation altered).
In the second part of chapter four, I outline how the analytic of Dasein presented in *Being and Time* provides a fully worked out philosophical account of the basis for the necessity for philosophy of a destructive method of research with particular reference to Heidegger’s account of Dasein’s falling (*Verfallen*). I begin with a general introduction to the way in which the question of the meaning of being is used by Heidegger to guide his account of human existence understood as Dasein. In so doing, Heidegger believes he can complete Dilthey’s task of rigorously formulating the “categories of life”.

Dasein’s “falling”, along with Dasein’s “facticity” and “existentiality”, make up the key elements of Heidegger’s threefold characterisation of the care structure of Dasein. The term “falling” is used by Heidegger to express the sense in which Dasein finds itself first of all in a world interpreted by others. Dasein grows up into traditional ways of interpreting itself and the world. This basic feature of Dasein’s existence is developed by Heidegger through an account of the way in which Dasein falls into the “idle talk” (*Gerade*) of “the they” (*das Man*). This provides the ontological basis for Heidegger’s account of what we ordinarily understand as the tradition. It also provides the basis for Heidegger’s distinction between the authentic and inauthentic ways in which Dasein can exist. According to Heidegger, the self of Dasein is first of all constituted by the “they”. Dasein is in this sense inauthentic because its ways of interpreting itself and the world are not its own. And because Dasein first finds itself lost in interpretations that are not its own, Dasein is set the task of finding itself, of finding its own interpretations.

Unfortunately, Heidegger’s way of formulating this account of the basic ontological structure of the tradition by using terms such as “idle talk” and the “they” makes it particularly prone to misunderstanding. Olafson, for example, takes Heidegger to be indicating that human existence, as essentially social, necessarily demands a degree of conformity. By characterising the “they” as inauthentic, Olafson takes Heidegger to be maintaining a strongly negative attitude to the depersonalising character of mass society. Olafson regards Heidegger’s argument to be flawed because it fails to recognise the benefits associated with some forms of social anonymity. Olafson points out, for example, that post codes are both depersonalising and beneficial.

To read Heidegger in this manner is, however, to miss entirely the point of Heidegger’s analysis. In setting out the way in which Dasein finds itself
thrown into a world already interpreted by the “they”, Heidegger is not primarily making a statement about the triviality of popular discourse or the depersonalising character of mass society. Instead, Heidegger is making an ontological point. Heidegger is trying to set out the structures that determine the way in which Dasein has fallen prey to the traditional interpretation of the being of entities as “present-at-hand” (vorhanden) such that this interpretation is accepted as so self-evident that alternative ways of interpreting the being of entities are not even considered a possibility. This is why Heidegger tells us that “idle talk” constitutes Dasein’s most everyday and most stubborn ‘Reality’.

Heidegger is trying to show that our most self-evident understanding of the being of things, our very way of “seeing” reality, is in fact a consequence of the tradition.

When properly understood, Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein as thrown and fallen has important implications for his account of the relationship between philosophy and its past. The “they” plays a positive role in Dasein’s constitution because it is by means of the interpretations of the “they” that Dasein first comes to understand itself and the world. And because the “they” constitutes one of the essential ontological structures of Dasein’s existence, Dasein can no more completely escape from the “they” than it can escape from its own being. Dasein is never and can never find itself “set before the open country of a ‘world-in-itself’, so that it just beholds what it encounters”. It is for this reason that any attempt to escape the tradition and understand the world immediately without recourse to history is doomed to fail. And it is for this reason that any attempt to do systematic philosophy separated from history can only lead to misunderstandings.

Philosophy is for Heidegger unavoidably historical because Dasein necessarily exists as fallen. Since we can never escape the tradition, its pernicious effect can only be dealt with by engaging in a positive struggle, an Auseinandersetzung, with the tradition. Phenomenological destruction culminates in the authentic appropriation or “retrieval” of the tradition. While this process of retrieval involves an engagement with the tradition, Heidegger clearly distinguishes this process from traditional methods of historical research.

32 SZ. p. 170.
33 SZ. p. 169.
Being and Time this distinction is characterised in terms of a distinction between authentic and inauthentic historiography. The structures that determine both the nature of, and the distinction between, authentic and inauthentic historiography are to be found, according to Heidegger, in Dasein's temporality which provides the fundamental structural basis for Dasein's historicity. The key to understanding Heidegger's criticism of traditional historical research as well as the key to understanding Heidegger's account of authentic historical research, of which his interpretation of Kant is an example, are to be found, therefore, in Heidegger's account of Dasein's temporality in the second division of Being and Time.

In chapter five, I introduce Heidegger's conception of temporality. In the second division of Being and Time, Heidegger repeats the existential analytic of Dasein presented in the first division by developing a temporal interpretation of Dasein's care structure. Heidegger tries to show that Dasein is temporality in the sense that Dasein's possible ways of being are at the most fundamental level constituted by temporal structures. According to Heidegger, Dasein's existentiality, facticity, falling are constituted by the temporal structures of future, past and present respectively. In this way, Heidegger characterises the structures of Dasein's existence as being determined by the way in which temporality "temporalises itself".  

The distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity is ultimately to be understood in terms of two different ways in which temporality temporalises itself. Inauthentic temporality provides the basis for the way in which time is ordinarily understood as a linear succession of "nows" (Jetzt). This way of understanding time conditions the way in which we ordinarily understand the past and the future. The "now" that has "passed away" makes up what we ordinarily understand as the past, and the "now" that is yet to come makes up what we ordinarily understand as the "future". Authentic temporality has a radically different structure. According to Heidegger, when temporality is authentically understood, "the character of 'having been' arises from the future, and in such a way that the future which 'has been' (or better, which 'is in the process of having been') releases from itself the present". Here, the past is

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34 SZ. p. 304.
35 SZ. p. 326.
understood not as an event that is past, but as that aspect of Dasein’s existence that is “in the process of having been (gewesende)”. It is the “I am as having been (ich bin-gewesen)”.

It is from within this account of temporality that Heidegger’s conception of “retrieval” is fully worked out. Retrieval is a process whereby Dasein hands down to itself a possibility it has inherited and does so in a way that enables it to wrest free from the inauthenticity of the “they” that holds sway in the present. Authentic historiography is nothing other than this process of retrieval explicitly worked out at the level of historical understanding. The task of this chapter is to demonstrate how Heidegger’s account of Dasein’s temporality provides the philosophical foundation for his distinction between authentic historiography and traditional methods of historical research. It is only on the basis of an understanding of this account of temporality that we can begin to grasp the sense in which Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics is not intended as a work of historical research. Indeed, it is not even concerned with the past as this is traditionally understood. Rather, it aims at a more fundamental and authentic sense of the historical, a sense in which the distinction between systematic questions and historical questions in philosophy simply has no place.

In chapter four, I also try to demonstrate why Heidegger’s conception of authentic historiography should not be read as implying a conception of history in which history is written in terms of the personal projects of an isolated individual. Calvin Schrag provides an example of such a reading. However, this way of reading Heidegger overlooks the sense in which Dasein’s past is always that of its generation and retrieval is a process whereby Dasein explicitly hands down that which it has already inherited through a hidden handing down. That is to say, retrieval is always regulated by Dasein’s fateful destiny.

In the conclusion, I return to the problem of how to understand and critically assess Heidegger’s project in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. On the basis of the interpretation of Being and Time developed in this dissertation, an interpretation informed by Heidegger’s philosophical development in the 1920s, I show how the basic motivations for Heidegger’s project in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics can be recovered. In so doing, it

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36 SZ, p. 326.
is possible to highlight some of the problems with the contemporary debate concerning Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant as well as some of the problems with some Anglo-American approaches to the interpretation of Being and Time. In addition, I argue that an appreciation of the Neo-Kantian context within which Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics was written is fundamental to understanding Heidegger’s project. Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is motivated by an attempt to overcome the Neo-Kantian conception of philosophy by overcoming the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant. This accords with Heidegger’s account of the temporal structures that govern authentic historiography. Heidegger attempts to confirm the correctness of his own philosophical insights by handing down to himself an inherited possibility that has been concealed by the way in which the present understands the past. As such, Heidegger tries to overcome the Neo-Kantian conception of philosophy by supplanting the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant with his own interpretation of Kant. And it is here that we find a kind of “Neo-Kantianism” in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. Heidegger remains within the tradition of an age when the possibilities open to philosophy were determined through the interpretation of Kant.
PART I

KANT AND THE PROBLEM OF METAPHYSICS
CHAPTER ONE

RETRIEVING WHAT KANT "WANTED TO SAY"

1.1 Introduction

*Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is presented under the following programmatic heading: "The unfolding (Auseinanderlegung) of the idea of fundamental ontology through the interpretation (Auslegung) of the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a laying of the ground (Grundlegung) for metaphysics".\(^1\) In this way, Heidegger’s own philosophical position is used to define the meaning and significance of Kant’s *Critique*. Heidegger’s interpretation involves a process of terminological reformulation and conceptual transformation in which Heidegger tries to show that key features of the problematic of transcendentental philosophy, as described by Kant, can be more adequately articulated using the philosophical framework developed by Heidegger in his account of the problematic of fundamental ontology.

In a crucial passage from his 1927/28 Marburg lecture course entitled “Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*”, of which *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is to some extent a condensed version, Heidegger summarises the basic features of his interpretation of Kant in the following terms:

If we radicalize the Kantian problem of ontological knowledge in the sense that we do not limit this problem to the ontological foundation of the positive sciences and if we do not take this problem as a problem of judgement but as the radical and fundamental question concerning the possibility of understanding being in general, then we arrive at the philosophically fundamental problematic of *Being and Time*. Time will then no longer be understood in terms of the ordinary concept of time, but in terms of temporality as the original unity of the ecstatic constitution of Dasein. Being will

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\(^1\) KPM, p. 3.
then no longer be understood in the sense of the present-to-hand of nature (Vorhandenseins von Natur), but rather in that universal sense which encompasses in itself all possibilities of regional variation. *Universality of being and radicality of time are the two titles which together denote the tasks which a further thinking of the possibility of metaphysics calls for.*

This is a very radical interpretation indeed. To suggest that “the Kantian problem of ontological knowledge”, when no longer limited to the problem of natural scientific knowledge and the problem of judgement, amounts to the same problem that Heidegger addresses in *Being and Time* is to bring into question, not only generations of Kant interpretation, but also to bring into question Kant’s understanding of his own philosophy.

To support his interpretation, Heidegger develops a highly nuanced analysis of some of the most technical aspects of Kant’s first *Critique*. Kant’s doctrine of schematism, his account of the faculty of the imagination, as well as the first edition version of the transcendental ceduction and Kant’s notion of self-affection are all treated in detail. There is no doubting Heidegger’s technical mastery of the *Critique*. As I hope to show in this chapter, the violence of Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is clearly not the result of a vulgar misunderstanding of Kant’s *Critique*. Heidegger cannot be accused of simple ignorance either of Kant’s work or of the tradition of Kant interpretation. As Eberhard Grisebach notes in one of the earliest extended reviews of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, “the interpretation appears technically convincing and yet reason resists conceding the transformation of Kant’s central tendency”. Even the most famous critic of Heidegger’s interpretation, Ernst Cassirer, commended Heidegger for developing an interpretation of sufficient philosophical force that it challenges us to “re-learn” Kant. Whether we agree or

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disagree with Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant, Heidegger develops an interpretation that challenges us to ask again fundamental questions about Kant’s philosophy and in so doing requires us to test our own understanding of the Critique. In the final analysis, however, Cassirer condemned Heidegger for grossly distorting the meaning and significance of Kant’s Critique.\(^5\) This is not only because Heidegger attributes to Kant ideas and arguments that go beyond anything that Kant actually wrote. Even more disturbing is the fact that Heidegger’s interpretation appears to be directly contradicted, not only by specific arguments presented by Kant in the Critique, but also by some of the most basic structural features of Kant’s entire transcendental philosophy.

In this chapter, I will provide a general introduction to some of the key elements of Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant. It is not, however, the intention of this chapter, much less this dissertation, to provide a detailed analysis of the often labyrinthine twists and turns of Heidegger’s interpretation. There is already a considerable body of secondary literature dedicated to such exegesis.\(^6\) Nor is this an attempt to defend the specific content of Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant. In fact, by the time Heidegger came to write the preface to the fourth edition of Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics in 1972, Heidegger himself accepted that Kant’s question is foreign to the manner of questioning in Being and Time. Although Heidegger retracted the most radical aspects of his interpretation of Kant, Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics remains one of the clearest examples of Heidegger’s method of destructive retrieval, and the one most closely associated with Being and Time. My aim is to use Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics as a test case for a more general question about the nature Heidegger’s method of “destructive retrieval” and Heidegger’s understanding of the relationship between philosophy and history.

In Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought, Richardson provides a particularly clear expression of the value of Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics for explicating Heidegger’s method for doing philosophy

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\(^5\) Ibid, esp. pp. 183-187

historically. After noting that Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics constitutes "the classic type of what Heidegger I (1929) called 're-trieve' and what Heidegger II (1950) calls 'dialogue'" and noting that these notions are fundamental to Heidegger's entire way of doing philosophy, Richardson writes:

Conceived and executed by Heidegger at the height of his powers, [Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics] lets us see his method in sharpest focus and find in it at the same time both its weakness and its strength. Unless we watch him go through the process at least once, we might be tempted to think that the 'rigor' (Strenge) of which he will speak later is either platitude or sham. 'Yes, yes, of course,' one might very well say, 'but what does it mean in the concrete?' This is what it means in the concrete.7

For the same reason, this dissertation begins with Heidegger's interpretation of Kant in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics because without such a concrete example, Heidegger's general statement about the nature of a destructive retrieval are barely intelligible. We must watch how Heidegger's method is worked out concretely in actual research before we can begin to make sense of Heidegger more general statements about the nature of that method.

1.2 The Question of Being and the Ground of Metaphysics.

Kant introduces the Critique of Pure Reason by raising the question as to whether metaphysics can ever hope to establish itself as a scientific discipline, and if so, how. To answer this question, Kant begins with a preliminary investigation into the nature of knowledge as such, taking the success of the natural sciences as his starting point. This account of scientific knowledge is then used to establish a theoretical framework within which to determine what, if anything, metaphysics can hope to establish with scientific rigour. One crucial outcome of this investigation is that Kant denies the possibility of genuine knowledge of matters beyond the limits of possible experience. In so doing, he undermines the aspirations of much traditional metaphysics and of traditional ontology in particular.

Heidegger's initial task is to show that with this basic movement Kant does not replace metaphysics, and in particular ontology, with epistemology. In

developing this argument, Heidegger is mindful of the way in which the terms metaphysics and ontology were used in the eighteenth century and understood by Kant. Heidegger argues that with his transcendental philosophy, Kant is to be understood as suspending the problems of *Metaphysica Specialis*, which concerned the specific realms of God (Rational Theology), nature (Rational Cosmology) and humankind (Rational Psychology), and deals with the problem of *Metaphysica Generalis*, which is to say, ontology. Kant was, of course, heavily influenced by this traditional partition of metaphysics through the work of Wolff and Baumgarten. It is all too rarely noted in the commentaries that the division between the Transcendental Analytic and the Transcendental Dialectic in the *Critique* clearly corresponds with the division between *Metaphysica Generalis* and *Metaphysica Specialis*. The Transcendental Analytic is usually read, however, as radically undermining ontology (*Metaphysica Generalis*) in the same way that the Transcendental Dialectic is usually read as radically undermining the claims by rationalist metaphysicians to knowledge of such matters as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul (*Metaphysica Specialis*). According to Heidegger, however, while Kant does undermine the ontology of rationalist metaphysics, the Transcendental Analytic is to be properly understood as re-establishing *Metaphysica Generalis* in a manner that in fact makes ontology possible for the first time. But how is a preliminary investigation into the possibility of scientific knowledge to be understood as a genuinely ontological rather than an epistemological problem?

1.2.1 Synthetic *a priori* judgements and the possibility of scientific knowledge

Kant’s formal definition of the essence of scientific knowledge is one of his most important breakthroughs and constitutes the central point of reference in the debate about the relationship between Kant’s *Critique* and the theory of natural scientific knowledge. If we are to avoid distorting this issue, it is important to remain attentive to the differences between the English term “science”, which has come to be almost exclusively associated with the natural

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8 See KPM, pp. 6-8.

9 Kant’s relationship with traditional metaphysics is, however, far more complex. For a recent, general discussion of this issue see Karl Ameriks, “The Critique of Metaphysics: Kant and Traditional Ontology” in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant.* (ed. Paul Guyer), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 249-279.
sciences, and the term *Wissenschaft*, which is, at least potentially, much broader in scope.

Kant accepts without question that scientific knowledge is only possible if it is based on principles that are universally and necessarily valid. He also accepts that only principles known independently of the contingencies of experience, that is to say principles that are pure *a priori*, can be universally and necessarily valid. At the same time, science must be genuinely informative in the sense of materially extending our knowledge. This means, according to Kant, that science cannot rest on what follows *a priori* from the analysis of mere concepts because we cannot learn anything genuinely new from such analysis. The analysis of a concept can at best simply render explicit what was already implicit within the concept. If it is to be genuinely informative, science must provide us with “synthetic” knowledge in the sense that such knowledge must “advance beyond the given concept” to “something altogether different from what was thought in it”. Kant famously declares, therefore, that the possibility of scientific knowledge is dependent upon the possibility of making judgements that are both synthetic and valid *a priori*. This account of the nature and possibility of scientific knowledge is then taken by Kant to hold the key to establishing metaphysics as a science:

That metaphysics has hitherto remained in so vacillating a state of uncertainty and contradiction, is entirely due to the fact that this problem, and perhaps even the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgements, has never previously been considered. Upon the solution of this problem ... depends the success or failure of metaphysics.  

The key to Kant’s solution to this problem is to be found in his account of the so-called Copernican revolution. In the preface to the second edition of the *Critique*, Kant provides us with an interpretation of the revolution in thinking that enabled the study of nature to become scientific. Kant tells us that with the experiments conducted by pioneers such as Galileo:

a light broke upon all students of nature. They learned that reason has insight only into that which it produces after a plan of its own, and that it must not allow itself to be kept, as it were, in nature’s leading-strings, but must itself show the way

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10 A154/B193-4.  
11 B19.
with principles of judgement based upon fixed laws, constraining nature to give answers to questions of reason’s own determining.\textsuperscript{12}

The basic lesson to be learned from this is that science must be guided by “that which it has itself put into nature”.\textsuperscript{13} If we are to understand how scientific knowledge is possible we must assume, therefore, that experience must in some sense conform to the structures of human pure reason. Only then can we hope to know anything that is genuinely informative (synthetic), at least with respect to the objects of possible experience if not with respect to the things in themselves, but that is also known independently of any actual experience (\textit{a priori}). Taking this initial insight as his clue, Kant’s \textit{Critique} is to be understood as an investigation into the possibility of transcendental knowledge. Transcendental knowledge is knowledge,

that is occupied in general not so much with objects as with the kind of knowledge we have of objects, in so far as it is possible \textit{a priori}.\textsuperscript{14}

Transcendental logic is, therefore, to be distinguished from traditional logic on the basis that it is concerned, not with the formal analysis of concepts, but with a determination of the valid \textit{a priori} employment of concepts in regard to any possible object of experience.\textsuperscript{15} The determination of the complete set of such concepts provides a determination of the nature, scope and limits of synthetic \textit{a priori} knowledge, and with it an account of the nature and limits of scientific knowledge as such.

As Kant was well aware, in the solution to the problem of synthetic \textit{a priori} knowledge “we are at the same time deciding as to the possibility of the employment of pure reason in establishing and developing all those sciences which contain a theoretical \textit{a priori} knowledge of objects”.\textsuperscript{16} These sciences include pure mathematics and pure science of nature. There is, therefore, a complex relationship between the question “How is pure science of nature

\begin{footnotes}
\item[12] Bxiii.
\item[13] Bxiv.
\item[14] A11-12/B25.
\item[15] See B23-4.
\item[16] B20.
\end{footnotes}
possible?" and the question "How is metaphysics, as science, possible?". Both questions are answered by solving the problem of how synthetic judgements are possible a priori. The Neo-Kantians tended to explain the problem of synthetic a priori knowledge and with it Kant's account of the problem of metaphysics in terms of the question of the possibility of mathematical natural science. In so doing, the entire problematic of transcendental philosophy is reduced to a question about whether and how the validity of the laws of nature which make up mathematical, natural science is based on the operation of a priori concepts.

Heidegger's contention is that while the success of the natural sciences provides Kant with an initial clue for solving the problem of metaphysics, the problem of how metaphysics can become a science is more fundamental and much broader in scope than the question of the possibility of the mathematical, natural sciences. In this way, Heidegger radically rethinks the basis for Kant's account of the problem of transcendental knowledge. Heidegger suggests that what Kant really means when he says that transcendental knowledge is concerned, not with the objects of experience, but with the possibility of a priori knowledge of such objects is that:

transcendental knowledge does not investigate the entity itself (Seiende), but rather the possibility of the preliminary understanding of being, i.e., at one and the same time: the constitution of the being of entities.

The a priori principles that make up human pure reason and that determine, independently of any experience, the way in which any object can be known is directly equated by Heidegger with the conditions of the possibility of an understanding of being that predetermines the way in which we can encounter and deal with any entity whatsoever. Heidegger has in effect re-described radicalised Kant's insight using Heidegger's own philosophical language. According to Heidegger, Kant's significance is that he has struck upon the fact that any specific knowledge or experience of entities is only possible in accordance with a preliminary understanding of the being of entities. This is the real lesson to be learned from the Copernican revolution in Heidegger's view.

17 See B20
18 See KPM, p. 7.
19 KPM, p. 10.
One of the clearest formulations of this point is to be found in Heidegger’s 1927/28 lecture course on Kant:

*Entities (Seiendes) are in no way accessible without an antecedent understanding of being.* This is to say that entities which encounter us must already be understood in advance in their ontological constitution. This understanding of the being of entities, this synthetic knowledge *a priori,* is crucial for every experience of entities. This is the only possible meaning of Kant’s thesis, which is frequently misunderstood and which is called his Copernican revolution.20

This reformulation continues to contain within it an implicit account of the nature of positive scientific knowledge. A brief description of Heidegger’s understanding of natural science provides one of the best introductions both to the relationship between the question of being and Kant’s transcendental philosophy and to what Heidegger means by the claim that “entities are in no way accessible without the advance understanding of being”.

1.2.2 Ontic and Ontological knowledge: Heidegger’s concept of science

Kant’s view of the way in which a previously projected plan of *a priori* principles has already determined the objects of scientific investigation is interpreted by Heidegger to mean that this previously projected plan “determines in advance the constitution of the being of entities”.21 In the case of natural science this previously projected plan is inscribed with “the basic concepts and principles of the science of nature”.22 These concepts determine in advance what counts as a possible object of inquiry. This basic structure is operative in all fields of possible knowledge and, according to Heidegger, is indicative of the hermeneutic structure of understanding as such. In *Being and Time,* Heidegger describes this structure in the following terms

Basic concepts determine the way in which we get an understanding beforehand of the area of subject matter underlying all the objects a science takes as its theme, and all positive investigation is guided by this understanding ... But since every such area is itself obtained from the domain of entities themselves, this preliminary research, from which the

20 PIK, p. 38.
21 KPM, p. 7.
22 KPM, p. 7.
basic concepts are drawn, signifies nothing else than an interpretation of those entities with regard to their basic state of Being. Such research must run ahead of the positive sciences, and it can.\(^{23}\)

Heidegger uses the terms “ontic knowledge” and “ontic experience” to refer to any type of knowledge or experience that is concerned directly with entities. The natural and historical sciences are concerned with ontic knowledge since they are concerned with knowledge of specific regions of entities such as “nature” and “history”. The basic concepts of these sciences are “ontological” in the sense that they constitute the basic terms of the preliminary understanding of the being of those entities that are the subject of such knowledge. These basic concepts make ontic knowledge possible and condition the basic structures of that knowledge and the possibilities open to it. Heidegger’s “fundamental ontology” is concerned with the question of being as such, without being limited to the being of any specific region of entities.

The significance of Kant’s account of the Copernican revolution for Heidegger is that it displays this basic distinction between the question of ontic knowledge of entities and the ontological question of the being of those entities understood in terms of the preliminary understanding of being that makes ontic knowledge of entities possible. That is to say, Kant’s account of the pure concepts of the understanding and the *a priori* forms of intuition that make experience possible and determine the possible structures of experience is to be understood as ontological in the sense that these *a priori* structures make ontic knowledge possible and determine the basic structures of that knowledge. According to Heidegger, this basic structure of Kant’s transcendental philosophy implicitly contains a recognition of this distinction between ontic and ontological knowledge and with it the distinction between entities (*Seiende*) and the being (*Sein*) of entities. Indeed, Heidegger explicitly states that “the Copernican revolution states simply that ontic knowledge of entities must be guided in advance by ontological knowledge”.\(^{24}\)

It is this distinction between “entities” and “the being of entities”, the so-called “ontological difference”, that enables us to ask about the possibility of

\(^{23}\) SZ, p. 10.

\(^{24}\) PIK, p. 38.
ontology by asking about the possibility of a preliminary understanding of the being of entities as such. As Heidegger says in his lecture course on *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, given in the summer of 1927, this distinction “is the one by which the theme of ontology and thus of philosophy itself is first attained. It is this distinction which is first and foremost constitutive for ontology”. It is by recognising this distinction that we are able to move from the sciences of particular kinds of entities to a critical science of the being of entities:

With this distinction between being and entities and the selection of being as theme we depart in principle from the domain of entities. We surmount it, transcend it. We can also call the science of being, as critical science, transcendental science. In doing so we are not simply taking over unaltered the concept of the transcendental in Kant, although we are indeed adopting its original sense and its true tendency, perhaps still concealed from Kant.

While the positive sciences provide the key to recognising these crucial parallel distinctions between being and entities and between ontic knowledge and ontological knowledge, this problematic is not limited to or primarily directed towards the problem of the structure of natural scientific knowledge. With respect to Kant’s account of the Copernican revolution, Heidegger writes:

Mathematical natural science gives an indication of this fundamental conditional connection between ontic experience and ontological knowledge. However, its function for the laying of the ground for metaphysics exhausts itself therein, for the reference to this conditional connection is not yet the solution to the problem. It is rather only a statement of the direction in which it, to be understood in its more fundamental universality, must first be sought.

It is precisely by universalising the problem of the connection between ontic knowledge and ontological knowledge that the specific problem of the structure of natural scientific knowledge is radicalised into the question about the being of entities as such. Heidegger recognises that Kant did not himself fully realise this radicalisation. Kant’s *Critique* remained oriented towards, and ultimately trapped within, the limits of a metaphysics of nature. While Kant discovered the

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25 BP, p. 17.
27 KPM, p. 7.
structure that is constitutive for ontology, he never raised the question of being as such. With this interpretation Heidegger maintains that it was Kant “in and with his transcendental method of inquiry, who could make the first decisive step since Plato and Aristotle toward an explicit founding of ontology” while at the same time claiming that Kant “altogether neglected the problem of being”.28

This way of reading Kant also highlights the extent to which Heidegger’s own account of knowledge and experience within his fundamental ontology operates firmly within the tradition of transcendental philosophy established by Kant.

1.3 Phenomenological Ontology, Transcendence and Synthesis

The most obvious objection to Heidegger’s ontological reading of Kant’s transcendental philosophy is based on Kant’s conclusion in the Critique that, as a result of the Transcendental Analytic,

"the proud name of an ontology that presumptuously claims to supply, in systematic doctrinal form, synthetic a priori knowledge of things in general (for instance the principle of causality) must, therefore, give place to the modest title of a mere analytic of pure understanding".29

Does not the entire orientation of Kant’s transcendental philosophy involve a rejection of ontology? Heidegger was well aware of this statement by Kant and his response highlights the sense in which when dealing with Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant, the meaning of the term ontology cannot be taken for granted. More importantly, I will argue that the real violence of Heidegger’s interpretation is directed, not at Kant’s rejection of traditional ontology, but at Kant’s attempt to replace traditional ontology with a “mere analytic of pure understanding”.

In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger notes that:

Kant wants to replace ‘the proud name of an ontology’ with that of a ‘Transcendental Philosophy’, i.e., with an essential

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29 A247/B303.
unveiling of transcendence. And he is justified in doing this as long as the title ‘Ontology’ is taken in the sense of traditional metaphysics.\textsuperscript{30}

In this Heidegger accepts Kant’s self-description. Heidegger quite rightly argues that the significance of Kant’s rejection of ontology is that it marks a rejection of the claim that reason can provide the absolute ground for knowledge of things as they are in themselves without regard to the limits of sensibility. Kant undermines the possibility of ontological knowledge so understood by limiting the objective validity of the categories to their operation within the realm of possible experience. In so doing, Heidegger argues, Kant does not undermine the possibility of ontology as such but only ontology as it had come to be understood by the tradition. Within the limits of possible experience, Kant’s \textit{Critique} continues to provide an account of the \textit{a priori} principles that determine the occurrence of, in Kant’s words, all “appearance and all relation of being and not being”.\textsuperscript{31} According to Heidegger, Kant’s transcendental philosophy must, therefore, be termed ontological, although the nature of ontology must now be rethought.

But what does Heidegger mean when he says that the effect of Kant’s transcendental philosophy is to replace traditional ontology with “an essential unveiling of transcendence”? The answer to this question will help to clarify the sense in which Kant’s transcendental philosophy is to be understood as ontological while also highlighting the way in which Heidegger undermines the central role that Kant gives to an analytic of the understanding and the role of acts of judgement within his transcendental philosophy. In developing this argument, Heidegger relies heavily on Kant’s discussion of the problem of synthesis and synthetic judgement.

Kant introduces his discussion of “The Highest Principle of All Synthetic Judgements” as central to the entire problem of transcendental logic:

The explanation of the possibility of synthetic judgements is a problem with which general logic has nothing to do. It need not even so much as know the problem by name. But in transcendental logic it is the most important of all questions;

\textsuperscript{30} KPM, p. 88.

\textsuperscript{31} A110. This remark is made with reference to the “one space and one time” within which all appearance occurs.
and indeed, if in treating of the possibility of synthetic a priori judgments we also take account of the conditions and scope of their validity, it is the only question with which it is concerned.32

General logic, according to Kant’s use of the term, is concerned with the formal rules of thought from which all content has been abstracted. These formal rules, such as the rule of non-contradiction, are valid irrespective of the way in which thought relates to objects. Yet, for this very reason, general logic can tell us nothing about how the rules of thought are to be applied. In contrast, transcendental logic is concerned entirely with the question of whether, and if so how, concepts can relate a priori to objects. For this reason:

transcendental philosophy has the peculiarity that besides the rule (or rather the universal condition of rules), which is given in the pure concept of understanding, it can specify a priori the instances to which the rule is to be applied.33

Since judgement is “the faculty of subsuming under rules; that is, of distinguishing whether something does or does not stand under a given rule”,34 Kant’s transcendental philosophy gives rise to a transcendental doctrine of judgement.

Kant states that if knowledge is to relate to an object and derive its meaning and significance from this relation, the object must be capable of being given.35 Without such a relation concepts are empty and through their use in thinking we can know nothing. The highest principle of all synthetic judgments states that “every object stands under the necessary conditions of synthetic unity of the manifold of intuition in a possible experience”.36 It is in this way that objects are given. To say that an object is given, Kant tells us, “means simply that the representation through which the object is thought relates to actual or possible experience”.37 When knowledge is capable of relating to a possible experience and thereby capable of being meaningful, it is said by Kant to have “objective reality”: “the possibility of experience is, then, what gives objective

32 A154/B193.
33 A135/B174-5.
34 A132/B171.
35 A155/B194.
36 A158/B197.
37 A156/B195.
reality to all our *a priori* modes of knowledge*.38 The crucial conclusion that Kant draws from his discussion in this section is that:

> the conditions of the possibility of experience in general are likewise conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and for this reason they have objective validity in a synthetic *a priori* judgement.39

That there are *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experience which thereby condition *a priori* the objects of experience is what makes it possible for there to be judgments that are both genuinely informative with respect to the objects of possible experience while at the same time being valid *a priori*.

Kant brings together an extraordinary complex of issues in this formulation of the problematic of transcendental logic and the interpretation of Kant’s argument is conditioned in no small part by where we locate the centre of gravity of this problematic. Heidegger’s interpretation locates the centre of gravity of this problem, not in an account of the conditions of the possibility of experience, nor in an account of the objective validity of synthetic *a priori* judgments, but in Kant’s determination of the conditions of the possibility of objects. The central question for Heidegger is, “what is it that makes an object an object?”

In this regard, Heidegger makes a great deal of Kant’s use of the term *Gegenstände* to refer to the objects of possible experience as opposed to the term *Objekte*, which refers to the objects of thought. Heidegger plays on the construction of the word *Gegenstand* to draw out the sense in which an object is to be understood as that which stands-against us (*Gegen-stand*). In asking about the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, Kant is interpreted by Heidegger as asking about the conditions that make possible the “letting-stand-against” which constitutes the object as object. By means of this interpretation, Heidegger reads Kant as taking the first steps toward a phenomenological ontology of the object as *gegen-stand*, that which stands against, akin to that developed by Heidegger. Moreover, the notion of the “conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience” is taken by Heidegger to refer to the conditions that make possible the opening up of an “horizon”

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38 A156/B195.
39 A158/B197.
within which we are able to encounter objects. Indeed, Heidegger goes so far as to say that with the highest principle of synthetic knowledge Kant has struck upon the fact that transcendental knowledge is “ecstatic-horizontal” and that the problem of transcendental knowledge must therefore be understood in terms of the problem of an “ecstatic-horizontal” transcendence.\(^{40}\) “Horizon” is a term that Heidegger takes up from Husserl. The object of every experience always occurs within a horizon. Yet this horizon is always a step beyond actual experience. The horizon is not itself experienced; just as when I look at a cube I do not, in fact, experience every side of the cube or when I look outside my window I do not experience the world of which that view forms a part. Yet this worldly horizon is a fundamental aspect of any experience.

Not only does Heidegger introduce the term “horizon” into his interpretation of Kant’s principle of synthetic judgements, Heidegger also equates and routinely substitutes Kant’s talk of “transcendental knowledge” with the word “transcendence”. This is a terminological expression of Heidegger’s attempt to explicate Kant’s idea of transcendental philosophy by means of what Heidegger calls “a more original concept of transcendence”.\(^{41}\) Heidegger uses the term “transcendence” to refer to the structure of the preliminary understanding of being that makes an encounter with entities possible. The essential structure of transcendence is taken by Heidegger to be a pure “going-beyond” or “surpassing”.\(^{42}\) In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger tells us that,

\[
\text{ontological knowledge ‘forms’ (bildet) transcendence, and this forming is nothing other than the holding-open of the horizon within which the being of entities becomes discernible in a preliminary way.}\(^{43}\)
\]

Heidegger also explains transcendence as the opening up of a “play-space” (*Spielraum*) that “lets-[something]-stand-in-opposition” (*entgegenstehenlassen*) and therefore makes the objects of experience, as Gegenstände, possible.

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\(^{40}\) KPM, p. 84.

\(^{41}\) Cf. BP, p. 323.

\(^{42}\) See BP, pp. 298-300. See also Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Reasons. op. cit.*, p. 35.

\(^{43}\) KPM, p. 87.

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The crucial point to note is that Heidegger uses the notion of transcendence, understood as “going-beyond”, to transform Kant’s problem of synthetic \textit{a priori} judgement into a question about the “synthesis” which constitutes transcendence. What is particularly significant about Heidegger’s often rather obscure talk of “play-space”, “letting-stand-against”, and “passing-beyond” is that it effaces the role of judgement. Heidegger is, in effect, trying to re-describe the problem of synthetic \textit{a priori} knowledge in a manner that is not dependent upon an account of the structure of judgement. The tension this creates between what Kant writes in the \textit{Critique} and Heidegger’s interpretation becomes particularly clear when we consider Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant’s notions of synthetic judgement and synthesis.

In his discussion of the highest principle of synthetic judgements, Kant writes that:

\begin{quote}
in synthetic judgements I have to advance beyond the given concept, viewing as in relation with the concept something altogether different from what was thought in it.\cite{44}
\end{quote}

If synthetic judgements are to be possible \textit{a priori}, a pure synthesis must be possible. It is to this act of synthesis, Kant tells us, “that we must first direct our attention, if we would determine the first origin of our knowledge”.\cite{45} Kant defines synthesis as “the act of putting different representations together, and of grasping what is manifold in them in one [act of] knowledge”.\cite{46} Synthesis is therefore an act of “combination”.\cite{47} This act appears very similar to the operation of the understanding. By means of concepts, the understanding brings various representations together under one representation. In the second edition of the \textit{Critique}, Kant overcomes any ambiguity about the relationship between synthesis and the understanding by saying that combination is an act of the understanding.\cite{48}

The task of undermining the primacy of judgement and, therefore, of logic within Kant’s \textit{Critique} is worked out by Heidegger through an attempt to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[44] A154/B193-4.
\item[45] A78/B103.
\item[46] A77/B103.
\item[47] See B130.
\item[48] See B130.
\end{footnotes}
undermine the role of the understanding with regard to the act of synthesis. It is for this reason that the task of clarifying the exact nature of this synthesis is one of the centre-pieces of Heidegger’s interpretation. In an allusion to the above quoted statement by Kant on synthetic judgements, Heidegger argues that:

Kant calls this ‘relationship’ to the ‘wholly other’ synthesis (the Veritative Synthesis). As such, in so far as it knows something wholly other, knowledge is synthetic. 49

In his interpretation, Heidegger distinguishes two basic types of synthesis. There is the synthesis which combines a subject with a predicate in a judgement, which Heidegger calls the apophantic-predicative synthesis. This synthesis is effected by thinking. According to Heidegger, however, there is also a synthesis which enables us to relate to the wholly other. Heidegger does not describe this synthesis in term of the unifying of separate representations. Instead, he describes this synthesis entirely in terms of the problem of transcendence and any references to concepts is carefully avoided. By “passing beyond” and creating the possibility of a relationship to the wholly other, this synthesis is understood as forming transcendence since it makes the going-beyond of transcendence possible. Heidegger calls this synthesis the “ontological synthesis”. According to Heidegger, this latter type of synthesis, which is ultimately to be understood as “ecstatic-horizontal”, grounds the possibility of the former synthesis which is effected by means of concepts and makes judgements possible. In this way, the entire problem of synthetic a priori knowledge is transformed by Heidegger in a manner that can be equated with Heidegger’s own phenomenological investigation in Being and Time into the horizon that makes possible any understanding of, or encounter with, entities. According to Heidegger, this horizon is constituted by time. The challenge facing Heidegger’s interpretation is to demonstrate this from within Kant’s transcendental philosophy.

Kant’s own account of the ground of synthesis is extremely complex and deserves to be quoted in full to enable us to grasp the complexity of Heidegger own position:

Granted, then, that we must advance beyond a given concept in order to compare it synthetically with another, a third something is necessary, as that wherein alone the synthesis of two concepts can be achieved. There is only one whole in

49 KPM, pp. 81-82.
which all our representations are contained, namely inner sense and its *a priori* form, time. The synthesis of representations rests on imagination; and their synthetic unity, which is required for judgement, on the unity of apperception. In these, therefore, [in inner sense, imagination, and apperception], we must look for the possibility of synthetic judgments; and since all three contain the sources of *a priori* representations, they must also account for the possibility of *pure* synthetic judgments.\(^{50}\)

Here we see that synthesis plays a somewhat ambiguous role within Kant’s account of the structure of human pure reason. There is the synthesis of representations in imagination. There is the synthetic unity of apperception. Moreover, Kant also refers to the “mere synthesis of various representations *in an intuition*”.\(^{51}\) The ambiguities arise when we ask how these different functions of synthesis are related. Are these three distinct functions or is there ultimately one function of synthesis which grounds these different examples of synthesis. Kant’s own view appears to change between the first and second editions of the *Critique*. In both the first and second editions, Kant writes that:

> By synthesis, in the most general sense, I understand the act of putting different representations together, and of grasping what is manifold in them in one [act of] knowledge.\(^{52}\)

And,

> Synthesis in general, as we shall hereafter see, is the mere result of the power of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no knowledge whatsoever, but of which we are scarcely ever conscious.\(^{53}\)

In the second edition, however, Kant writes that:

> all combination - be we conscious of it or not, be it a combination of the manifold of intuition, empirical or non-empirical, or of various concepts - is an act of the

\(^{50}\) A155/B194.

\(^{51}\) A79/B104-5.

\(^{52}\) A77/B102-3.

\(^{53}\) A78/B104.
understanding. To this act the general title 'synthesis' may be assigned.\textsuperscript{54}

Heidegger develops his interpretation by exploiting the tensions between the subjective deduction of the categories in the first edition of the \textit{Critique} and the deduction presented in the second edition. When expressed in terms of Kant's architecture of human pure reason, Heidegger's interpretation aims to show that the unity of apperception is derivative upon the synthesis of imagination which, in turn, must be understood as being fundamentally temporal in nature. It is to this architecture that we shall now turn.

\subsection*{1.4 Finitude and the subjectivity of the subject}

Kant assumes that the only source of human knowledge apart from experience is to be found in the structures of pure reason. Pure reason is "that which contains the principles whereby we know anything absolutely \textit{a priori},\textsuperscript{55} and nothing can be known \textit{a priori} about the objects of experience except that which has its source in the thinking subject.\textsuperscript{56} The problem of how synthetic judgements are possible \textit{a priori} cannot, according to Kant,

be solved except as follows: that we consider it beforehand in relation to the human faculties by means of which man is capable of expansion of his knowledge \textit{a priori} and which in him constitute what one can specifically call his pure reason.\textsuperscript{57}

The problem of metaphysics is to be resolved by means of a study of "our inner nature" understood as a critique of pure reason.\textsuperscript{58} This is worked out through a resolution of all transcendental knowledge into its elements.

\textsuperscript{54} B130.
\textsuperscript{55} A11/B24.
\textsuperscript{56} See Bxxiii.
\textsuperscript{57} Immanuel Kant, "Preisschrift über die Fortschritte der Metaphysik seit Leibniz und Wolff" in \textit{Immanuel Kants Werke} (ed. Ernst Cassirer) Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1923, volume 8, pp. 233-321, at p. 312, quoted by Heidegger in KPM, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{58} See A703/B731.
1.4.1 Sensibility and Understanding

Kant’s begins his investigation into our inner nature with the crucial assumption that,

there are two stems of human knowledge, namely, sensibility and understanding, which perhaps spring from a common, but to us unknown, root. Through the former, objects are given to us; through the latter, they are though.:59

Kant explicitly states that these are the only two sources of knowledge and that knowledge is only possible through the union of these two faculties.60

As the faculty whereby objects are given to us, sensibility is described by Kant as receptive.61 By means of sensibility we are able to enter into an “immediate relation” (unmittelbar bezieht) with objects.62 Kant is, of course, only interested in these faculties in so far as they are capable of a pure a priori employment. He is in principle not interested, for example, in the empirical employment of the sense organs. In the Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant argues that space and time are the only “two pure forms of sensible intuition, serving as principles of a priori knowledge”.63 Space is the a priori condition of all outer appearance, whereas time is the a priori condition “by means of which the mind intuits itself or its inner state”.64 Time is, therefore, the a priori condition of our inner sense.

In contrast with sensibility, understanding is the faculty through which an object is thought. Kant contrasts the receptivity of sensibility with the spontaneity of thought, and the immediate nature of intuitions with the mediation of concepts in thought.65 The understanding brings various individual representations together under a concept. Kant characterises the understanding as a “function” or more precisely as a “faculty of rules” which in so far as they

59 A15/B29 cf. A50/B74.
60 See A50-1/B74-5 &. A294/B350.
61 A51/B75.
62 A19/B33.
63 A22/B36.
64 See A22-3/B37 &. A34/B50-1.
65 See A51/B75 and A68/B93.
relate to objects are called laws.\textsuperscript{66} A coherent experience that is capable of being an object of knowledge is possible only if the appearances conform to such \textit{a priori} laws. These \textit{a priori} concepts must be related to intuitions, and thereby sensibility, if they are to have any sense, rather than being empty logical functions. Kant clearly emphasises that “all thought must ... relate ultimately to intuitions, and therefore, with us, to sensibility”\textsuperscript{67}

Both concepts and intuitions must operate in tandem for experience and therefore knowledge to be possible:

Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. It is, therefore, just as necessary to make our concepts sensible, that is, to add the object to them in intuition, as it is to make our intuitions intelligible, that is, to bring them under concepts. These two powers or capacities cannot exchange their functions. The understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise. But that is no reason for confounding the contribution of either with that of the other; rather it is a strong reason for carefully separating and distinguishing the one from the other. We therefore distinguish the science of the rules of sensibility in general, that is, aesthetic, from the science of the rules of the understanding in general, that is, logic.\textsuperscript{68}

This division between sensibility and understanding, which constitutes Kant’s basic starting point, gives rise to the separation between the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Logic while at the same time requiring an account of how these distinct stems of human knowledge can come together so as to make synthetic judgements possible \textit{a priori}.

In Marburg, where Heidegger developed his interpretation of Kant, this radical dichotomy between intuition and thought was regarded as completely untenable. The Marburg school of Neo-Kantianism, led by Cohen and Natorp, attempted to show that this dichotomy was Kant’s great error and the source of a range of problems within the \textit{Critique}. On this view, Kant’s mistake was to claim that the content of thought is given and not a product of thought. In so doing, Kant is taken to have introduced an unacceptably irrational element into

\textsuperscript{66} A68/B93 and A126.
\textsuperscript{67} A19/B33.
\textsuperscript{68} A51-2/B75-6.
transcendental philosophy. The Marburg Neo-Kantians solved this problem by collapsing the Transcendental Aesthetic into the Transcendental Logic so that space and time are understood as functions of thought. This resulted in a strongly idealist “correction” of Kant’s transcendental philosophy. 69

Heidegger agreed with the Marburg school that the separation between intuition and thought was untenable and his own interpretation constitutes an extremely forceful attempt to overcome this dichotomy. In direct opposition to the Marburg school, however, Heidegger gives priority to intuition over thinking in a manner that affirms what Heidegger calls the “finitude” of human knowledge. More importantly, by establishing the basis for the unity of intuition and thinking, Heidegger hopes to disclose temporality both as the basis for the subjectivity of the subject and as the horizon for any understanding of being.

Heidegger argues that in recognising sensibility as a necessary element of knowledge, Kant grasped the essential finitude of human knowledge. Talk about the “finitude” of human existence is one of the great catch-cries of Heidegger’s philosophy and Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is in this respect particularly instructive. With the term “finitude”, Heidegger is not making a statement about the fallibility of human knowledge. Even less does human finitude, as it is understood by Heidegger, concern our dependence upon sense organs. Indeed, Heidegger argues that Kant’s significance in this respect is to have revealed the possibility of a non-empirical sensibility that is, in Heidegger’s words, “ontological rather than sensualistic”. 70

To understand what the notion of finitude means and why, according to Heidegger, it necessarily implies that thinking operates in the service of intuition, Heidegger argues that we must compare Kant’s account of human knowledge with the notion of divine or infinite knowledge. Kant defines divine knowledge in a traditional way as intuitus originarius in contrast with human intuitus derivativus. 71 For God, “all his knowledge must be intuition, and not thought, which always involves limitations”. 72 God’s knowledge is not mediated by

70 KPM. p. 19.
71 See B72.
72 B72.
concepts, but rather, as the absolute creator of things, God has a direct insight into the nature of His own creations. Indeed, there can be no "object" of knowledge for God where an object is understood as that which stands against (Gegenstand) God. The categories, therefore, "have no meaning in respect of such a mode of knowledge" because, as rules that merely combine and arrange the materials of knowledge, the categories are required only by a creature whose knowledge is dependent upon sensible intuitions of an object. 73 Thinking is required precisely because human knowledge is dependent upon a derivative intuition whereby things not of its own making, which stand-against it, are given.

This comparison of human knowledge with divine knowledge reveals, according to Heidegger, that intuition marks the real essence of human knowledge:

In order to understand the Critique of Pure Reason this point must be hammered in, so to speak: Knowing is primarily intuiting. From this it at once becomes clear that the new [Neo-Kantian] interpretation of knowledge as judging (thinking) violates the decisive sense of the Kantian problem. All thinking is merely in the service of intuitions. 74

For Heidegger, the ultimate significance of Kant's account of intuition is that it reveals the subordinate nature of thinking.

The Transcendental Aesthetic is, therefore, to be understood as much more than just an argument for the a priori nature of space and time worked out to explain the possibility of geometry and to resolve "absurdities" that result from the Newtonian argument for the reality of space and time; absurdities that might lead the unwary to embrace Berkeley's radical idealism. 75 The real significance of the Transcendental Aesthetic is, according to Heidegger, that by setting out the need for intuition Kant is forced to re-think the very nature of logic, which is then worked out in the Transcendental Logic. In stark contrast to the Marburg School of Natorp and Cohen, who argued that placing the Transcendental Aesthetic before the Transcendental Logic was a serious mistake, Heidegger

73 B145.
74 KPM, p. 15.
75 See B70-71.
argues that this location accurately reflects the fundamental significance that Kant's account of intuition has for the entire Critique.\textsuperscript{76}

Kant clearly stated, however, that "to neither of these powers [sensibility and understanding] may a preference be given over the other.\textsuperscript{77} Nevertheless, Heidegger argues that this order of precedence is necessarily built into Kant's problematic such that, despite Kant's explicit statements to the contrary, the priority of intuition over concepts must be affirmed "if we want to come closer to the innermost course of the Kantian problematic".\textsuperscript{78}

Not only does Heidegger argue that the effect of Kant's arguments is to give priority to intuition over thinking, he also argues that Kant gives priority to time over space. The crucial outcome of Kant's characterisation of time understood as the form of inner sense is that:

all representations, whether they have for their object outer things or not, belong, in themselves, as determinations of the mind, to our inner state; and since this inner state stands under the formal condition of inner intuition, and so belongs to time, time is an \textit{a priori} condition of all appearance whatsoever.\textsuperscript{79}

Heidegger uses this statement by Kant to argue that time has a clear priority over space.\textsuperscript{80} Moreover, as the \textit{a priori} condition of all appearances whatsoever, Heidegger argues that time has a pre-eminent "ontological" function.\textsuperscript{81} The result is that Heidegger's claim for the priority of intuition over thinking becomes an argument for the priority of time over thought such that it is the structure of time rather than the structure of thought that provides the real basis for the problem of metaphysics.

\textsuperscript{76} See PIK, pp. 53-54.
\textsuperscript{77} A51/B75, see KPM, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{78} KPM, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{79} A34/B50.
\textsuperscript{80} KPM, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{81} See KPM § 10.
1.4.2 Imagination

In the subjective deduction of the first edition of the *Critique*, Kant suggests that:

There are three subjective sources of knowledge upon which rests the possibility of experience in general and of knowledge of its objects - *sense, imagination and apperception*.\textsuperscript{82}

Heidegger notes that with this account of the structure of human knowledge, Kant appears to contradict his earlier insistence that our knowledge arises from only two stems: sensibility and understanding.\textsuperscript{83} As we have seen, Kant also suggests that:

Synthesis in general ... is the mere result of the power of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we are scarcely ever conscious.\textsuperscript{84}

What, then, is the relationship between this “synthesis in general” and, on the one hand, the synthetic unity of apperception and the manifold of pure intuition on the other? According to Heidegger, Kant was forced to introduce the imagination because he was unable to give an adequate account of the function of synthesis within the limitations of his traditional starting point. Heidegger tells us that “under the pressure of the phenomenon that up till now he [Kant] has identified as synthesis” Kant was forced “to throw out his theory of the two stems and add a third one”.\textsuperscript{85}

Kant’s most sustained account of the role of the imagination is to be found in the chapter on schematism and in the transcendental deduction of the first edition. In Kant’s doctrine of schematism, the imagination plays a mediating role between concepts and intuitions. Through the production of transcendental schemata, the imagination enables the application of pure concepts to intuitions and so makes experience possible. It can do this, according to Kant, because a schema is homogeneous with both concepts and intuitions. This homogeneity is a consequence of the peculiar nature of time. Time is

\textsuperscript{82} A115.
\textsuperscript{83} See KPM, p. 95.
\textsuperscript{84} A78/B104.
\textsuperscript{85} PIK, pp. 188-189.
homogeneous with the categories because time, as the *a priori* form of intuition, is universal and rests upon an *a priori* rule. Yet time is also homogeneous with appearance because time is contained in every empirical representation. The schematism of the concepts of the understanding produced by the imagination and understood in terms of the transcendental determination of time mediates and makes possible the subsumption of appearance under categories.\(^6\) Kant describes the role of the schematism in one of his Reflections in the following terms:

> the schematism shows the conditions under which an appearance is determined in respect to a logical function and, therefore, stands under a category.\(^7\)

Heidegger regards Kant’s doctrine of schematism as the key to understanding the true nature of the *Critique*. Yet Heidegger’s interpretation aims at demonstrating that the productive synthesis of the transcendental imagination does not simply link intuitions and concepts, thereby linking sensibility and the understanding, but is in fact the hidden root of sensibility and understanding. The real significance of this claim that the synthesis of the imagination is the hidden root of sensibility and the understanding is to be found in the way in which Heidegger uses this interpretation in an attempt to show that the structure of time provides the most fundamental basis for the possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge, which, as we have seen, is, for Heidegger, equivalent to the possibility of the understanding of being.

Heidegger also argues that the “categories have their necessary origin in time itself” and it is time that provides the source of the objective validity of the categories.\(^8\) As such, Heidegger argues that the categories cannot be understood simply as pure concepts of the understanding. This is because the pure concepts of the understanding derive their status as categories, rather than mere concepts, only in so far as they can and must be related through a pure, time related synthesis to intuitions such that they constitute the conditions of the possibility of experience and the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and so have objective validity. According to Heidegger:

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8. PIK, p. 272.
The schemata of pure concepts of the understanding, the categories, are *a priori* time-determinations and as such they are the transcendental product of the pure power of imagination.89

Here Heidegger completely collapses any distinction between schema and category, such that the categories are the schemata and as schemata are to be understood as products of the imagination rather than the understanding. This contrasts starkly with Kant’s explicit assertion that “apperception is itself the ground of the possibility of the categories”.90

Heidegger also argues that precisely in so far as Kant presents the unity of apperception as synthetic, the function of synthesis, and with it the imagination, must be understood as more fundamental than apperception.91 To support this interpretation, Heidegger points to a passage where Kant says that,

the principle of the necessary unity of pure (productive) synthesis of imagination, prior to apperception, is the ground of the possibility of all knowledge, especially of experience.92

Of course, it is one thing to say that the synthesis of the imagination is a necessary element of knowledge; it is quite another thing to say that the synthesis of the imagination is more fundamental than apperception.

Heidegger argues that with his account of the synthesis of imagination in the first edition, Kant was on the brink of a radical new insight in philosophy, but failed to pursue this insight because he was afraid of the consequences. In his 1927/28 lecture course, Heidegger argues that,

Kant retreats before the consequence of eliminating the priority of transcendental apperception, of understanding, that is, of the traditional, unfounded privileged position of logic. Kant is afraid of sacrificing the transcendental apperception to the transcendental power of imagination. In the second edition of the *Critique* transcendental apperception is again elevated to its old position of supremacy as the ultimate apex to which the

89 PIK, p. 292.
90 See A401.
91 See PIK, p. 279.
92 A118, See PIK pp. 278-279.
whole of transcendental philosophy and ontology must be attached.\textsuperscript{93}

According to Heidegger, this self-correction by Kant conceals the role of the time-related synthesis of the imagination as the true basis for the synthetic unity of apperception, a role that was first hinted at by Kant’s own investigation into the nature of the function of the synthesis of imagination.

1.5 \textit{Being and Time} in the Subjective Transcendental Deduction

The basic thrust of Heidegger’s attempt to demonstrate, from within Kant’s \textit{Critique}, that time functions as the horizon for any possible understanding of being and that the self is essentially temporal, is perhaps most clearly apparent in Heidegger’s extraordinary interpretation of the transcendental deduction presented in the first edition of the \textit{Critique}. In the preface to the first edition, Kant points out that the transcendental deduction has both an objective and a subjective side. The objective side “refers to the objects of pure understanding, and is intended to expound and render intelligible the objective validity of its \textit{a priori} concepts. It is therefore essential to my purposes”.\textsuperscript{94} It does this by demonstrating the applicability of the categories to the objects of experience, although it is arguable that this is sufficient only to show the objective reality and not the objective validity of the categories. Indeed, it is precisely to correct this deficiency that the transcendental doctrine of the schematism is needed.\textsuperscript{95}

In contrast, Kant tells us that the subjective side of the transcendental deduction in the first edition “seeks to investigate the pure understanding itself, its possibility and the cognitive faculties upon which it rests”.\textsuperscript{96} Kant also tells us that, while this endeavour is important, it is not essential for his chief purpose because “the chief question is always simply this:- what and how much can the understanding and reason know apart from all experience? not:- how is the faculty of thought itself possible?”.\textsuperscript{97} The subjective side of the transcendental

\textsuperscript{93} PIK, pp. 279-280.
\textsuperscript{94} Axvi.
\textsuperscript{95} See Henry Allison, \textit{Kant’s Transcendental Idealism}. \textit{op. cit.}, at pp. 174-179.
\textsuperscript{96} Axvi.
\textsuperscript{97} Axvii.
deduction is concerned with demonstrating how the three syntheses that correspond with the three subjective sources of knowledge come together in a single act of knowing. These three syntheses are: the synthesis of apprehension in intuition, the synthesis of reproduction in imagination, and the synthesis of recognition in a concept. In very general terms, the synthesis of apprehension is concerned with the unity of each representation in a single moment. The synthesis of reproduction is what enables the co-existence or sequence of representations to be retained and reproduced in experience. The synthesis of recognition concerns the unitary consciousness which "combines the manifold, successively intuited, and thereupon also reproduced, into one representation". 98 This is nothing other than the act of the synthetic unity of apperception.

What Heidegger sees in this account, however, is an expression of the basic structures of his own account of the temporal structure of Dasein’s understanding of being as presented in Being and Time. Indeed, Heidegger writes that it was only on the basis of his investigation in Being and Time that "the possibility arose for me to understand what Kant is actually seeking, respectively must seek". 99 Despite Kant’s own assessment of the importance of the subjective side of the transcendental deduction, Heidegger presents it as containing one of the most fundamental insights of the Critique.

According to Heidegger, the three acts of synthesis described by Kant are to be properly understood as being determined by the basic structure of time. Heidegger argues that the synthesis of apprehension forms the now, the present as such. It is by virtue of this intuition that we are able to encounter entities as present in the "now". In addition, the synthesis of reproduction "makes possible the inter-connection of no-longer-nows as such, as what has been (Gewesenes)". 100 These two modes of synthesis, according to Heidegger, "are nothing other than the manner in which pure time is disclosed a priori in its now and no-longer now, as present and past". 101 Most surprising of all, Heidegger argues that the “synthesis of recognition in a concept” is determined by the “future” understood in the Heideggerian sense of grounding the possibility of an anticipatory understanding of being. Heidegger’s basic point is that the very

98 A103.
99 PIK, p. 267.
100 PIK, p. 238.
101 PIK, p. 240.
possibility of transcendental knowledge, understood as determining in advance the possibility of an encounter with objects, is to be understood in terms of the structure of time and, in particular, the way in which the future enables such an anticipatory understanding, rather than being determined by the function of *a priori* concepts understood in terms of the problem of the subsumption of particular intuitions under universal concepts.

According to Heidegger, this interpretation is reinforced by Kant’s remark toward the beginning of the transcendental deduction that all representations, whether their origin is empirical or *a priori*, are produced through inner causes and so,

> All our knowledge is thus finally subject to time, the formal condition of inner sense. In it they must all be ordered, connected, and brought into relation. This is a general observation which, throughout what follows, must be borne in mind as being quite fundamental.¹⁰²

Heidegger’s own account of the temporal structure of human existence is discussed in more detail in chapter five of this dissertation. The point to note here is that, using his own account of temporality, Heidegger argues that:

> The modes of pure synthesis - pure apprehension, pure reproduction, pure recognition - are not therefore three in number because they refer to the three elements of pure knowledge, but rather because, as originally unified in themselves, as time forming, they constitute the ripening of time itself.¹⁰³

The very fact that there are three syntheses confirms the fact that synthesis is nothing other than a function of time. Once this becomes apparent, then, according to Heidegger, it becomes clear that the entire problem of transcendental knowledge and with it the problem of metaphysics is to be worked out on the basis of an analysis of time. As Heidegger says:

> It is not because time functions as ‘form of intuition’ and was interpreted as such at the point of entry into the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but because the understanding of being must be projected upon time from out of the ground of the finitude of the Dasein in man, that time, in essential unity with the

¹⁰² A98-A99.
¹⁰³ KPM, p. 137.
transcendental power of imagination, attained the central metaphysical function in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.\textsuperscript{104}

The problem of metaphysics as worked out in the *Critique of Pure Reason* amounts, therefore, to nothing other than the fundamental philosophical problem of *Being and Time*. In this way, Heidegger argues Kant’s *Critique* “rattles the mastery of reason and the understanding. ‘Logic’ is deprived of its pre-eminence in metaphysics, which was built up from ancient times”.\textsuperscript{105} Indeed, the very idea of logic is thereby rendered questionable.\textsuperscript{106}

1.6 Retrieving what Kant “wanted to say” by repeating the *Critique*

What is to be made of this extraordinary interpretation of Kant’s *Critique*? In particular, what are we to make of the points of conflict between the text of Kant’s *Critique* and Heidegger’s interpretation? Lewis White Beck expresses the dismay engendered by Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant’s *Critique* by suggesting that Heidegger,

so mangles the Kantian architectonic that “primordial time” and “transcendental apperception” are identified ... an identification that I cannot criticize because I find no sense in it at all.\textsuperscript{107}

The contemporary debate about *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* will be discussed in the next chapter of this dissertation. My concern in this section is to introduce the way in which Heidegger attempts to defend his interpretation against the accusation that he has illegitimately distorted what Kant actually writes in the *Critique*.

The immediate difficulty faced by any attempt to clarify Heidegger’s method of interpretation in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is that the nature of Heidegger’s methodological position is only hinted at in a few fragmented statements. The basis for Heidegger’s method of interpretation, and with it the justification for the violence of Heidegger’s interpretation, remains

\textsuperscript{104} KPM, p. 170.
\textsuperscript{105} KPM, pp. 170-1.
\textsuperscript{106} KPM, p. 171.
crucially "unsaid" within the text of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* itself. Nevertheless, these fragmented statements provide the necessary starting point for any attempt to critically assess Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant in *Kant the Problem of Metaphysics*.

At the very least, we can say that the points of conflict between Kant’s text and Heidegger’s interpretation are not a matter of simple misreading by Heidegger. Heidegger was well aware that his interpretation conflicted with Kant’s text. According to Heidegger, a certain degree of violence is necessary in order to wrest *(abringen)* from what the words say, what it is they want to say. ¹⁰⁸ Heidegger was also aware, however, that his interpretation could not be counted as successful if these points of conflict revealed his interpretation to be a mere matter of “roving arbitrariness” *(schweifende Willkür)*. ¹⁰⁹ Instead, these points of conflict are presented by Heidegger as a necessary, justifiable and positive aspect of his strategy of interpretation. Indeed, Heidegger’s entire approach to interpretation undermines to some extent the philosophical legitimacy of any interpretation that merely paraphrases what Kant said in a manner that avoids any possibility of violence. In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger argues that:

> if an interpretation *(Interpretation)* merely gives back what Kant has expressly said, then from the outset it is not a laying-out *(Auslegung)*, in so far as the task of such a laying-out remains framed as the making visible in its own right of what Kant had brought to light in his ground-laying over and above the explicit formulation. ¹¹⁰

It is in this sense that Heidegger’s interpretation *(Auslegung)* constitutes a “laying-out” *(Aus-legung)*. This demand that an interpretation go beyond Kant’s own statements is based up Heidegger’s understanding of the very nature of philosophical knowledge. Heidegger writes that:

> with any philosophical knowledge in general, what is said in uttered propositions must not be decisive. Instead, what must

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¹⁰⁸ See KPM, p. 141.
¹⁰⁹ See KPM, p. 141.
¹¹⁰ KPM, p. 140.
be decisive is what it sets before our eyes as still unsaid, in and through what has been said.111

For Heidegger, “Metaphysics is not something which was just “created” by human beings in systems and doctrines”.112 Instead, metaphysics is to be understood as an event that “happens” in Dasein as such. Metaphysics is nothing other than the basic happening of the projection of being upon time within Dasein. It is precisely because metaphysics is not a mere fabrication of philosophers that the significance of a particular philosophical text, if it constitutes a genuine expression of metaphysics, cannot be limited to what is said in specific propositions. For Heidegger, it is this event that constitutes the decisive content of Kant’s philosophising even while it remains unsaid in Kant’s philosophy. Heidegger’s aim is to grasp this event of metaphysics in and through Kant’s text. Heidegger, therefore, sets himself the task of making visible this unsaid, “decisive content” (entscheidenden Gehalt) of Kant’s philosophising so as to bring to light what Kant “had wanted to say”.

In his 1927/28 lecture course on Kant, Heidegger provides a slightly more elaborate introduction to this distinction between the said and the unsaid by telling his students that to understand Kant it is not enough to be able to describe Kant’s philosophical position in a literal manner by simply repeating (nachsprechen) or paraphrasing Kant’s concepts and propositions.113 Instead, Heidegger tells his students, to really understand Kant it is necessary to understand Kant “better than Kant understood himself”.114 The idea that hermeneutics aims at understanding a writer better than he understood himself was made famous by Schleiermacher. As Gadamer notes in Truth and Method, this formula has been repeated ever since, and, in its changing interpretation the whole history of modern hermeneutics can be read. Indeed, this statement contains the whole problem of hermeneutics.115

111 KPM, p. 140.
112 KPM, p. 170.
113 PIK, p. 3.
114 PIK, 2.
According to Heidegger, to understand Kant better than he understood himself requires that we go back to the objective ground (sachlichen Grund) of Kant’s transcendental philosophy. We must, Heidegger tells us, return to the real subject matter (Sache) of Kant’s Critique. It is this ground that constitutes the foundation of what Kant meant to say. In so doing, we must enter into a dialogue with Kant (mit ihm zu sprechen) by joining Kant in his struggle to come to terms with the central philosophical problem that forms the basis of Kant’s Critique. Indeed, we can say that Heidegger is concerned not with Kant’s philosophy, understood as a fixed set of propositions and assertions, but with the way in which Kant philosophises, with the dynamic motivations of his thinking. Heidegger’s interpretation also aims at freeing Kant from his place within the tradition established by Neo-Kantianism and, in a sense, to bring Kant back to life:

We are for Kant against Kantianism. And we are for Kant only in order to give him the possibility to live with us anew in a lively debate.

Heidegger also argues that with this procedure, his interpretation creates a maxim of its own which Kant himself would have wanted to know had been applied to the interpretation of his philosophical investigations. To support this view, Heidegger cites a text written by Kant in the context of a dispute with the Leibnizian Eberhard. Kant concludes this text with a remark criticising those historians of philosophy who, despite their praise for past philosophers, continue to, as Kant says, “speak nonsense”. Kant suggests that the cause of this nonsense is that:

They do not discover the intentions of these philosophers while they neglect the key to all interpretations of the pure products of reason on the basis of mere concepts, the critique of reason itself (as the common source for all), and while they cannot see, beyond the etymology of what their predecessors have said, what they had wanted to say.

116 PIK, p. 2.
117 PIK, p. 190.
Within the context of this general claim, Kant suggests that his *Critique of Pure Reason* can be understood as a genuine apology for Leibniz. The apparent implication is that the *Critique of Pure Reason* contains the key for an understanding of what Leibniz “had wanted to say” in so far as Leibniz’s philosophy aims at an account of concepts which are ultimately the products of reason itself.

In the introduction to his 1927/28 lectures on Kant, Heidegger cites a number of additional passages from Kant which provide further clarification and support for Heidegger’s claim that his interpretation remains consistent with Kant’s real intention, even while effacing what Kant actually said. The most important of these is from Kant’s chapter on the Architectonic of Pure Reason. After suggesting that no one would attempt to establish a science without first having an idea on which to base it, Kant points out that the original founder of a science rarely has an adequate understanding of this idea. Instead “this idea lies hidden in reason, like a seed (Keim) in which the parts are still undeveloped and barely recognisable even under microscopic observation”.119 As a consequence, Kant tells us,

\[\text{[since sciences are devised from the point of view of a certain universal interest,]}\] we must not explain and determine them according to the description which their founder gives of them, but in conformity with the idea which, out of the natural unity of the parts that we have assembled, we find to be grounded in reason itself.120

This conceptual scheme is again clearly operating in another passage quoted by Heidegger where Kant makes a few general remarks on how to understand the work of past philosophers in the context of a short discussion of Plato. Kant tells us that it is by no means remarkable to find that we understand a philosopher better than he understood himself. This occurs when philosophers fail to be sufficiently clear about their idea and, as a result, express themselves in opposition to their own intention.121

Heidegger uses these statements to presents his interpretation of Kant as being consistent with Kant’s intentions precisely in so far as it aims at bringing to

119 A834/B862. Quoted in PIK, p. 2.
120 A834/B862. Quoted in PIK, p. 2.
121 A314/B370.
light the original basis or “seed” from which Kant’s Critique is to be understood as having developed. In so doing, Heidegger is turning Kant’s own words against him by arguing that Kant himself lacks a sufficiently clear conception of the idea that is at the heart of his own philosophy. It is at this point that a genuinely productive dispute (Auseinandersetzung) between Kant and Heidegger begins. Of course, Kant clearly did believe that he had succeeded in fully articulating in an architectonic manner the systematic unity implicit in the idea of pure reason that was to ground metaphysics as science. As such, from Kant’s perspective, there can be no room for any touching up or reconstruction. Of course, Kant clearly did believe that he had succeeded in fully articulating in an architectonic manner the systematic unity implicit in the idea of pure reason that was to ground metaphysics as science. As such, from Kant’s perspective, there can be no room for any touching up or reconstruction.122 Heidegger, on the other hand, approaches Kant as one who left much “still unsaid” about the idea upon which his philosophy is based.

The result of this interpretative strategy is that Heidegger presents an interpretation of Kant that is crucially bifurcated. Heidegger argues that Kant was the first person since Plato and Aristotle to make a decisive step towards the explicit founding of ontology. Moreover, in Being and Time, Heidegger argues that Kant was the first and only person who has gone any stretch of the way towards investigating the dimension of Temporality (Temporalität) or has even let himself be drawn hither by the coercion of the phenomena themselves.123

This is what Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics is meant to show in detail. Heidegger’s interpretation tries to demonstrate indirectly that Kant “in a fumbling and rough sort of way, indeed seeks the core of the transcendental deduction in time”.124 At the same time, however, Heidegger argues that “Kant could never achieve an insight into the problematic of Temporality (Temporalität)”.125 Heidegger gives a number of reasons for this failure. In the first place, Heidegger tells us, Kant “altogether neglected the problem of being”.126 In addition, Kant “failed to provide an ontology with Dasein as its theme or (to put this in Kantian language) to give a preliminary ontological analytic of the

123 SZ, p. 23.
124 PIK, 365 p. 247.
125 SZ, p. 24.
126 SZ, p. 24.
subjectivity of the subject".\textsuperscript{127} Instead, Kant took over Descartes’ position quite dogmatically with regard to the \textit{cogito}. Moreover, while Kant brought the phenomena of time “back into the subject” his understanding of the concept of time remained entirely traditional.\textsuperscript{128} The result of this traditional understanding of time and the \textit{cogito} was that “the decisive connection between time and the “I think” was shrouded in utter darkness; it did not even become a problem”.\textsuperscript{129} Heidegger argues that Kant was so committed to the traditional distinction between sensibility and understanding and the priority of reason in metaphysics that he was, in a sense, blind to the essential connection between time and the “I think” despite the fact that Kant’s own philosophical investigations pointed, according to Heidegger, to this connection.

Heidegger is thus claiming both that the basic structure of the problem of \textit{Being and Time}, the fundamentally temporal character of Dasein’s understanding of being, is in some sense operative within the philosophical investigations undertaken by Kant in the \textit{Critique}, while at the same time arguing that Kant himself was unable to gain any actual insight into this problematic. Heidegger even goes so far as to suggest that Kant was in some sense aware that his philosophical endeavours were taking him into a difficult and obscure area and that Kant shrank back from the implications of his inquiry because he was “afraid” of bringing into question the central place of logic within philosophy. Heidegger writes that:

the entire problematic of the \textit{Critique}, in its structure and in the form of its execution, is not suited to the originality of the insight to which Kant arrives in the most decisive segment of the \textit{Critique}, where he unhinges himself and undermines his own foundation.\textsuperscript{130}

Heidegger presents us with an impression of Kant struggling to gloss over the tensions in his own argument, and, in particular, tensions concerning the role of the imagination, synthesis and time, in an effort to maintain the priority of logic within metaphysics. According to Heidegger, however, it is precisely these tensions that indicate the real basis for Kant’s philosophising.

\textsuperscript{127} SZ, p. 24.  
\textsuperscript{128} SZ, p. 24.  
\textsuperscript{129} SZ, p. 24.  
\textsuperscript{130} PIK, p. 145.
The fact that Kant struggled with these difficulties rather than ignoring them completely is taken by Heidegger as a mark of the integrity and genuineness of Kant’s thinking. Heidegger concludes his 1927/28 lecture course on Kant by saying that Kant’s immense significance is to be found in the fact, “one can trust him [Kant] fully. In Kant as in no other thinker one has the immediate certainty that he does not cheat”\textsuperscript{131} This faith in the integrity of Kant’s philosophising is quite fundamental to the possible success of Heidegger’s interpretation. Indeed, it underwrites the significance of Heidegger’s attempt to demonstrate the “happening” of the projection of being upon time from within Kant’s philosophising. The ultimate significance of Kant’s philosophy for Heidegger is determined by the extent to which his philosophising constitutes a genuine expression of this happening of metaphysics in Dasein. The genuineness of Kant’s philosophy underwrites its significance as an articulation of this event, as opposed to an artificial construction. It is perhaps not too far from the mark to say that Kant’s significance for Heidegger is to be found in the extent to which Kant genuinely bears witness to this event. And it is for this reason that Kant is able to become for Heidegger, “a crucial confirmation of the accuracy of the path (Richtigkeit des Weges) which I took in my research”\textsuperscript{132}.

These statements from \textit{Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics} and Heidegger’s 1927/28 lecture course on Kant provide, however, only the most general hints about the philosophical basis for Heidegger’s strategy for interpreting Kant. As we have seen, this strategy of interpretation is ultimately based upon Heidegger’s conception of the nature of philosophy and philosophising. As such, the basis not only for the content, but also for the method of Heidegger’s interpretation is to be found in Heidegger’s fundamental ontology. The significance of this is indicated in a crucial passage from \textit{Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics}:

On the basis of the philosophising “remembrance” of the concealing projection of being upon time as the innermost happening in the understanding of being for ancient and subsequent metaphysics, a task arises for a retrieval of the grounding question of metaphysics: to carry out the going-back into the finitude in human beings which was demanded by this problematic so that in the Da-sein as such, temporality as transcendental primal structure, becomes visible ... The

\textsuperscript{131} PIK, p. 293.
\textsuperscript{132} PIK, 292.
transcendental interpretation of hisoricity on the grounds of temporality should at the same time give a preconception of the mode of being of that happening which happens in the retrieval of the question of being.¹³³

Heidegger describes his interpretation of Kant as just such a retrieval of the grounding question of metaphysics. The task of this retrieval is the opening-up of the original, long concealed possibilities of the problem of metaphysics.¹³⁴ Understood as a retrieval, Heidegger's interpretation has as its primary subject matter the "possible", rather than what Kant himself actually wrote. But what sort of interpretation is this that is primarily concerned with unsaid possibilities rather than what Kant actually wrote?

The terms retrieval (Wiederholung) and possibility (Möglichkeit), as with the terms interpretation (Auslegung) and violence (Gewalt), are terms of art for Heidegger. Their meaning, and with them the meaning of Heidegger's interpretation of Kant, can only be worked out with reference to Heidegger's fundamental ontology. The few statements in which Heidegger sets out his strategy of interpretation in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics do not so much explain Heidegger's strategy of interpretation so much as set the task of recovering the real basis of his interpretation from within Heidegger's own fundamental ontology. This is the primary task of this dissertation.

1.7 Concluding Summary

In this chapter, I introduced some of the key aspects of Heidegger's attempt in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics to use the idea of fundamental ontology as a guide for the interpretation of Kant's Critique. Heidegger tries to demonstrate that the philosophical position developed in the Critique is ultimately motivated by the problematic of fundamental ontology. As we have seen, however, to support this claim Heidegger develops an interpretation that is contradicted at key points by Kant's own text. While Kant's begins with the problem of how scientific knowledge is possible, Heidegger argues that Kant is to be understood as raising the question of the meaning of being. Moreover, while Kant maintains a clear separation between time and the understanding,

¹³³ KPM, p. 169.
¹³⁴ See KPM, p. 143.
Heidegger collapses this distinction and give priority to time over the understanding. Central to this argument is Heidegger’s claim that the function of synthesis in general and the synthesis of the imagination in particular is rooted in time. Yet at no stage does Kant suggest that the function of synthesis is ultimately grounded in the threefold structure of time. The result is that the structure of time is taken by Heidegger as providing the bases for the origin and objective validity of the categories. Indeed, Heidegger argues that transcendental apperception and pure reason are fundamentally based upon the structure of time. This directly conflicts with the fundamental role within metaphysics that Kant gives to his transcendental logic based on the analytic of pure understanding.

The explicit violence of Heidegger’s interpretation immediately raises the question of how Heidegger’s interpretation is to be justified. Heidegger’s own attempt in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* to justify his interpretation is somewhat obscure. Heidegger’s tells us that his interpretation is primarily concerned not with what Kant said but with what Kant “wanted to say”. Indeed, Heidegger argues that the primary subject matter of his interpretation is what Kant left unsaid. Heidegger’s interpretation aims at grasping the “concealed inner passion” that provides the *Critique* with its most fundamental motivation. Heidegger also characterises his interpretation as an attempt to retrieve the concealed “possibilities” inherent in Kant’s *Critique*. 
PART II

PUTTING THE DEBATE BACK INTO CONTEXT

The task of the following two chapters is to demonstrate how an appreciation of the context within which *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* was written can be used to overcome a number of key problems with contemporary attempts to understand and critically assess Heidegger's interpretation of Kant and some related problems with some contemporary interpretations of *Being and Time*. 
CHAPTER TWO

THE CONTEMPORARY DEBATE AND HEIDEGGER’S NEO-KANTIAN CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I introduced some of the more controversial aspects of Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant. In this chapter I will introduce both the contemporary controversy surrounding *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* and the Neo-Kantian context within which *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* was written. In so doing, I will try to demonstrate some of the difficulties that arise when an attempt is made to critically assess Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant.

There is one question that most commentators feel compelled to confront when assessing Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant: should *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* be judged according to the standards of traditional historical research or should it be assessed according to the philosophical adequacy of the substantive philosophical claims made by Heidegger in the course of his “interpretation” of Kant’s philosophy, irrespective of the historical validity of Heidegger’s interpretation? I will argue that neither of these approaches provides an adequate basis for criticising Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant because they fail to grasp correctly the nature of Heidegger’s project in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

In the second section of this chapter, I will introduce the Neo-Kantian context within which Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant was written. The Neo-Kantians were still a dominant force in German philosophy when Heidegger wrote *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* and Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant hardly makes sense without reference to these Neo-Kantians. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* constitutes an attempt by Heidegger to overcome the traditional, Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant’s *Critique*. At stake in this debate
between Heidegger and the Neo-Kantians is not, however, primarily an historical question about how to understand Kant. For these Neo-Kantians, the question of how to understand Kant was unavoidably connected with the question of how to understand philosophy as such. The tension this creates between philosophical and historical questions was a familiar part of Heidegger’s philosophical landscape. This Neo-Kantian context provides a crucial point of reference for any account of what Heidegger is trying to do in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

**THE CONTEMPORARY DEBATE**

**2.2 Kant the Problem of Metaphysics as history**

A central tenet of traditional historical research is that, if we wish to gain the most accurate or “objective” knowledge of the past, we must try to understand the past on its own terms. As such, any assessment of the intention of an historical figure must be made from within the framework of that figure’s own stated principles and objectives as understood within their own historical context. Quentin Skinner provides us with a particularly clear formulation of the central principle of historical interpretation. “No agent” Skinner writes, “can eventually be said to have meant or done something which he could never be brought to accept as a correct description of what he had meant or done”.¹ It is precisely this principle that Heidegger seems to break with impunity. Heidegger’s interpretation is not exclusively oriented towards Kant’s text, understood as an historically self-enclosed object of research. Instead, the basic philosophical tenets of *Being and Time* are quite explicitly used by Heidegger to shed light on Kant’s intention. In this manner, Heidegger appears to give us an account of what Kant’s text looks like when viewed, as it were, through Heidegger’s eyes. Indeed, Heidegger’s tells us that his interpretation has the goal of presenting and confirming the correctness of the idea of fundamental ontology. As a work of history, Heidegger’s interpretation appears to be flawed from the start because it is hopelessly anachronistic. How can the task of clarifying the central idea of *Being and Time* possibly be compatible with the task of clarifying Kant’s intention?

If we accept the ideal of objectivity inherent in traditional methods of historical research, then the task of critically assessing Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is essentially one of comparing Heidegger’s account of what Kant “intended” to say with what Kant actually said and determining whether, on the basis of what Kant actually said, Kant would have accepted Heidegger’s interpretation as a reasonable attempt to paraphrase his philosophical position. Based on what Kant wrote in the Critique and elsewhere, there can be little doubt that there is much in Heidegger’s interpretation that Kant would not have accepted as a reasonable account of what he intended. And there is no shortage of secondary literature dedicated to demonstrating this in detail.

Rudolf Makkreel’s discussion of Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics in the introduction to his book on Kant’s theory of imagination provides a good example of how Heidegger’s interpretation can be criticised on historical grounds. Makkreel’s criticisms centre on Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant’s account of the three syntheses in the transcendental deduction in the first edition of the Critique of Pure Reason. These syntheses are the synthesis of apprehension in intuition, the synthesis of reproduction in imagination and the synthesis of recognition in a concept. As we saw in the previous chapter, Heidegger argues that these three syntheses are ultimately based on the threefold structure of time: past, present and future.

Makkreel demonstrates that Heidegger’s argument is fundamentally incompatible with Kant’s position in the Critique by contrasting Kant’s pre-critical writings with the Critique. Makkreel notes that Kant develops an account of how certain modes of empirical image formation are temporally definable in his account of what had become known as the lower cognitive faculties and what Kant refers to as the formative faculty (Bildungsvermögen) in a series of lectures on metaphysics thought to have been delivered in 1778-9 or 1779-80. These modes of empirical image formation include direct image formation (Abbildung), reproductive image formation (Nachbildung) and anticipatory image formation (Vorbildung). These modes of image formation are characterised by Kant in terms of the past, present and future respectively. While Makkreel notes that

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these three modes of image formation foreshadow the three syntheses of the subjective deduction in the first edition of the *Critique*, in the transition to Kant’s account of the three transcendental syntheses associated with the three subjective sources of knowledge Kant abandons his earlier temporal characterisation.

While Kant does say that the synthesis of apprehension is time forming, Kant does not limit the temporal dimension of this synthesis to the “formation” of the present as suggested by Heidegger. Unlike Kant’s earlier account of direct image formation (*Abbildung*), the synthesis of apprehension spans the entire continuum of time rather than being characterised in terms of one element of this continuum. Equally, the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination is not limited to the past by Kant, but refers to our capacity to revive the past in the present. Even more problematic for Heidegger is that while the first two syntheses have a temporal aspect, the synthesis of recognition in a concept does not. Heidegger argues that this third synthesis involves a process of anticipation that is essentially futural in character. There is simply no basis in Kant’s *Critique* for equating the synthesis of recognition in a concept in any way with the future. The function of this synthesis is to produce a unity among the different representations that go to make up experience.

Heidegger’s interpretation also undermines the significance of the function of the understanding in Kant’s *Critique*. Time for Kant is primarily distinguished in the *Critique* not in terms of past, present and future but in terms of duration, succession and simultaneity. As Ernst Cassirer quite rightly points out, these characteristics of time are made possible because of the operation of the pure concepts of the understanding. It is because of the operation of the categories of substance, causality and reciprocity that experience takes on the definite temporal character of duration, succession and simultaneity. The synthesis of the understanding is for Kant, therefore, fundamental to the character of our temporal experiences.4

For these reasons, Kant would not have accepted Heidegger’s interpretation as an adequate description of his intention. Indeed, it is at least arguable that Kant would see in Heidegger’s interpretation a fundamental failure

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to appreciate crucial aspects of Kant’s move from a pre-critical account of the function of imagination to his fully worked out account in the *Critique* of the transcendental elements of knowledge. The key question, however, is to what extent does such an appraisal of Heidegger’s interpretation constitute a real criticism of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Makkreel treats Heidegger’s interpretation as if Heidegger were presenting us with a standard historical commentary on Kant’s *Critique* and judges it accordingly. The difficulty with such an approach is that such criticisms miss their mark while they ignore Heidegger’s arguments for why *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* should not be read in this manner. Heidegger would be the first to admit that his interpretation is a violent one that attributes to Kant arguments that are inconsistent with many of Kant’s own stated principles. Heidegger accepts that Kant did not himself gain any real insight into the structure of temporality and the connection between the subject and time. Heidegger tells us that the entire structure of the *Critique* is unsuited to the interpretation that Heidegger develops because Kant in fact shrank back from problematic of temporality.

Heidegger’s interpretation actually requires, therefore, that Kant would have rejected Heidegger’s interpretation precisely in so far as Kant was either unable or unwilling to follow the more radical implications that are set out in Heidegger’s interpretation. Heidegger’s interpretation does not simply break the principles of traditional historical research by attributing to Kant arguments that Kant would not have accepted. Heidegger rejects the applicability of these principles to his interpretation. The crucial issue is not whether Heidegger breaks the principles of historical research. He clearly does. The issue is whether Heidegger can show that he is justified in so doing. This is a problem that must be worked out before we can begin to criticise Heidegger’s interpretation on traditional historical grounds. If Heidegger’s strategy of interpretation can be justified, then we may well be able to accept the claims made by historians like Makkreel about the violence of Heidegger’s interpretation while at the same time defending Heidegger’s interpretation. It is for this reason that a simple comparison between what Kant said and Heidegger’s interpretation cannot, of itself, form the basis for a comprehensive critique of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.
2.3 *Kant the Problem of Metaphysics as philosophy*

Those more sympathetic to Heidegger’s project have tended to respond to the problem of the historical adequacy of Heidegger’s interpretation by arguing that Heidegger introduces us to a radically new and genuinely philosophical way of reading the work of a past philosopher. On this view, the question of the adequacy of Heidegger’s interpretation is to be worked out in terms of the adequacy of Heidegger’s philosophical insights and not in terms of the historical adequacy of his interpretation. A particularly clear formulation of this approach is provided by Charles Sherover in his book on *Heidegger, Kant and Time*, which remains one of the most substantial book-length studies of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* available in English. Responding to the objection that Heidegger is writing bad history, Sherover argues that it is simply:

irrelevant to object that Kant is being approached from a new context, subject to possibly strange criteria or that novel implications are seen in what he had worked out. The task of a retrieve is not to chronicle the past but to wrest out of it a deeper comprehension of our present situation and the possibilities for development it yet offers. The real question of concern is whether significant philosophic insights emerge, or new directions for philosophic development are brought forth, from such an encounter between two thinkers. Such a project seeks what is still relevant or suggestive in the work of an original thinker from a bygone era.

This provides a neat summary of Sherover’s understanding of what Heidegger means when he describes his interpretation as an attempt to retrieve the unsaid, concealed possibilities in Kant’s *Critique*. According to Sherover, Heidegger productively appropriates Kant’s *Critique* in a manner that reveals new possibilities for future philosophical development. This means that when reading Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant we must ask whether Heidegger opens up new and productive ways of thinking about the problem of temporality rather than asking whether Heidegger is presenting us with a credible account of what is going on in Kant’s *Critique*.

There is no doubt that this account of how we are to understand what Heidegger is trying to do in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is to be

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preferred to one that simply treats Heidegger's book on Kant as an historical
commentary and treats it accordingly. I will argue, however, that Sherover’s
rather general account of Heidegger’s method of retrieval is ultimately inadequate
both as an account of the method being enacted in Kant and the Problem of
Metaphysics and as a response to the problem of the historical adequacy of
Heidegger’s interpretation. Indeed, as I hope to show, such a general account
has the effect of blurring rather than clarifying a number of crucial
methodological issues.

Sherover’s presents us with the all too vague claim that Heidegger reads
the work of past philosophers from the perspective of his own contemporary
philosophical problematic with a view to developing new approaches to that
problematic. The main problem with such a loose characterisation becomes
apparent when we compare Heidegger’s method of retrieval with alternative
ways of attempting a philosophical reading of texts from the history of
philosophy. Sherover’s characterisation is simply insufficient to enable us to
distinguish Heidegger’s approach from other approaches to the philosophical
interpretation of the work of past philosophers. For example, how are we to
distinguish Heidegger’s approach to interpretation from the sort of
Problemgeschichte developed by Windelband in the nineteenth century?
Windelband interprets the work of past philosophers from the perspective of
systematic philosophical problems with a view to clarifying, if not actually
solving, those problems.

We can equally ask how are we to distinguish Heidegger’s approach to the
interpretation of Kant, as characterised by Sherover, from Anglo-American
attempts at what has become known as the “rational reconstruction” of the work
of past philosophers. Consider, for example, Bennett on Kant. Bennett writes
that:

we understand Kant only in proportion as we can say, clearly
and in contemporary terms, what his problems were, which of

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6 For a discussion of analytic rational reconstruction, see in particular Christopher Janaway
and Peter Alexander “History of Philosophy: The Analytical Ideal” Proceedings of the
“Analytical Philosophy and the History of Philosophy” in Philosophy and Its Past. (eds J
them are still problems and what contribution Kant makes to their solution.\(^7\)

And Strawson praises Bennett for his ability to bring Kant back to life and engage him in debate:

Bennett’s Kant is not a giant immersed, or frozen, in time. He is a great contemporary - a little out of touch admittedly, with recent developments in mathematics and physics - but one with whom we can all argue ... And so Bennett does argue ... and summons to join in the argument, at appropriate moments, those older contemporaries, Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, and Hume, and those younger contemporaries, Wittgenstein, Ryle, Ayer, Quine [...].\(^8\)

To deliberately quote Sherover out of context, Bennett’s concern is not “to chronicle the past but to wrest out of it a deeper comprehension of our present situation and the possibilities for development it yet offers”. Sherover’s characterisation of Heidegger’s strategy of interpretation is largely indistinguishable from an attempt to read Kant from the perspective of systematic philosophical problems in a manner that is directly comparable, in method though of course not in content, to Bennett’s dialogue.

Bennett, Strawson and Heidegger each have very different views on the significance of Kant’s *Critique*. My point is simply that Sherover has failed to distinguish Heidegger’s hermeneutic strategy from those of Bennett and Strawson. As I hope to show in this dissertation, there are fundamental differences between Bennett’s attempt to bring to life the great dead philosophers and engage them in conversation and Heidegger’s own “thoughtful dialogue between thinkers (denkendes Gespräch zwischen Denkenden)”.\(^9\) In Bennett’s dialogue, systematic philosophical concerns completely overshadow all historical and temporal issues so that the dialogue is conducted in what appears to be the timeless atmosphere of an Oxford common room. For Heidegger, however, the temporal dimension is paramount. Heidegger affirms the temporality and with it the historicity of philosophy. To understand Heidegger’s method of retrieval we

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\(^9\) KPM, p. xx.
must understand the way in which, according to Heidegger, the temporal structures that determine Dasein's existence also determine the relationship between philosophy and its past and so govern any attempt to do philosophy in "dialogue" with a past philosopher.

By way of another comparison, consider Rorty's conception of a self-justifying dialogue. Rorty rejects outright the view that the history of philosophy is held together by a common set of problems. In so doing, Rorty rejects not only *Problemgeschichte* but also Heidegger's view that the history of philosophy is to be understood as the history of the forgetting of the question of being. Rorty's self-justifying dialogue is grounded, not on the existence of a shared set of philosophical problems that are taken to drive all genuine attempts to do philosophy, but on the vagaries of historical contingency. For this reason, there will be, in Rorty's view, as many interpretations "which purport to find significant truths, or pregnant important falsehoods, in the work of a great dead philosopher, as there are importantly different contexts in which his works can be placed".\(^{10}\) Rorty's self-justifying dialogue is an attempt read the history of philosophy from the perspective of the present situation in a manner that recognises the unavoidable contingency of both the present and the past.

Despite Rorty's radical rejection of Heidegger's claim for the significance of the question of being in the history of philosophy, Rorty argues, in defence of his own violent and explicitly self-justifying interpretation of Heidegger, that he is doing to Heidegger nothing more than what Heidegger does to philosophers like Kant. This claim is plausible only if we accept that Heidegger's method of retrieval is roughly the same as Rorty's and so amounts to little more than a rather cryptic way of making a general assertion about the need to read the work of a past philosopher from the perspective of contemporary philosophical concerns. The danger this creates is that Heidegger's strategies of interpretation are read as detachable from, and understandable without, the basic principles of Heidegger's fundamental ontology. In so doing, the genuine philosophical import of Heidegger's interpretative strategies is lost.

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The purpose of these brief comparisons is to highlight some of the problems with attempts to discuss Heidegger's strategies of interpretation without reference to their basis in Heidegger's fundamental ontology. The failure to distinguish Heidegger's method of retrieval from Rorty's self-justifying dialogue and analytic rational reconstruction is ultimately a failure to distinguish Heidegger's position from an historicist approach to the problem of philosophy (Rorty) and an ultimately a-historical approach to the problems of philosophy (Bennett). This, in turn, marks a fundamental failure to account for Heidegger's own understanding of the nature of philosophy and its relationship to history.

Sherover's approach also fails to provide an adequate explanation for why Heidegger refers to Kant at all. On Sherover's reading, it is not simply an error to judge Heidegger's interpretation according to the standards of objective historical research. It is also an error to ask, for example, whether or not Heidegger has successfully shown that the problematic of temporality motivated, in some meaningful sense, Kant's *Critique*. Sherover claims that Heidegger "contents himself not with what Kant 'intended' to say but with the import he sees in what Kant did and did not say concerning the problems with which he dealt". On Sherover's reading, Kant's text becomes at best a contingent source of inspiration creatively appropriated by Heidegger in a manner that does not involve Heidegger making any substantial claims about Kant at all.

### 2.4 Kant the Problem of Metaphysics as philosophy and history

Martin Weatherston and Daniel Dahlstrom have recently tried to bridge this gulf between reading *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* as history and reading it as philosophy. Against Sherover, Weatherston argues that "the pertinence of the original Kantian text is demonstrated amply by the fact that Heidegger does try to prove his views through direct appeals to it. These appeals must be examined for their adequacy". Indeed, the very fact that Heidegger not only recognises the possibility that his interpretation of Kant could be in error but ultimately admits that his interpretation of Kant was full of errors constitutes, according to Weatherston, a tacit admission by Heidegger that his interpretation can be criticised on the grounds of its historical adequacy. Weatherston's basic

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claim is that since Heidegger’s account of what Kant “wanted to say” is, at least in part, built upon an interpretation of what Kant did in fact say, any misrepresentation by Heidegger of what Kant actually said at least potentially undermines Heidegger’s interpretation. At the same time, however, Weatherston recognises that:

Since we should also demand that Heidegger clarify the philosophical issues themselves, such an historical approach is clearly not a sufficient means of judging the worth of Heidegger’s treatment of Kant.13

Nevertheless, an historical approach “would at least provide for the reader an alternative access to the problems discussed”.14 Weatherston tries to combine this historical approach with a critique of Heidegger’s philosophical claims by trying to show that inadequacies in Heidegger’s own philosophical position can be exhibited by clarifying inadequacies in his interpretation of Kant. Weatherston tries to demonstrate this by showing how Heidegger’s failure to distinguish clearly between intuitions and forms of intuition in his interpretation of Kant’s Critique can be used to demonstrate inadequacies in Heidegger own arguments in Being and Time.

Dahlstrom also argues that:

only through an understanding of what Kant explicitly says will it be possible to show what he intended or should have been intending to demonstrate. At the same time, the interpreter must make the pretension of giving a more adequate account of the subject matter than Kant does.15

The result, Dahlstrom writes, is that “there are two perspectives that can critically be brought to bear on Heidegger’s commentary”. The notion of what Kant “intended to say” has both an historical and a philosophical aspect: historical because it is based on what Kant did say; philosophical because it pretends to give a more adequate account of the philosophical subject matter itself.

13 Weatherston, Ibid, at p. 278.
14 Weatherston, Ibid, at p. 278.
Dahlstrom and Weatherston are both correct to point out that what Kant actually said must have some bearing on Heidegger’s interpretation. Heidegger does engage in an extremely detailed analysis of the Critique and this analysis is clearly part of an attempt to demonstrate that the problematic of Being and Time is in some sense operative within Kant’s philosophy. Dahlstrom and Weatherston are also correct to point out that Heidegger gives a certain priority to the philosophical subject matter itself. Heidegger does try to argue that Being and Time constitutes a more adequate account of what Kant was trying to say. It would seem, therefore, that both “historical” and “philosophical” issues unavoidably come into play in Heidegger’s interpretation and that, as a result, it is insufficient to read Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics exclusively either as a work of history or as a work of philosophy.

There are, however, serious difficulties with such a “two perspective” approach as an account of how Heidegger’s interpretation should be judged. The problem is neatly summed up by Reinhard Brandt, whose Die Interpretation philosophischer Werke constitutes a particularly forceful clarification and defence of the methods of objective historical research as against what he takes to be the “subjective” methods of writers like Heidegger. Against Heidegger, Brandt argues that:

when Kant ‘puts something before our eyes’ it needs no further words; when, on the other hand, Heidegger does, why then the recourse to the writings of Kant.16

Either we read Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics for the light it sheds on what Kant said, in which case it is bound by the laws of objective historical research, or we read it for the light it sheds on the philosophical subject matter itself, in which case the references to Kant are simply irrelevant. Brandt’s point is ultimately based on the claim that systematic and historical methods of research in philosophy are necessarily distinct. This is not to say that these are not complementary exercises. It is, however, to say that these two tasks have their own separate methods and criteria of success and if we wish to avoid confusion we must clearly distinguish between them. On Brandt’s reading, Heidegger’s attempt to present his own systematic philosophical position by means of an

interpretation of Kant’s intention is inherently contradictory because it fails to recognise the distinct nature of these two tasks.

At this stage the debate about *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* reaches something of an *aporia*. As an interpretation of Kant, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* seems to be flawed in so far as Kant did not and could not have intended to formulate something like Heidegger’s fundamental ontology. Indeed, in a number of key respects, Kant’s *Critique* is fundamentally at odds with Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, not least with regard to the role of logic in metaphysics. If *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is read for its philosophical insights rather than for its insights into Kant, then how are we to account for the fact that this book is dedicated to an attempt to demonstrate that the problematic of fundamental ontology is, in some sense, operative within Kant’s *Critique*?

As I hope to show in the following chapter, the solution to this problem is to be found in the way in which Heidegger radically rethinks the very nature of philosophy and history. In so doing, Heidegger undermines the entire basis of the contemporary debate about *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Before I discuss this, however, I will provide an historical clarification of the tension between historical and philosophical interpretations of Kant through a brief introduction to the Neo-Kantian context within which Heidegger wrote *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

**The Neo-Kantian Context**

While the positive task of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* was to interpret Kant’s *Critique* as laying the foundations for metaphysics in a manner that brings to light the problem of fundamental ontology, Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant was also given the negative task of overcoming the traditional, Neo-Kantian interpretations of Kant’s *Critique*. In particular, Heidegger rejected Neo-Kantian attempts to read Kant’s *Critique* primarily as an attempt to clarify the metaphysical presuppositions of science. In so doing, the
Neo-Kantian tried to clarify the epistemological and logical basis for natural scientific knowledge claims.17

The conflict between Heidegger and the Neo-Kantians reached something of a high point at a conference at Davos in Switzerland in 1929. This conference, which occurred a few months before the publication of Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, included a debate between Heidegger and the Marburg Neo-Kantian, Ernst Cassirer.18 Cassirer was then one of the elder statesmen of German academic philosophy. This dispute between Heidegger and Cassirer occurred at a time when Neo-Kantianism, which had come to dominate German academic philosophy in the second half of the nineteenth century, was being eclipsed by the new philosophical movements of phenomenology (Husserl) and existentialism (Jaspers). Heidegger was a rising star whose philosophical orientation seemed to straddle both of these new movements. The tide was turning against Neo-Kantianism which was characterised by Heidegger as an impoverished philosophical tradition that needed to be overcome if philosophy was to make any headway. In recognition of the way in which circumstance had framed this debate, Cassirer began his presentation at Davos by complaining that Neo-Kantianism had been reduced to "the whipping boy (Sündenbock) of the newer philosophy".19

The dispute between Heidegger and Cassirer represents a particularly graphic moment in a major shift in German academic philosophy. In keeping with the scope of this shift, the debate was extraordinarily wide-ranging. The nature of truth, freedom, and human existence were all directly addressed. From the perspective of those sympathetic to Heidegger, this debate could all too easily been seen as a conflict between the brave new future of philosophy, represented by Heidegger, and a moribund, academic tradition, represented by Cassirer. This is, however, far from the only way of looking at this conflict. Cassirer could just as easily be seen as one of the key representatives of the Enlightenment tradition, who struggled, in vain, for the triumph of reason and with it the cause

19 “Davos Disputation between Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger” KPM, Appendix IV, p. 193.
of human dignity and the possibility of progress. Cassirer, the liberal humanist, can be seen as standing in opposition to Heidegger, the anti-humanist, who heralded the destruction of reason and spoke positively of violence, struggle and the abyss.20

Needless to say, the significance of the issues raised in this debate went far beyond any purely philosophical or merely academic problematic. Germany itself stood on the brink of an abyss. Within four years of this debate, Heidegger had joined the National Socialists and, as the Rector of the University at Freiburg, used his own philosophical vocabulary in tandem with Nazi rhetoric.21 Cassirer, in contrast, was forced to flee Germany. The debate about truth, freedom and the human dignity was soon to be fought out in the streets of Germany. In this respect, it is important to keep in mind that for both Heidegger and many of the leading Neo-Kantians, philosophy was not to be understood as an academic discipline isolated from broader cultural and political concerns.

The Neo-Kantian emphasis on logic and epistemology was driven by ethical and political concerns. They were concerned to defend the rationality and freedom of the individual against what they saw as the growing threat of determinism and ethical relativism.22 The Marburgers in particular were concerned with political questions. Friedrich Albert Lange (1828-1875), the first Neo-Kantian professor of philosophy at Marburg, wrote pamphlets on workers rights.23 Lange’s successor to the chair of philosophy at Marburg, Hermann Cohen, who founded the Marburg school of Neo-Kantianism proper, continued this tradition of combining Kant scholarship with socialist concerns. As the historian Keck describes it, “the Marburg philosophers sought to bring Kant out of the study and into the streets” and “to rally the nation around the ethical idealism of Immanuel Kant”.24 Cohen and his student Vorländor, who also

24 Keck, Tim. “Practical Reason in Wilhelminian Germany: Marburg Neo-Kantian Thought in Popular Culture” in Political Symbolism in Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of George
established himself as a leading Kant scholar, attempted to do this by creating an ethical socialism that united the economic and historical concerns of Marx with Kant’s ethics. This link between Kant scholarship and broader political concerns was not limited, however, to the cause of an Enlightened socialism. By the time of the First World War, one of Cohen’s other students, Paul Natorp, was using Kant to defend the German cause in the war. This culminated in what Keck describes as a “shrilly chauvinistic” claim for Germany’s “sacred cultural mission” developed in Natorp’s *Deutscher Weltberuf* of 1918.25

While it is not possible to discuss this context of broad ethical and political concerns in the brief span of this chapter, it is important to keep in mind that these issues provide a key motivation for the often rather technical philosophical arguments developed by the Neo-Kantians. This broader context also helps to explain why so much sound and fury was generated by what may seem to be rather technical questions about the role of epistemology and logic in philosophy.26

Given the differences in philosophical and political orientation between Heidegger and the Neo-Kantians, it is hardly surprising that in their debate, Heidegger and Cassirer often seemed to be talking at cross-purposes. Indeed, one of the conference participants remarked during the debate that “both men speak a completely different language”.27 What is surprising, especially for those unfamiliar with the history of German academic philosophy during this period, is that both men found in Kant a common vocabulary with which to express their disagreements. The debate began with and was held together by an ongoing concern with the problem of how to understand Kant correctly. This is not simply because Heidegger and Cassirer happened to share an interest in Kant. Through the tradition of Neo-Kantianism, the fundamental questions of philosophy which included questions about the value and dignity of human life, and indeed questions about the identity and destiny of German culture, had come

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27 “Davos Disputation between Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger” KPM, Appendix IV, p. 201.
to be inextricably entwined with the question of how to understand Kant correctly. Heidegger’s attempt in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* to introduce and develop his own philosophical position by means of an interpretation of Kant cannot be properly understood, however, without an appreciation of this Neo-Kantian tradition. One important task of this discussion of Neo-Kantianism is, therefore, to recapture the sense in which Heidegger’s attempt to do philosophy through the medium of Kant interpretation made sense within the context of the Neo-Kantian tradition.

### 2.5 Neo-Kantianism and the Question, “What is Philosophy?”

What exactly is Neo-Kantianism? Neo-Kantianism is extremely difficult to characterise and with Köhnke’s recent study on *The Rise of Neo-Kantianism* the nature, if any, of Neo-Kantianism has itself become a matter of debate. One of the clearest formulations of the orthodox understanding of Neo-Kantianism is provided by Lewis White Beck. Neo-Kantianism is, a term used to designate a group of somewhat similar movements that prevailed in Germany between 1870 and 1920 but had little in common beyond a strong reaction against irrationalism and speculative naturalism and a conviction that philosophy could be a ‘science’ only if it returned to the method and spirit of Kant.

I will begin this discussion of Neo-Kantianism with a brief account of the Neo-Kantian understanding of the nature of philosophy and then in the following section discuss the way in which the Neo-Kantians attempted to combine their philosophical program with a return to the “method and spirit” of Kant.

Neo-Kantianism is best understood as a response to a complex set of events that resulted in a particularly intense “end of philosophy” crisis that gripped German philosophy from the mid-nineteenth century. Central to this crisis was an awareness of the seemingly intolerable contrast between the extraordinary success of the sciences, which went from strength to strength in Germany throughout the nineteenth century, and the ongoing failure of

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philosophy, in particular the philosophy of post-Kantian German idealism, to solve any of the traditional problems of philosophy. In the early part of the century, the conflicts within German idealism between the systems of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel seemed to entirely discredit philosophy as nothing more than an irresolvable, and so futile, struggle between different speculative systems. The monumental search for knowledge of absolute being had, it would seem, come to nothing. In contrast, the extraordinary success of the sciences suggested to many that the only hope for any real progress in human knowledge was to be found in the rigorous application of scientific method. In so doing, it seemed that the problems of philosophy could either be solved or, in many cases simply dissolved, by a thorough going naturalism and positivism that was often closely associated with extreme forms of materialism. The very survival of philosophy as an independent discipline with its own method and clearly defined set of problems was, therefore, brought into question. A particularly important example of this threat was to be found in attempts to replace philosophical self-reflection on the nature of consciousness with scientific investigations into brain physiology. Perhaps the most extreme instance of this is to be found in Vogt’s declaration that

all those capacities that we understand by the phrase psychic activities are but functions of the brain substance; or, to express myself a bit crudely here, that thoughts stand in roughly the same relation to the brain as gall to the liver or urine to the kidneys.\(^\text{30}\)

In this way the enigma of consciousness was reduced to just another object of empirical, scientific research. In the eyes of materialists like Vogt, whose views were influential in the middle of the nineteenth century, philosophy was at best redundant and at worse a contemptible example of idle speculation.

The threat to philosophy did not, however, only come from the natural sciences. The rise of positivism in the historical sciences (Geisteswissenschaften) brought into question the legitimacy of attempts to investigate history and culture in a manner that was unified by and grounded upon a system of values. The attempt to directly apply the methods of the natural sciences.

\(^{30}\) Quoted by Fredrick Gregory in Scientific Materialism in Nineteenth Century Germany. Dordrecht: D.Reidel, 1977, p. 64. This statement is also discussed by Charles Guignon in Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge. Indiana: Hackett, 1983, at p. 41.
sciences in the historical sciences meant that the primarily goal of these sciences was conceived in terms of the value-free accumulation of facts.

This triumph of science represented an extraordinary challenge to philosophy. At the Davos disputation, Heidegger neatly summed up this situation in the following terms:

Since about 1850 it has been the case that both the human and the natural sciences have taken possession of the totality of what is knowable, so that the question arises: what still remains of philosophy if the totality of beings has been divided up under the sciences? 31

If, as Schnädelbach writes, the nineteenth century was “above all else, a century of science”, then, for this very reason, it was also a century in which the question “what is philosophy?” became one of the most pressing of philosophical problems. 32 What exactly does philosophy study? What, if anything, remains for philosophy once the universe has been subjugated into facts and then divided up among the sciences?

Neo-Kantianism was a movement of philosophical restoration that tried to answer these questions in a manner that promised to establish philosophy as a rigorous scientific endeavour in its own right. The Neo-Kantians tried to do this, not by radically divorcing philosophy from the sciences in the manner of romanticism, but by re-establishing philosophy as the critical study of the very possibility of scientific knowledge itself. A straight-forward appeal to “the facts”, whether natural or historical, was taken to be insufficient to justify the claims to universality and necessity which the Neo-Kantians took to be the hallmark of a genuine science. The very success of the natural sciences in discovering the laws of nature gave rise, therefore, to a series of residual logical and epistemological problems which, according to the Neo-Kantians, could not be adequately solved by recourse to positivism or materialism. In so doing, the analysis of the presuppositions, methods and concepts of science was presented as the legitimate subject matter of philosophy. Heidegger goes so far as to

31 “Davos Disputation between Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger” in KPM, Appendix IV, p. 193.
accuse the Neo-Kantians of entirely reducing philosophy to the philosophy of science.\textsuperscript{33}

The Neo-Kantians were not, or course, the only philosophers who were concerned with the threat that positivism posed to philosophy. The question of what happens to philosophy in an age dominated by science was also a fundamental concern for Heidegger. In his inaugural lecture at Freiburg University given in 1929, Heidegger began his discussion of the question “what is metaphysics?” by asking “what happens to us, essentially, in the grounds of our existence, when science becomes our passion?”.\textsuperscript{34} Much of Heidegger’s philosophy can be read as a struggle to come to terms with this question. Heidegger’s 1925 lecture course on “The History of the Concept of Time”, which constitutes his first substantial draft of Being and Time, begins with a discussion of the problems created by this Neo-Kantian transformation of philosophy into a theory of scientific knowledge. From this perspective, Being and Time can be read as a particularly forceful attempt to come to terms with the threat that the dominance of scientific naturalism posed to the existence of philosophy.

Heidegger’s attack on the Neo-Kantians was not absolute. In What Is a Thing?, based on Heidegger’s 1935/36 lecture course on Kant, Heidegger cites the Neo-Kantian defence of philosophy against the threat of positivism as a crucial benefit to arise out of the Neo-Kantian movement.\textsuperscript{35} In their attempt to defend philosophy against positivism, however, the Neo-Kantians had, according to Heidegger, intensified a series of fundamental misunderstandings about the nature of truth, being, and human existence. These misunderstandings had the effect of grossly distorting our understanding of the nature and essential task of philosophy. As we have seen, the traditional problems of philosophy were pared down to problems of epistemology that were narrowly conceived in terms of the specific methods and concepts of the sciences. Moreover, the solution to these problem is to be found in a transcendental logic which replaces the traditional questions of metaphysics and ontology with the question of the

\textsuperscript{33} For Heidegger’s account of this reduction of philosophy to philosophy of science, see HCT, pp. 13-16 and 18-9.


possibility of universal validity. According to one of Heidegger’s most condensed accounts of the essence of Neo-Kantianism, philosophy is reduced to a theory of knowledge, where “knowledge equals judgement, truth equals judgedness equals objectivity equals valid sense”.36 Truth and being, which for Heidegger are defining notions of philosophy, are understood by the Neo-Kantians entirely in terms of the logic of universally valid propositions.

It is this Neo-Kantian conception of philosophy that constitutes the “present situation” of philosophy for Heidegger. And it is against this present situation that Heidegger’s philosophy struggles. The conflict between Heidegger and the Neo-Kantians was, above all else, a conflict over the very nature of philosophy. Heidegger’s own attempt to restore philosophy by re-awakening the question of being involved an attempt to radically rethink the nature of philosophy and its problems in a manner that was profoundly at odds with this dominant Neo-Kantian conception of philosophy. For Heidegger, the most fundamental and truly philosophical inquiry concerns the being of things before they have been constructed into objects of scientific research, whether historical or natural science, and the truth to which such an inquiry aims is an event of disclosure that surpasses both the conceptual categories of the sciences and the logical structure of propositional judgements.

If, as Heidegger argues, the history of philosophy is to be understood as the history of the decline, distortion, and ultimately, the forgetting of the fundamental question of philosophy, the question of being, then the Neo-Kantians represent for Heidegger something of a low point in the history of this decline. The Neo-Kantians were not, of course, the inventors of this fateful misunderstanding of the nature of philosophy. Heidegger argues that the origin of this misunderstanding is to be found in the Greek understanding of being and truth which was crucially compounded by Descartes. Nevertheless, the Neo-Kantian conception of philosophy provides Heidegger with a specific, contemporary instance of what has gone wrong with philosophy. In the words of two commentators, the Neo-Kantians are “the unannounced adversaries

36 GP, p. 201.
throughout *Being and Time*” and “the movement against which Heidegger rebels with all his strength”.37

### 2.6 “Back to Kant”

As the name suggests, Neo-Kantianism represented not just an attempt to defend philosophy against speculative naturalism but also an attempt to do so by means of a return to the “spirit and method” of Kant. It is difficult to over-state the importance of Kant for nineteenth and early twentieth century German academic philosophy. Two examples from Köhnke’s study of *The Rise of Neo-Kantianism* provide a particularly clear indication of Kant’s significance. One is taken from a statement of the “principles of the philosophy of the future” propagated by a congress of philosophers at Gotha in 1847. After noting that the attempts at “riotous philosophising in outlines and aperçus supposedly characterised by genius and constructions of the universe from the standpoint of the absolute have rightly fallen into disrepute”, the statement declares that:

> all independent inquirers of the present day (herein again restoring and returning to the spirit of Kant) agree that a systematic treatment of philosophy requires that an answer to the question of method, in short a solution of the problem of knowledge, must be pursued before we can expect to arrive at any kind of metaphysical principle.38

A few years later, in 1852, a leading nineteenth century historian of philosophy, Johann Eduard Erdmann (1805-1892), highlighted the extent to which Kant had become synonymous with philosophy:

> the Atlas who bears the world of German speculation is and remains Kant. Whoever wishes to know what problems have still to be solved, what demands have still to be fulfilled, will always have to orient himself by his works. Whoever teaches us to know Kant better thus at any rate fosters the study of philosophy.39

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The store of basic concepts and problems that make up the very language of philosophy was to be found in Kant’s texts and these texts so determined the terrain of philosophy that to understand Kant was to understand philosophy.\footnote{Thus Köhnke writes that “Kantian philosophy became the medium of discussion of philosophy in general” \textit{Ibid.} p. 249.} Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant operates firmly within this tradition. Heidegger introduced his 1927 lecture course on Kant by invoking precisely this view of Kant’s significance: “the intention of this course is to achieve a philosophical understanding of Kant’s \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} and that means to learn how to do philosophy.”\footnote{PIK, p. 1.}

The result of this nineteenth century tradition, in which Kant is taken as the atlas of philosophy, is that systematic philosophical positions were worked out in the process of a critical confrontation with Kant’s philosophy. Cassirer characterises the work of his mentor, Hermann Cohen, for example, in the following terms:

\begin{quote}
From within Kant’s system, Cohen decided upon the really fateful question of philosophy: the question of the relationship between philosophy and science. The reconstruction of this system from its original driving force leads us into the midst of the world-historical struggle over the existence of philosophy itself.\footnote{Ersnt Cassirer, “Hermann Cohen und die Erneuerung der Kantischen Philosophie” \textit{Kant-Studien.} 17 (1912) pp. 252-273, at p. 253. The original reads: “Im System Kants entscheidet sich für Cohen die eigentliche Schicksalsfrage der Philosophie überhaupt: die Frage nach dem Verhältnis von Philosophie und Wissenschaft. Die Rekonstruktion dieses Systems aus seinen Ursprünglichen Triebkräften führt uns daher mitten hinein in den weltgeschichtlichen Kampf um den Bestand der Philosophie selbst”.}
\end{quote}

Given this Neo-Kantian context, Heidegger challenged the dominant Neo-Kantian understanding of philosophy in perhaps the most forceful and provocative manner possible: by challenging their interpretation of Kant. Kant’s \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} provided the natural field on which Heidegger’s conflict with the Neo-Kantians over the nature of philosophy was to be conducted. In this way, Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant constitutes a critique of the contemporary situation of philosophy and an attempt to replace it with his own conception of philosophy by means of a re-interpretation of the nature and significance of Kant’s philosophy.
There are, therefore, clear historical reasons why Heidegger's critique of the Neo-Kantian conception of philosophy was presented in the form of a critique of the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant. Above all else, this meant for Heidegger a rejection of an interpretation in which Kant is seen as a "theoretician of the mathematico-physical theory of knowledge". This Neo-Kantian conception of Kant’s significance was exemplified by the work of Hermann Cohen, and while Heidegger does not provide us with an explicit discussion of Cohen’s work in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, his interpretation of Kant is clearly aimed at refuting the main points of Cohen’s interpretation of Kant.

For Cohen, "the establishment of the relation between metaphysics and mathematical, natural science is Kant’s decisive act". The meaning and significance of Kant’s transcendental method in the first *Critique*, according to Cohen, was to be found in Kant’s strategy of beginning with the fact of the mathematical, natural sciences and then asking about the possibility of this fact. Kant’s *Critique* should be read, according to Cohen, as a theory of experience that was built upon autonomous logical principles. The primary significance of this “axiomatic” theory of experience, for Cohen, is that it can be used to provide an absolute logical foundation for a theory of the mathematical, natural sciences. In this movement was to be found the essence of Kant’s so-called Copernican revolution. On this view, the heart of Kant’s *Critique* is to be found in his deduction of the universal, necessary and, as such, essentially atemporal, logical principles that provide the presuppositions for the possibility of the mathematical, physical sciences.

Against the Neo-Kantian claim that Kant’s Copernican revolution situates the question of the possibility of scientific knowledge at the centre of philosophy, Heidegger argues that with this revolution, the question of Dasein’s understanding of being is brought to the fore. Neo-Kantians like Cohen argued that Kant had gained a seminal insight into the need to establish philosophy on an autonomous, transcendental logic which founds the possibility of universally

43 Martin Heidegger, "Davos Disputation between Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger" in KPM, Appendix IV, p. 193.
valid judgements. Heidegger argued, however, that Kant’s Critique in fact “rattles the mastery of reason” and renders “inconceivable” the idea of a transcendental logic that could claim to be autonomous and absolute.46 While the Neo-Kantians argued that Kant exposed the need to replace ontology with transcendental logic, Heidegger argued that Kant had attempted to work out the inner possibility of ontology and revealed the need for an ontology of Dasein that would enable the realisation of metaphysics. Most importantly, while the Neo-Kantians sought in Kant the key to understanding theoretical reason, Heidegger argues that Kant indicated the unavoidably temporal and finite nature of human existence. In short, while Kant’s Critique had long been read as providing confirmation of the Neo-Kantian approach to the problems of philosophy, Heidegger argues that, when properly read, Kant’s Critique confirms the correctness of Heidegger own very different conception of philosophy.47

By conducting this debate about the nature of philosophy by means of a return to Kant, a number of crucial hermeneutic problems come to the fore. The nineteenth century return to Kant did not constitute the reduction of the entire field of German philosophy down to the narrow confines of orthodox Kantianism. The Neo-Kantians did not attempt to philosophise entirely within the limits set by the conceptual framework developed in Kant’s Critical philosophy. Even less was the cry “back to Kant” understood as an appeal to write historical works explaining Kant’s philosophy and his place in the history of philosophy. The question of how to correctly understand Kant was never understood simply as a question of Kant philology. Instead, Neo-Kantianism heralded the development of an exceptional flexibility in the interpretation of Kant’s texts which were stretched to encompass a broad range of philosophical positions. The leading Neo-Kantians were important philosophers in their own right. They returned to Kant explicitly in search of insights that would enable them to resolve what they took to be the fundamental problems of philosophy. The kernel of this interpretative strategy was clearly articulated by Otto Liebmann, who popularised the back to Kant slogan, and claimed that to separate the real substance of Kant’s doctrine from the impure dross.

46 KPM, pp. 170-1.  
47 See PIK, p. 292.
Kant's philosophy was thought to contain the key to a fundamental breakthrough in philosophy. This breakthrough represented the true "spirit" of Kant. The problem was how to isolate the core principles of Kant's critical breakthrough from the detail of his philosophy which was, at best, considered to be of only historical interest. Implicit in this approach is the view that Kant failed to pursue his critical breakthrough with sufficient rigour so that much of his work remained trapped within the limits of his own historical context. These historically conditioned errors were then used to explain the apparent contradictions in Kant's philosophy. The Neo-Kantians understood themselves to be Kantian in so far as they remained true to the "spirit" of Kant, while being "new" in the sense that they went beyond Kant by attempting to correct Kant's own historically determined errors and thereby overcoming the contradictions within Kant's philosophy. In the forward to the first edition of his *Praëludein*, Wilhelm Windelband sums up these aspects of the Neo-Kantian approach to Kant:

All we nineteenth-century philosophers are Kantians. Yet our contemporary 'return' to Kant is not merely a renewal of a historically conditioned form of thought which presents the idea of a critical philosophy. The more thoroughly one grasps the antagonisms between the varying motifs in Kant’s thought, the more readily one is able to find therein the means by which to solve those problems which Kant posed. To understand Kant is to go beyond him. 48

The business of Kant correction was, therefore, fundamental to the entire Neo-Kantian approach to Kant.

This process of correcting Kant involved far more than just tinkering at the edges of Kant's philosophy. Such corrections often involved an extraordinary reworking of Kant's philosophy. A good example of a radical correction is provided by Friedrich Albert Lange who was Cohen's predecessor

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in the chair of Philosophy at Marburg. In a letter from 1858, Lange wrote that he returned to Kant,

to whom so many sterling scholars return so as, if possible, to accomplish wholly what Kant accomplished only in part: the destruction of metaphysics. I regard all metaphysics as a kind of madness possessing only an aesthetic and subjective justification. My logic is calculus of probabilities, my ethics are moral statistics, my psychology rests on physiology; in a word, I try to operate only within the exact sciences. 49

From this perspective, Lange argues in his *History of Materialism* of 1866 that Kant “failed to see that his method for the discovery of the *a priori* in reality could be nothing but the method of induction”. 50 While accepting what he took to be Kant’s fundamental idea that there are propositions whose necessity is given before experience, Lange argued that any attempt to develop a pure deduction of the *a priori* from concepts was doomed to fail. Instead, the nature of the *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experience which determine the absolute limits of knowledge must be established inductively by means of an investigation into the “physico-psychological organisation of man”. 51

Lange’s interpretation was heavily influenced by the famous German scientist Hermann von Helmholtz (1821-1894). In his monumental work on physiological optics, Helmholtz writes of Muller’s theory that the quality of sense perceptions is determined by the sense organs themselves and not by the object, that:

Muller’s law of specific energies was a step forward of the greatest importance for the whole theory of sense perceptions, and it has since become the scientific basis of this theory. In a certain sense, it is the empirical fulfilment of Kant’s theoretical concept of the nature of human reason. 52

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49 Quoted in Köhnke, *The Rise of Neo-Kantianism*, op. cit. at p. 151. This quote is also discussed in Willey, *Back to Kant*, op. cit. at p. 88.


Lange reformulates this point in the following terms:

The physiology of the sense-organs is developed or corrected Kantianism, and Kant’s system may, as it were, be regarded as a programme for modern discoveries in this field. One of the most successful inquirers, Helmholtz, has employed the views of Kant as a heuristic principle, and yet in so doing has only followed consciously and consistently the same path by which others too have succeeded in making the mechanisms of sensation more intelligible.53

Needless to say, this implies a particular radical “correction” of Kant’s philosophy. Lange’s anti-metaphysical approach to philosophy leads him to criticise Kant for having retained remnants of a “Platonic doctrine of pure thought” in his attempt to develop a transcendental deduction of the categories of the understanding. According to Lange, Kant’s great achievement in theoretical philosophy is the discovery that sensibility and intuition are necessary components of any theory of knowledge. Indeed, the distinction between understanding and intuition is completely removed by Lange on the basis that the physiology of the senses provides the mysterious common root hinted at by Kant.

The examples of such radical corrections of Kant could be easily multiplied. Neo-Kantianism encompassed an extraordinary diversity of interpretations each of which was determined by a different systematic philosophical position. This diversity is highlighted by Bochenski’s division of Neo-Kantianism along systematic grounds into seven great schools: the physiological, metaphysical, realist, relativist, psychological, logical, and value-theoretical.54 Each of these schools seemed to find in the “spirit” of Kant a reflection of their own philosophical view-point. In a review of contemporary German philosophy published in the 1891 edition of The Monist, Friedrich Jodl captured the spirit of the age when he wrote:

Back to Kant. Yes. But to which Kant? ... The philosophy of Kant is not so easily reducible to a simple and comprehensive formula. It is a veritable Proteus, that changes at will form and appearance. Every one interprets it, in the end, as he wishes

Kant should have thought. The cry ‘back to Kant’ has become in the ranks of German philosophers a veritable apple of discord.55

The hermeneutic problem is clear. The very decision as to what counts as Kant’s decisive breakthrough which is then taken to constitute the “spirit” of Kant seems to be pre-determined by the specific philosophical view-point of the interpreter.

In this respect, it is interesting to note Cohen’s own attempt to account for this hermeneutic situation. In the preface to his book on Kant’s Theory of Experience, Cohen writes that,

in order to understand Kant in his own words it is indispensable (unumganglich) that one test for oneself the differing interpretations it is possible to draw from them for their value in regard to the theory of knowledge: systematic partisanship is unavoidable ... One can express no judgement concerning Kant without betraying in every line the world one carries in one’s own head.56

The crucial implication seems to be that this conflict of interpretations cannot be resolved simply by recourse to a rigorously faithful, historical interpretation of Kant’s philosophy. This is precisely because we cannot make a decision about the meaning and significance of Kant’s Critique, its true “spirit”, except on the basis of a prior philosophical commitment. And this is exactly what is meant by the claim that “to understand Kant is to go beyond him”. Is this not, however, to recognise a fundamental circularity in the entire enterprise of Neo-Kantian Kant interpretation? The historian Köhnke goes so far as to argue that the Neo-Kantians represent an “egregious example” of the “mere confirmation of the thought of the present day through a judicious selection of historical material”.57

The precise nature of this hermeneutic difficulty becomes even more apparent on a close reading of Cassirer’s dispute with Heidegger. Cassirer sums

56 Hermann Cohen, Kants Theorie der Erfahrung. Berlin: B.Cassirer, 1918, p. xi. The original reads: “Um Kant nach seinem Wortlaute zu verstehen, ist es unumgänglich, die von einander verschiedenen Auffassungen, welche derselbe möglich gemacht hat, auf ihren Wert für die Theorie der Erkenntnis eigens zu prüfen; die systematische Partnahme ist unvermeidlich ... Man kann kein Urteil über Kant abgeben, ohne in jeder Zeile zu verraten, welche Welt man im eigenen Kopfe trägt”.
up the main reason why he rejects Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant in the following manner:

While Heidegger tries to relate and indeed to trace back all faculties of knowledge to transcendental imagination, the only thing left to him is the one frame of reference; namely, the framework of temporal existence. The distinction between phenomenon and noumenon is effaced: for all existence belongs now to the dimension of time and thus to finitude. But this removes one of the foundation stones on which Kant’s entire position rests and without which that position must collapse. Nowhere does Kant contend for such a monism of imagination. Rather, he insists upon a decided and radical dualism, the dualism of the sensuous and intelligible world. For his problem is not the problem of being and time but rather the problem of ‘is’ and ‘ought’, experience and Idea.55

The essence of Kant’s philosophy, according to Cassirer, is to be found in the noumenal meaning of the idea of freedom. This idea “is purely ‘intelligible’” and it “is not bound to merely temporal conditions. It is rather the pure view into the timeless - the horizon of trans-temporality”.59

Nevertheless, Cassirer accepts that historical accuracy alone is insufficient to establish the legitimacy of a genuinely philosophical interpretation of Kant. In his review of Heidegger’s book, Cassirer accepts that “here we are not concerned with historical justice but solely with material and systematic correctness”.60 Cassirer also accepts Heidegger’s claim that every interpretation must be guided by the power of an illuminating idea that enables us to go beyond what Kant said and recover what Kant wanted or should have said. In his review, Cassirer accepts, “that such an idea must be dominant in every philosophical presentation I do not intend to dispute in any way. I myself have never interpreted the history of philosophy in any different sense”.61 Cassirer’s response to Heidegger is based on the following critical question:

59 Ibid, p. 182.
60 Ibid, p. 171.
But does not interpretation become arbitrary when it forces the author to say something that he left unsaid only because he did not want to think it?\(^{62}\)

Cassirer accepts the legitimacy of what he takes to be Heidegger’s method of interpretation and then rejects the content of Heidegger’s interpretation on the basis that Heidegger has misused these maxims of interpretation. But when does a philosophical interrogation and legitimate correction of Kant become a matter of illegitimate violence? How is such a decision to be made? How can this line be drawn in a manner that is not itself arbitrary?

In his dispute with Heidegger, Cassirer himself recognises that the debate about the true spirit of Kant’s philosophy is,

ultimately led to a point at which merely logical discussion and mere analysis of concepts no longer suffice in order to reach a decision. This is a point at which the total attitude by which every philosophy is inspired and determined takes on essential significance.\(^{63}\)

Cassirer characterises Kant’s “total attitude” in the following terms:

Kant was and remained - in the most noble and beautiful sense of this word - a thinker of the Enlightenment. He strove for illumination even where he thought about the deepest and most hidden grounds of being.\(^{64}\)

In contrast, Cassirer tells us, “Heidegger’s philosophy obeys, as it were, a different principle of style”.\(^{65}\) Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, which “sees a primary revelation of the existent in the fundamental mode fear”, and “must put all Kant’s concepts from the very beginning - however much Heidegger attempted to do justice to their purely logical sense - into a changed atmosphere and thus, as it were, cover them up”.\(^{66}\)

Heidegger is acutely aware of the fundamental hermeneutic problem that Cassirer has touched on here. Every interpretation is ultimately based upon a  

\(^{62}\) Ibid, p. 184.  
\(^{63}\) Ibid, p. 191.  
\(^{64}\) Ibid, p. 191.  
\(^{65}\) Ibid, p. 191.  
\(^{66}\) Ibid, p. 191
view about the total orientation and motivation of a philosophy. This understanding of the "total attitude" can never be fully justified on the basis of the specific arguments and orientations that make up that total attitude. The strength of Heidegger's interpretation is to be found precisely in the way in which he brings into question our most basic and seemingly self-evident understanding of the fundamental motivation and direction of Kant's critical philosophy.

2.7 Heidegger's Neo-Kantianism?

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, we can now correct a common misconception about Heidegger's interpretation of Kant and, in so doing, raise a critical question about how Heidegger's method of interpretation is to be understood. Christopher Macann begins a recent article on Heidegger's Kant interpretation by explaining both its significance and controversial nature in the following terms:

Heidegger's *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is a unique contribution to philosophical literature. At the time of writing, it was the only example of an attempt by a philosopher to interpret the thinking of a major historical figure in such a way that the basic structures of the interpreter's own philosophy emerged in the course of the interpretative transformation of the work under examination. No doubt this is why it attracted so much attention in its day and why it has continued to prompt voluminous critical attention right up to the present time.67

Taminiaux is equally effusive about the significance and originality of Heidegger's approach to the history of philosophy. In a general remark about Heidegger's approach to the interpretation of philosophical texts, Taminiaux tells us that "Heidegger happens to be the first one to have taught us how to read 'original' works anew and to seek their phenomenal pertinence beyond the traditional acceptance and the legacy of scholarship we have come to take for granted".68

The problem, however, is that such often repeated claims are simply inadequate as a characterisation of what is distinctive about Heidegger's

interpretative strategies and nowhere is this clearer than with regard to Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant. Heidegger was not the first person to break through the legacy of traditional Kant scholarship in an effort to grasp the real philosophical import of Kant’s *Critique*. He was not the first person to distinguish between historical and philosophical approaches to Kant in a manner that gave priority to the philosophical. Nor was he the first person to grapple with the fundamental problems of philosophy by means of an interpretative transformation of Kant’s transcendental philosophy. He was not even the first person to distinguish between what Kant said and what Kant intended or wanted or should have said. All of these strategies had long been characteristic of Neo-Kantian approaches to Kant.

Cassirer began his dispute with Heidegger by asking “What does Heidegger have in mind when he employs his own phenomenological critique in place of the Neo-Kantian one?”. Cassirer goes on to say,

> the term ‘Neo-Kantianism’ must be determined functionally rather than substantially. It is not a matter of the kind of philosophy as dogmatic doctrinal system; rather, it is a matter of a direction taken in question-posing. As I had not expected to find it in him, I must confess that I have found a Neo-Kantian here in Heidegger.”

With regard to their substantial philosophical positions, the differences between Heidegger and the Neo-Kantians are considerable. However, these differences have come to disguise the often striking similarities between the Neo-Kantian way of doing philosophy by means of a return to and correction of Kant and Heidegger’s own approach to the interpretation of Kant. These similarities are such that Cassirer seems to treat Heidegger’s talk of the need for a “retrieval” guided by an “illuminating idea” as little more than a rather obscure way of expressing familiar, Neo-Kantian maxims of interpretation.

Cassirer’s question raises a serious challenge for scholars like Macann and Taminiaux. If any claim is to be made about the originality or distinctive significance of Heidegger’s method of philosophical appropriation, it must be possible to distinguish this method from that of the Neo-Kantians. An appreciation of the apparent similarities between Heidegger’s productive

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69 “Davos Disputation between Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger” in KPM. Appendix IV, p. 193.
appropriation of Kant and Neo-Kantian attempts to understand the spirit of Kant’s work by going beyond him. It is more precise about what really is distinctive about Heidegger’s violent method of destructive retrieval.

2.8 Concluding Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the controversy surrounding *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. I discussed both the circumstances of Heidegger’s own conflict with his Neo-Kantian contemporaries as well as the contemporary, Anglo-American controversy surrounding Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant. In so doing I raised the following two critical questions. Firstly, what is distinctive about Heidegger’s strategies of interpretation, as compared with, for example, Neo-Kantian methods of Kant interpretation that operated under such slogans as Liebmann’s call to separate the real substance of Kant’s doctrine from the impure dross and Windelband’s claim that “to understand Kant is to go beyond him”? This same question can be raised by comparing Heidegger strategy of interpretation with contemporary approaches to the philosophical interpretation of texts from the history of philosophy such as Analytic rational reconstruction and Rorty’s self-justifying dialogue. I argued that both the Neo-Kantian Cassirer and contemporary commentators like Sherover, Macann and Taminiaux have failed to characterise Heidegger’s approach to the interpretation of Kant in a manner that is sufficient to distinguish Heidegger’s interpretative strategies from these other approaches to the interpretation of texts from the history of philosophy.

The second question concerned whether the claims made by Heidegger in his interpretation of Kant are to be characterised as primarily historical or philosophical in nature. I argued that the contemporary debate about *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* can be understood primarily as a conflict between those who treat Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant as a work of history and those who treat it primarily as a work of philosophy. There is, however, a fundamental conflict between attempts to read *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* either as history or philosophy. Heidegger is not presenting us simply with an historical interpretation of what Kant said or actually intended. At the same time, however, Heidegger is not simply presenting us with a work of philosophy that includes a creative appropriation of Kant’s *Critique*. Heidegger is making substantive claims about the nature of the philosophical problem that motivates Kant’s philosophising and is in some sense operative within Kant’s *Critique*. The legitimacy of Heidegger’s references to Kant cannot therefore be
ignored in favour of a purely philosophical assessment of the philosophical
claims Heidegger makes.

3.1 Introduction

In the present chapter, I will address some of the problems that arise with
attempts to characterize and judge the claims made by Heidegger in "Kant and the
Problem of Metaphysics" as mere "intentional or philosophical" in nature. In this
chapter, I will argue that Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics should be read as
part of a wider trend in Heidegger's thought that overcomes the methodological
division between systematic and historical approaches to philosophy. In so doing,
Heidegger in effect puts the ground under the feet of the contemporary debate over
how to understand and critically assess Heidegger's interpretation of Kant.

Of course, Heidegger's thought can be viewed as a sustained critique of
Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. As we saw in the last chapter of this dissertation,
Heidegger only discusses the nature of the question of interpretation in a few,
shortly fragmented and somewhat cryptic sections in Kant and the Problem of
Metaphysics. It is therefore, therefore, to argue the "core" issues for
Heidegger's project in "Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics". I will do
this by considering the relationship between Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics and
"Being and Time", and by analyzing how Heidegger developed the philosophical
position in sections of "Being and Time" immediately prior to the publication
"Being and Time".

In the first section of this chapter, I will attempt to show how the
contemporary Anglo-American interpretation of "Being and Time" is unconcerned
with the work of Heidegger. I will then argue the importance of assessing the
history of philosophy for Heidegger's understanding of philosophy but also, more
importantly, negotiate the way in which Heidegger's reinstatement of the responsibility of
CHAPTER THREE

READING BEING AND TIME AND THE EARLY HEIDEGGER'S STRUGGLE WITH SYSTEM AND HISTORY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I outlined some of the problems that arise with attempts to characterise and judge the claims made by Heidegger in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics as either historical or philosophical in nature. In this chapter, I will argue that Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics should be read as part of a radical attempt by Heidegger to do philosophy in a manner that overcomes the traditional separation between systematic and historical approaches to research in philosophy. In so doing, Heidegger in effect cuts the ground from under the feet of the contemporary debate over how to understand and critically assess Heidegger's interpretation of Kant.

Of course, Heidegger does not in fact develop this argument in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. As we saw in the first chapter of this dissertation, Heidegger only discusses the nature of his strategies of interpretation in a few, highly fragmented and somewhat cryptic statements in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. It is necessary, therefore, to recover the "unsaid" basis for Heidegger's project in Kant in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. I will do this clarifying the relationship between Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics and Being and Time and by setting out how Heidegger developed his philosophical position in lectures and writings in the years immediately prior to the publication of Being and Time.

In the first section of this chapter, I will attempt to show how the dominant Anglo-American interpretation of Being and Time, as exemplified by the work of Hubert Dreyfus, not only conceals the importance of research in the history of philosophy for Heidegger's conception of philosophy but also, more importantly, conceals the way in which Heidegger's account of the temporality of
human existence, which is fundamental to the project of *Being and Time*, is intended, among other things, to ground Heidegger's method for doing philosophy historically. By means of a critique of Dreyfus's interpretation of *Being and Time*, I will outline how the key elements of Heidegger's analytic of Dasein in *Being and Time* can be read as constituting a discourse on the very method of interpretation that is concretely enacted in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

In the second section of this chapter, I will draw on Heidegger's recently published lectures and writings from the 1920s to provide historical support for my approach to the interpretation of *Being and Time*. In his early lectures, Heidegger repeatedly characterises the distinctive nature of his own philosophical position as one that radically overcomes the distinction between systematic and historical approaches to research in philosophy. Heidegger's discussion of this problem in his early lectures and writings provides a crucial clue for understanding how Heidegger thought that he could overcome the apparent contradiction between systematic and historical criteria for judging the success of his interpretation. If we are to address this methodological problem in a way that is adequate to Heidegger's own philosophical position, it must be approached, not as a specific problem of textual interpretation or historical understanding, at least not as these problems have been traditionally formulated, but as a problem fundamental to the very nature of philosophical method. The discussion of the early Heidegger in this section will, therefore, provide the basis for a transition from a discussion of the problem of how to understand and critically assess Heidegger's strategy of interpretation in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* to a discussion of how Heidegger's position in *Being and Time* can be read as providing the solution to the problems raised in the previous chapter. In the process of clarifying this methodological problematic, we can begin to develop a more sophisticated and historically informed account of what is genuinely distinctive about Heidegger's strategy of doing philosophy by means of an interpretation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.

**Dreyfus's commentary on *Being and Time***

Until relatively recently there was a dearth of historical information about the path Heidegger took in developing the arguments presented in *Being and Time*. Heidegger did not publish anything of significance between his Habilitation thesis of 1916 and the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927.
Heidegger’s magnum opus was heralded only by rumours about his extraordinary ability as a teacher. In Arendt’s now famous phrase, in the eight years prior to the publication of *Being and Time* Heidegger’s name travelled all over Germany like “the rumour of a hidden King”.1 Arendt characterised Heidegger’s fame before 1927 in the following terms:

> The rumour about Heidegger put it quite simply: thinking has come to life again; the cultural treasures of the past, believed to be dead, are being made to speak, in the course of which it turns out that they propose things altogether different from the familiar, worn-out trivialities they had been presumed to say. There exists a teacher; one can perhaps learn to think.2

Heidegger’s approach to the history of philosophy, his attempt to bring the work of past philosophers back to life and in so doing to bring philosophy itself to life, is presented here as the central aspect of Heidegger’s significance as a philosopher. Yet this emphasis on the need to bring the history of philosophy back to life is by no means evident from *Being and Time*. *Being and Time* appears as a highly systematic work that provides surprisingly little information about the importance of the history of philosophy for Heidegger’s own method for doing philosophy. And it provides even less information about the specific historical context within which Heidegger’s philosophy is to be understood. The genesis of *Being and Time*, its relationship to the history of philosophy and with it the proper context within which *Being and Time* is to be understood was to remain a matter of speculation and rumour, at least for those who did not attend Heidegger’s lectures or have privileged access to his archive. To this extent, *Being and Time* itself conceals its own basic orientation.

This dearth of information, combined with the tendency among many Anglo-American scholars to down-play the significance of history for understanding philosophical arguments, explains, at least in part, the extraordinarily a-historical approach to the interpretation of *Being and Time* taken by many Anglo-American scholars. Chief among these is Dreyfus’s enormously influential commentary on *Being and Time*.3 For Dreyfus, the central

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The significance of *Being and Time* is to be found in Heidegger’s anti-Cartesian claim that human existence is to be understood primarily in terms of its embeddedness in shared social practices. These shared social practices provide the conditions of intelligibility for all our dealings with, and understanding of, the world. If we are to understand properly the central problems of philosophy, be it the nature of truth, meaning or knowledge for example, this must be done on the basis of a recognition of the primacy of our shared social practices. In this way, Heidegger is taken to be developing an account of the central problems of philosophy that is of obvious relevance to Anglo-American philosophers influenced by the later Wittgenstein and by the pragmatist tradition.

I do not intend to dispute this aspect of Dreyfus’s interpretation; although, in the discussion of *das Man* in the following chapter I will develop a critique of Dreyfus’s interpretation of Heidegger’s notion of *das Man*. There can be little doubt that Dreyfus has played an enormous role in introducing Heidegger to the English speaking world. My primarily criticism is that Dreyfus has provided an extremely one-sided introduction to Heidegger that disregards the central importance of the problem of temporality and with it the problem of history within Heidegger’s philosophy. As a result, Dreyfus also disregards the importance of the history of philosophy for Heidegger’s way of doing philosophy. This results in a serious distortion of Heidegger’s entire understanding of the nature of philosophy.

Without an adequate appraisal of the importance of history for Heidegger, Dreyfus is left without the resources to develop a satisfactory interpretation for much of Heidegger’s philosophical project. This leads Dreyfus to dismiss many of Heidegger’s arguments as inadequate or, even worse, simply to ignore key aspects of Heidegger’s philosophical position. As I hope to show, Dreyfus’s interpretation of *Being and Time* has the effect of concealing the very elements of Heidegger’s philosophical position that are needed to fully grasp the relationship between, on the one hand, Heidegger’s understanding of philosophy and philosophical method as outlined in *Being and Time* and, on the other hand, his method for interpreting Kant.

Two omissions in Dreyfus’s interpretation are particularly important in this regard. Firstly, like many Anglo-American commentators, Dreyfus makes no attempt to interpret the published portion of *Being and Time* from within the context of Heidegger’s original project. Secondly, Dreyfus fails to come to
terms with the fundamental significance of temporality for Heidegger's philosophical position. This, in turn, is indicative of a failure to grasp Heidegger's very conception of the nature of philosophy and philosophical method.

3.2 Heidegger's original plan for Being and Time

The book that we now know as Being and Time, that astonishing “torso” to use Spiegelberg's famous description,\(^4\) constitutes only the first two instalments of what was intended to be a much larger work. According to Heidegger's original design, Being and Time was to be divided into two parts. The first part was to comprise an “interpretation of Dasein in terms of temporality, and the explication of time as the transcendental horizon for the question of being”.\(^5\) This first part was to be divided into three divisions of which only the first two were published in what is now known as Being and Time. The second part, which was never published, was to set out “the basic features of a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology, with the problematic of Temporality as our clue”.\(^6\) This was also to be divided into three divisions that were to address the work of Kant, Descartes and Aristotle respectively. With these interpretations, Heidegger's goal was not to provide three separate interpretations of the work of three great dead philosophers but rather to set out the decisive elements of a unified interpretation of the entire history of western philosophy, understood as a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology.

The first division of this “phenomenological destruction” was to cover “Kant's doctrine of schematism and time, as a preliminary stage in a problematic of temporality”.\(^7\) Heidegger explains in the preface to the first edition of Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics that this book “arose in connection with a first working-out of Part Two of Being and Time”.\(^8\) In this dissertation I will treat Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics as a draft for the first division of the second part of Being and Time. This cannot be done entirely without

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\(^5\) SZ, p. 39.

\(^6\) SZ, p. 39.

\(^7\) SZ, p. 40.

\(^8\) KPM, p. xix.
qualification. In the preface to the first edition of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* Heidegger says that:

In Part Two of *Being and Time*, the theme of the following investigation was treated on the basis of a more comprehensive manner of questioning. By contrast, a progressive interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* was rejected there. The present publication should serve as a fitting supplement to that [book].

Heidegger seems to be suggesting here that two quite distinct ways of questioning were to be pursued in these two works. The entire structure of Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is, however, informed by a concept of method that is implicit in *Being and Time*. Heidegger’s highly technical use of such terms as “repetition”, “happening”, and “possibility” in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* indicate that the distinctive nature of his strategies of interpretation cannot be understood, much less defended, without reference to the broader tasks of *Being and Time*. It is precisely in so far as an appreciation of the conception of philosophical method that is implicit in *Being and Time* is necessary for an understanding of the specific interpretative strategies employed in his interpretation of Kant that the real substance of this link between *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* and *Being and Time* can be clarified.

I will, therefore, at least provisionally, interpret the relationship between *Being and Time* and *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* from the perspective of the unity of the two parts of this larger project envisioned by Heidegger. To ask why Heidegger thought that both of these parts were integral to this project is to ask why Heidegger thought that research in the history of philosophy is integral to philosophical research. And it is by asking about the guiding methodological principles that determine the architectonic structure and unity of Heidegger’s original philosophical project that we are able to provide a substantial clarification of the grounds for the method of interpretation employed in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* understood, not as an isolated instance of textual interpretation, but as integral to Heidegger’s conception of philosophical research. Conversely, by disregarding Heidegger’s original project, Dreyfus conceals the significance of an interpretation of the history of

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9 KPM, P. xix.
philosophy for Heidegger’s entire philosophical project in *Being and Time*. Dreyfus gives us a view of Heidegger’s philosophy in which research into the history of philosophy appears to be external to *Being and Time* and with it external to Heidegger’s entire way of doing philosophy. This not only conceals the philosophical basis for Heidegger’s method of interpretation in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Heidegger’s own conception of *Being and Time* and with it his conception of the nature of philosophy and its method is thereby distorted.

An important indicator of the inadequacy of Dreyfus’s presentation of Heidegger’s understanding of philosophical method is to be found in Dreyfus’s extraordinarily selective commentary on the second chapter of Heidegger’s introduction to *Being and Time*, which Dreyfus correctly characterises as Heidegger’s “methodological introduction”. The problem is that Dreyfus completely fails to discuss the very section where Heidegger provides his most sustained account of “the task of destroying the history of ontology”. It is precisely in this section that Heidegger provides a rough outline of his argument for why a destruction of the history of ontology is an essential element of philosophical research.

### 3.3 Heidegger’s methodological introduction

Heidegger begins his methodological introduction to the task of destroying the history of philosophy by stating that “all research”, which includes philosophical research, “is an ontical possibility of Dasein”. This claim is of fundamental importance for Heidegger’s entire account of the nature of philosophy and philosophical method. According to Heidegger, it follows from this that the basic structures that determine the way in which humans exist also determine the possibilities open to philosophy. As Heidegger says in his 1927 lecture series on *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, “the possibilities and destinies of philosophy are bound up with man’s existence, and thus with temporality and with historicity”. Indeed, for Heidegger, philosophy constitutes a quintessential expression, or more properly actualisation, of human existence. This means, in effect, that the entire analytic of Dasein that makes up

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11 *SZ*, § 6.
12 *GP*, p. 20.
the first two divisions of *Being and Time* and which sets out the basic structures of human existence, constitutes a discourse on method. Here “method” is not be understood in the manner of Descartes as a canon of rules for thought. Instead, “method” in the Heideggerian sense is to be understood as a clarification of the structures which determine the way in which philosophy, understood as a way of existing, can be done. In so doing the very distinction between subject matter and method in philosophy breaks down. Moreover, when we ask about how the structures of human existence determine the possibilities open to philosophy, the temporality and historicity of human existence becomes central to the question of philosophical method.

Immediately after stating that “all research is an ontical possibility of Dasein”, Heidegger goes on to provide a thumb-nail sketch of how this claim underpins and explains key elements of the entire architectonic structure of *Being and Time* as it was originally planned:

Dasein’s being finds its meaning in temporality. But temporality is also the condition which makes historicity (Geschichtlichkeit) possible as a temporal kind of being which Dasein itself possesses, regardless of whether or how Dasein is an entity ‘in time’. Historicity, as a determinate character, is prior to what is called ‘history’ (world-historical happening). ‘Historicity’ stands for the state of being that is constitutive for Dasein’s ‘historical-happening’ (Geschehens) as such.

It is on the basis of this “historical-happening”, Heidegger tells us, that “Dasein ‘is’ its past in the way of its own being, which, to put it roughly, ‘happens’ (geschieht) out of its future on each occasion”. It is because the basic structure of human existence (Dasein) is fundamentally temporal, that human existence can be characterised in terms of its historicity and it is because of this historicity that the question of the meaning of being “gives us the assignment of inquiring into the history of that inquiry itself, that is, of becoming historiographic (historisch)”.

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14 SZ, pp. 19-20. I use the more familiar term “historicity” to translate “Geschichtlichkeit” rather than the term “historicality” as used in the Macquarrie and Robinson translation.

15 SZ, p. 20.

16 SZ, pp. 20-21. I use the term “historiography” to translate Heidegger’s use of the term “Historie” where it refers to the act of writing history rather than “historiologic” as used in the Macquarrie and Robinson translation.
any such historical questioning. It is by means of this historical inquiry that we “positively make the past our own” and in so doing “bring ourselves into full possession of the ownmost possibilities of such inquiry”. That is to say, this entire process must be worked through before we can properly grasp the real nature of philosophical inquiry, understood as an inquiry into the meaning of being. When interpreted in accordance with the temporal structures of authentic human existence, this appropriation of the past is to be understood as a “retrieval”. Retrieval is one of the key elements of Heidegger’s account of the temporal structure of authentic human existence. Heidegger’s own retrieval of Kant is, therefore, to be understood as a concrete realisation of these temporal structures.

Heidegger characterises Being and Time from the very beginning as an attempt at a “retrieval” of the question of being which, since retrieval is a core part of Heidegger’s temporal schema, means that Heidegger’s entire effort to raise the question of being is governed from the very beginning by his account of temporality. The analytic of Dasein carried out in the first part of Being and Time, in particular the account of Dasein’s temporality and historicity, is intended, therefore, to bring us to the point where we can understand the nature and necessity of Heidegger’s historical inquiry in the projected second part, an inquiry that includes his interpretation of Kant. In very broad terms, this explains why, the question of the meaning of being must be carried through by explicating Dasein beforehand in its temporality and historicity; the question thus brings itself to the point where it understands itself as historiographic.

The temporal structure of human existence grounds Heidegger’s entire approach to philosophy understood as the retrieval of the question of being. And it is this line of argument that needs to be unpacked if the real significance and unique methodological character of Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is to be properly clarified. Yet if Being and Time is read with Dreyfus’s eyes, this entire line of argument is lost from view.

17 “positiven Aneignung der Vergangenheit” SZ, p. 21.
18 See KPM p. 168 where Heidegger highlights the fact that “the fundamental-ontological laying of the ground for metaphysics in Being and Time must be understood as retrieval”.
19 SZ, p. 21.
3.4 Temporality

It is only because Dreyfus fails to recognise the *methodological* significance of Heidegger’s account of the temporality and historicity of Dasein that his second, far larger omission does not appear from the start as a gross distortion. Dreyfus dismisses the entire second division of *Being and Time*, which contains Heidegger’s discussion of death, historicity and temporality. According to Dreyfus, the second division can be divided into two “somewhat independent enterprises”. The first task is interpreted by Dreyfus as broadly “existentialist” in character while the second task aims at setting out the temporal structures of human existence. The bulk of Dreyfus’s interpretation of the second division is presented in an appendix co-authored with Jane Rubin. In striking contrast to the rather cursory treatment of the influence of past philosophers on the development of Heidegger’s ideas in his commentary on the first division of *Being and Time*, Dreyfus’s interpretation of the second division is conducted through a detailed interpretation of the influence of Kierkegaard on Heidegger. This interpretation is necessarily speculative, of course, since Heidegger rarely makes any explicit reference to Kierkegaard in his work. Kierkegaard’s Christian existentialism is used by Dreyfus to explain Heidegger’s talk of such matters as death, fallenness, and authenticity. At the same time, however, Dreyfus uses this characterisation of Heidegger’s position to dismiss Heidegger’s arguments as an unfortunate existentialist digression. Heidegger’s problem, on this view, is that he has dogmatically and quite unnecessarily imported a Christian conception of society and sinfulness into his philosophy.  

If, however, in setting out these structures Heidegger is trying to lay out the structures that predetermine what philosophy is and how it can be done, then this constitutes far more than just an easily excisable existentialist digression. It simply may not be possible to develop a coherent interpretation of Heidegger’s understanding of philosophy without providing a substantial account of Heidegger’s use of such notions such as fallenness and authenticity. The real challenge facing Heidegger is to demonstrate how he can argue that the existential structures of human existence pre-determine the possibilities open to philosophy without thereby reducing philosophy to philosophical anthropology. In the following chapters, I hope to show how it may be possible to develop a non-
existentialist interpretation of Heidegger's use of terms such as "fallenness" and "authenticity".

Given that Heidegger explicitly states that the provisional aim of Being and Time is "the interpretation of time as the possible horizon for any understanding whatsoever of being", the issue of temporality is also not easily side-lined. Dreyfus recognises that Heidegger's account of temporality is "an essential part of Heidegger's project". He nevertheless dedicates little more than three pages of his book to a discussion of this issue. Dreyfus's justification for this cursory treatment of temporality is that Heidegger's account of temporality,

leads him so far from the phenomenon of everyday temporality that I did not feel I could give a satisfactory interpretation of the material. Moreover, the whole of Division II seemed to me much less carefully worked out than Division I and, indeed, to have some errors so serious as to block any consistent reading.

The result is that Dreyfus attempts an interpretation of Being and Time in which the themes of historicity and temporality do not play a fundamental role. It is true that Heidegger wrote the second division in an extremely short period of time, under pressure from the Ministry of Education to publish more than just the first division of Being and Time before he could be offered the chair of philosophy at Marburg, although Heidegger was ultimately awarded a chair at Freiburg. If I am right, however, in arguing that Heidegger's account of the temporal structure of human existence provides the schema that determines Heidegger's entire method for doing philosophy, understood as a retrieval of the question of being, then Heidegger's account of temporality cannot be rejected without disregarding the guiding methodological principle for Heidegger's entire philosophical project. By disregarding Heidegger's account of temporality, Dreyfus is trying to develop an interpretation of one aspect of Heidegger's work that is radically at odds with

21 SZ, p. 1.
23 Ibid, pp. 243-245.
Heidegger’s entire conception of the nature of philosophy and philosophical method.

Dreyfus is simply unable to make sense of Heidegger’s conception of temporality because Heidegger radically distinguishes his notion of temporality from the ordinary conception of time. When properly understood, the relationship between *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* and *Being and Time* contains a crucial clue for making sense of Heidegger’s notion of authentic temporality. Precisely in so far as the basic structures of temporality govern the strategies of interpretation worked out in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, these strategies can be used to provide concrete instances with which to clarify the at times rather obscure account of temporality found in *Being and Time*. In this way, we can begin to understand the sense in which Heidegger’s discussion of temporality can be understood as much more than a rather eccentric and seemingly highly subjective theory of time.

**System and History in the Early Heidegger**

With the publication of Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe*, scholars are now confronted with an extraordinary wealth of information about Heidegger’s path to *Being and Time*. As a result, we are in a much better position to understand what Heidegger was trying to do in *Being and Time* and, in so doing, to overcome the limitations of Dreyfus’s interpretation. These lectures have been impressively surveyed in Kisiel’s monumental work on *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time*. The bulk of these lectures show Heidegger trying to formulate his own philosophical position in the course of a philosophical interpretation of the major figures in the history of western thought. The sheer scope and complexity of the historical influences on Heidegger means that there are now almost too many contexts within which to interpret *Being and Time*. A particularly clear summary of this plurality of contexts is provided by Crowell who, in a review essay on Kisiel’s *The Genesis of Being and Time*, writes that Kisiel gives us a “Heidegger for all seasons”,

there is the Lask-Heidegger who develops a logic of philosophy by way of the reflexive categories; there is the Dilthey-Heidegger who adopts the term ‘life’ and seeks an ontology of historicality; there is the Paul-Heidegger whose ‘actualization-historical’ situation leads paradigmatically to the kiaiological core of *Being and Time*; there is the Aristotle-Heidegger whose triad - poeisis, phronesis, techne - breaks through the theoretism of the ontological tradition; and finally
there is the Kant-Heidegger whose ‘horizontal schema’ of temporality is the central innovation of [Being and Time] as published.\textsuperscript{26}

It is well beyond the scope of this section to discuss all of the influences that are important for an understanding of Heidegger’s account of the relationship between the history of philosophy and philosophy. Even less can we hope to address the possible conflicts that arise between these different ways of gaining access to Heidegger’s problematic by means of a discussion of different past thinkers. In this section, I will show how Heidegger’s fundamental philosophical concerns in the lead up to Being and Time resulted in Heidegger developing a conception of philosophy that promised to overcome the distinction between systematic and historical approaches to philosophy. This will then be used to provide the historical support for the interpretation of Being and Time developed in the following two chapters. It is important to keep in mind that in what follows I am not suggesting that Heidegger’s fundamental ontology was developed specifically to overcome the separation between systematic and historical approaches to philosophy. The significance of the question of the meaning of being cannot be limited in this way. I am suggesting, however, that overcoming the distinction between systematic and historical approaches to philosophy was presented by Heidegger as an important outcome of his approach to philosophy. And it is this outcome that gives Heidegger’s way of doing philosophy historically its distinctive character.

3.5 \textit{Wissenschaft} and \textit{Weltanschauung}

Perhaps the best short hand way to characterise\textsuperscript{27} Heidegger’s philosophical development in the ten years leading up to Being and Time is as an attempt to unify the concerns of the so-called “philosophy of life” movement with the ideal of philosophy as a rigorous science. In so doing, Heidegger tried to show that philosophy could establish itself as a genuinely rigorous enterprise.

\textsuperscript{26} Steven Crowell. “Heidegger’s Phenomenological Decade” \textit{Man and World.} 28 (1995) pp. 435-448, at p. 441. Crowell goes on to criticise Kisiel for neglecting the “Husserl-Heidegger” and argues that Kisiel’s neglect of Husserl results from Kisiel’s effort to unearth new information about the historical influences on Heidegger’s work. The already well known influence of Husserl is thereby underplayed in Crowel’s view.

without, in the manner of Neo-Kantianism, primarily orienting philosophy to the analysis of the concepts and methods of the established natural and historical sciences. The conflict between *Wissenschaft* and *Weltanschauung*, science and worldview, was a dominant feature of the German intellectual terrain at the turn of the century. The work of Dilthey is of particular importance for an appreciation of Heidegger’s own response to this problem. For Dilthey, life is the starting point for both the human sciences and philosophy. Dilthey’s work is dominated by the struggle to understand life. What is meant by the term “life”? In Dilthey’s words,

> [The] term ‘life’ expresses what is to everyone the most familiar and intimate, but at the same time the darkest and even most inscrutable. What life is, is an insoluble enigma. All reflection, inquiry, and thought arises from this most inscrutable enigma.

This characterisation of life is not as uninformative as it may first appear. The most important feature of the term life as it is presented by Dilthey is that life is much richer, broader and more fundamental than thought. Moreover, thinking is said to arise out of life. That is to say, thinking is always motivated by concerns that have their origin in life. Reason cannot be properly understood, therefore, without grasping the broader structures of life which provide reason with its true motivation.

This focus on life constitutes a critique of what was seen as the limitations associated with the traditional philosophical focus on theoretical knowledge in a manner that privileged the model of mathematical, natural science. For Dilthey, Kant provides the classic example of this orientation. The problem with Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, according to Dilthey, is that it begins from the viewpoint of logic and mathematics,

> Formal logic, in the time of Kant, treated the final logical abstractions, the laws and forms of thought, as the ultimate

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logical justification of all scientific statements. The laws and forms of thought, above all judgement, from which he derived the categories, contained for Kant the conditions of knowledge. To them he added those which, according to him, made mathematics possible. The magnitude of his achievement lay in his complete analysis of mathematical and scientific knowledge.\footnote{31}

Kant's account of the structures of human pure reason is, however, completely inadequate when we inquire into the theoretical structures that underpin historical knowledge, and, according to Dilthey, this betrays a crucial failing in Kant's position. Kant has completely neglected the sphere of historical life and in so doing failed to give an adequate account of the experience of life. This means that, if we wish to establish an adequate theory of historical knowledge, we must construct an entirely new set of categories, the categories of life. This is precisely what Dilthey tries to do.

But Dilthey's, never completed, critique of historical reason does not simply stand next to Kant's \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} as an epistemology of historical knowledge in contrast with an epistemology of natural, scientific knowledge. To characterise these works simply as complementary epistemologies would be to misinterpret both Kant and Dilthey. Dilthey promises both a fundamental critique and development of Kant's \textit{Critique}. As Dilthey famously declared at the beginning of his \textit{Introduction to the Historical Sciences}:

\begin{quote}
No real blood flows in the veins of the knowing subject constructed by Locke, Hume and Kant; it is only the diluted juice of reason, a mere process of thought. Cognition seems to develop concepts such as the external world, time, substance and cause from perception, imagination and thought. However, my historical and psychological studies of man as a whole led me to explain cognition and its concepts in terms of the powers of man as a willing, feeling and imagining being. So I have used the following method: I have related every constituent of present-day, abstract scientific thought to the whole of human nature (as experience and the study of language and history reveal it) and sought to connect them.\footnote{32}
\end{quote}

\footnote{31} Dilthey, \textit{Selected Writings}. op. cit. p. 208. 
\footnote{32} \textit{Ibid}. p. 162.
Philosophy becomes a "mere process of thought" when it no longer recognises that its questions, problems and basic concepts are derived from this broader sphere of lived-experience. Properly understood, philosophy is both motivated by concerns which derive from life, that is to say, philosophy operates in the service of life, and is a struggle to understand life. Philosophy is, therefore, a struggle for self-understanding which is, in a sense, the struggle of life to understand itself. Dilthey tries to break through the limitations that arise from the traditional focus of philosophy on reason and recover the true origins of a rigorous philosophy in life. In so doing, Dilthey's work promises to provide a more fundamental ground for the narrower and more derivative inquiry undertaken in Kant's theoretical philosophy.

It is important to keep in mind that for Dilthey, life is not something biological that can be explained using natural scientific methods. Life is something that is immediately experienced and intuitively known. Life is something that is lived. And because life is already intuitively known and experienced, life can be genuinely understood, whereas nature, which includes human biology, can only ever be explained. This does not mean, however, that life is something that can only be understood in an entirely personal and merely subjective manner. Life contains within it: our language, culture and history. When used in this extremely broad sense by Dilthey, the subject matter of life is identical with history, "history is merely life viewed in terms of the continuity of mankind as a whole".\(^{33}\) To equate life with history requires that we understand by history something more than just the object of traditional historical research. History is not something to be found only, or even primarily, in books about the past. History is something within us. We are our history and it is only because we are our history that we can understand history as it is written.\(^{34}\) Dilthey uses the term "historicity" to refer to this distinctive sense of history as something that we ourselves are. He does not thereby dissolve the individual into historical context. We do not merely passively understand our historical context, we also actively contribute to this context.

To recover the essential connection between philosophy and life is at the same time to recover the essential connection between philosophy and history.


\(^{34}\) *Ibid*, p. 66.
precisely because philosophy arises out of the historical processes of life. Once this is recognised, we get a glimpse of the historicity of philosophy. With this line of argument, however, Dilthey runs the risk of reducing philosophy to the relativity of historical worldviews. To understand philosophy as nothing more than the expression of a particular historical worldview is to betray philosophy's traditional aspiration for universal validity. Dilthey was acutely aware of this problem:

Everything historical is relative; when we assemble it in our minds it seems to work towards dissolution, scepticism and impotent subjectivity. Thus this period poses a particular problem. What is relative must be related more profoundly with what is universally valid. The emphatic understanding of the whole past must become a power for shaping the future ... Only when we have grasped all the forms of human life, from primitive peoples to the present day, does it become possible to see the generally valid in the relative, a firm future in the past.35

It would be wrong, therefore, to characterise Dilthey as a romantic partisan on the side of historical life and against science. Instead, he struggled to bridge the gulf between \textit{Weltanschauung} and \textit{Wissenschaft}. Dilthey ultimately failed, however, to resolve the tension between “the striving of philosophy for universally valid cognition” and “the finitude of every historical phenomenon” and in a lecture given on his seventieth birthday in 1903 expressed a hope that his “younger companions and students will go on to the end of the road”.36

The philosophy of the early Heidegger represents a particularly radical engagement with this conflict between science and worldviews. Kisiel characterises Heidegger’s early philosophy as “neither theory nor worldview, but rather the plunge into life itself in its authenticity”.37 Heidegger shared Dilthey’s view that philosophy springs from “factual life experience”. If we are to understand philosophy we must understand its origin in life which provides philosophy with its genuine motivations. Such a move promises to uncover the very genesis of theoretical philosophy. Heidegger rejected the dominant Neo-Kantian attempt to establish philosophy as a rigorous science precisely because in

\begin{footnotes}
35 Dilthey, \textit{Selected Writings}. op. cit. p. 121.
\end{footnotes}
so doing the Neo-Kantians focused exclusively on a limited notion of theoretical reason and lost sight of the historicity of lived experience. At the same time, however, Heidegger affirmed the need for absolute rigour in philosophy and agreed that the reduction of philosophy to the mere expression of a particular, historical worldview constituted a betrayal of philosophy. According to Heidegger, worldviews cannot be eradicated from philosophy, any more than philosophy can escape history. Even the particular, theoretical orientation of the natural sciences is based on a particular worldview. Philosophy can, however, escape the limitations of particular worldviews by setting out the very structures that determine the formation of all worldviews as such. In this way, philosophy promises to escape the limitations of the worldview of traditional philosophy oriented towards the mathematical, natural sciences and establish itself as primal science, which is supra- or pre-theoretical. The early Heidegger tried to find these structures in the structures of life. The challenge facing philosophy is, therefore, to work out how the fundamental structures of life can be set out in a rigorous manner.

In a 1922 letter to Jaspers, quoted by Kisiel, Heidegger writes of the facticity of life:

It must be made clear what it means to be involved in 'making up' human Dasein, to have a part in it. But this means that the sense of being of being-alive, cf being-human, must be originally won and categorically defined.

Here we see that the question of being is to provide the clue that will enable us to categorially define the notion of life. Time provides the other crucial clue. Dilthey had already suggested that, “the categorial characterisation of life is temporality which forms the basis for all the others”. The experience of time, our memories of the past, our present situation, and the field of future possibilities determines the structure of our lives. The connectedness of life is, therefore, essentially temporal. It is this conception of time that holds the key to the development of a coherent set of categories of life that are not only to be

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38 See OP, p. 10.
40 Quoted in Kisiel, ibid. p. 147.
41 Dilthey, Selected Writings. op. cit. p 209.
contrasted with the traditional categories of reason but which in fact provide the true ground for the traditional categories of reason. By setting out the basic structures of our understanding of being within the horizon of time, which is the task of *Being and Time*, Heidegger promises to work out rigorously Dilthey’s basic insight and thereby finally move beyond the impasse between philosophy as science and philosophy as worldview.

To clarify what is at stake in this attempt to break through the traditional categories of philosophy and grasp “life in itself” and to show how this move relates to the problematic relationship between systematic and historical research in philosophy, it is instructive to consider Heidegger’s position in relation to the work of the Southwest School of Neo-Kantianism. Heidegger’s Habilitation was supervised by Rickert and Heidegger’s earliest publications reflect the concerns of the Southwest School of Neo-Kantianism.

3.6 Rickert on the Gulf Between Reason and Life

Rickert argued that reality is a “heterogeneous continuum”. Reality is made up of an immeasurable multiplicity that constitutes a “flux” or “continuum of gradual transitions” within which there are no “sharp or absolute boundaries”. This means that it is simply impossible to know reality as it really is “for even the ‘smallest’ part contains more than any mortal man has the power to describe”. For us to have any knowledge at all, we need a principle of selection with which to separate the essential from the inessential and thereby “draw lines of demarcation in the continuous flux of real events and transform its indeterminable heterogeneity into a determinable domain of discrete objects”. This is done by means of the formation of concepts. Knowledge is only possible, therefore, on the basis of discursive reasoning and conceptual construction; while reality itself is inherently “irrational”, in the sense of being beyond conceptual, theoretical analysis, and is therefore, unknowable.

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44 Ibid, p. 32.
Rickert’s theory of knowledge affirmed an absolute gulf between concept and reality which formed the basis of his critique of the philosophy of life movement. In his polemic against the philosophy of life, Rickert concludes that,

"there is no science without conceptual thought, and that is precisely the meaning of each concept: that it distances itself from the immediate reality of life... The dualism of reality and concept is never to be overcome. To overcome it would be to overcome science itself." 46

There is, according to Rickert, an unavoidable tension between real life as it is immediately experienced and a conceptual theory of life or reality. Any philosophy of life that strives to go beyond the limitations of discursive reason, necessarily undermines the goal of philosophy to establish itself as a genuine science which could make any claim to universal validity. If it achieves dominance, Rickert wrote, the "modish philosophy of life will lead to the death of philosophy as a science. I believe, therefore, that I serve the life of philosophy when I attack this 'philosophy of life'". 47

3.7 The Problem of Historical Knowledge

Both Rickert and Dilthey developed their philosophical positions within the context of the problem of how to understand the relationship between the natural sciences and history which had been rendered problematic by the rise of psychology. Both Rickert and Dilthey were trying to defend the historical sciences from positivist incursions by establishing that history was a science that was quite distinct from natural science. Rickert rejected, however, as hopelessly vague and arbitrary, attempts to base the distinction between the historical and the natural sciences on a distinction between spirit and nature. Rickert hoped to overcome the use of such vague notions by basing this distinction, not on a difference in subject matter, but rather on a distinction between the concepts and methods used by these sciences. Following Windelband, Rickert tried to ground the distinction between science and history on a distinction between two basic types of concept formation. Reality becomes an object of nature when it is thought in accordance with generalising concepts; it becomes an object of history when it is thought in accordance with individualising concepts. 48

46 Quoted in Bambach, Heidegger, Dilthey, and the Crisis of Historicism. op. cit. p. 93.
47 Ibid., p. 87
48 See Rickert, Science and History: A Critique of Positivist Epistemology. op. cit. pp. 40-
between the natural sciences and the historical sciences is, therefore, a logical
difference in the way they construct their object from the flux of reality.
Rickert’s problem was to establish how history can lay claim to universally valid
knowledge given that its subject matter is made up of unique events. He tried to
solve this problem by showing how universally valid, transcendental values are
used to determine the significance of unique historical events. These values
provide the principle of selection that enables us to make sense of the infinite
array of historical facts. The crucial point to note for our purposes, however, is
that for the Southwest School of Neo-Kantianism, reality itself is not divided into
nature and history. Instead, nature and history are constructed and differentiated
in accordance with two different types of concept formation which in turn
provides the logical basis for the knowledge claims made by natural science and
history.

As a student, Heidegger was brought up with this Neo-Kantian
conception of the logical structure of the natural and historical sciences. In his
trial lecture at the University of Freiburg in 1915, Heidegger tried to show how
the natural and historical sciences could be distinguished on the basis of their use
of the concept of time. In physics, time “becomes a homogeneous ordered series
of points” that is used to provide an exact scale for measurement.\(^\text{49}\) In history,
time is not homogeneous. Instead, time is qualitatively divided into periods: “the
historian can do nothing with the mere number 750 in the concept of ‘hunger
crisis in Fulda in the year 750’”, just as the historian can do nothing with the
numerical difference between 750 and, for example, 1789.\(^\text{50}\) This provides an
interesting early example of Heidegger trying to show how time is used to
distinguish between different regions of being, the historical and the natural.
Heidegger’s inquiry remained essentially Neo-Kantian in orientation, however,
in so far as his primary concern was with “the sharp delineation and logical basis
for [the] autonomy” of the historical and natural sciences.\(^\text{51}\)

By the mid-1920s, Heidegger no longer accepted that an investigation
into the conceptual structure of the natural and historical sciences provides an

\(^{49}\) Martin Heidegger, “The Concept of Time in the Science of History” (trans. Harry S.
Taylor and Hans W. Uffelmann) \textit{Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology}. 9(1)

\(^{50}\) \textit{Ibid}, p. 10.

\(^{51}\) \textit{Ibid}, p. 3.
adequate basis for an exhaustive account of the nature and limits of that which
can be known in a genuinely rigorous manner. Heidegger begins his 1925
lecture course on the "History of the Concept of Time", which was given the
subtitle "Prolegomena to a Phenomenology of History and Nature" and which
constitutes a substantial draft of *Being and Time*, by noting that the separation
between nature and history,

comes first from the sciences, which reduce history and nature
to the level of domains of objects. But the phenomenology of
history and nature promises to disclose reality precisely as it shows itself *before* scientific inquiry, as the reality which is
already given to it.\(^{52}\)

Heidegger's aim is to approach history and nature "*before* scientific elaboration,
so that we may see both realities in their reality".\(^{53}\) In so doing, Heidegger
promises to establish a more fundamental type of inquiry that surpasses the
limitations associated with Neo-Kantian accounts of the nature of scientific
knowledge. This inquiry is no longer limited to specific regions of entities, such
as the natural and the historical, but concerns the basic structures of the being of
entities as such. This constitutes Heidegger's mature response to the problem of
how to break through the limitations associated with traditional problems of
philosophy and gain access to the real matters that provide philosophy with its
genuine, motivating experiences.

Heidegger continues to accept that the basic concepts of the natural and
the historical sciences determine what can be known within those realms. Heidegger argues, however, that there is an alternative method of inquiry that
"runs ahead" of the positive sciences in so far as it is concerned with the meaning
of being before it has been framed using the basic concepts of the sciences.\(^{54}\)
This involves Heidegger in a critique of philosophical accounts of knowledge
that take as their starting point, and so are ultimately limited by, either the basic
concepts and methods of the natural or the historical sciences. In so doing,
Heidegger formulates a distinction between history, understood using the basic
concepts of the established historical sciences, and what Heidegger refers to as
the authentic reality of history. Heidegger argues, for example, that:

\(^{52}\) HCT, p. 2.
\(^{53}\) HCT, p. 5.
\(^{54}\) See SZ, p. 10.
To say that the science of history deals with history does not necessarily mean that history as this science understands it is as such also the authentic reality of history. Above all, no claim is made as to whether historiographic knowledge of historical reality ever enables us to see history in its historicity. It might well be that something essential necessarily remains closed to the potentially scientific way of disclosing a particular field of subject matter; must remain closed if the science wishes to perform its proper function.  

In speaking about the “authentic reality of history”, Heidegger is referring to the historical aspect of what he had, a few years earlier, referred to as factical life. The clarification of this more fundamental sense of history is a crucial problem for Heidegger.

Heidegger concludes a review of Jaspers’s Psychology of Worldviews written between 1919 and 1921 but not published until 1972, by suggesting that one of the urgent tasks confronting phenomenology was the clarification of this more fundamental sense of history:

To what extent does ‘history’ get appropriated here in such a way that it is seen to be more than just a discipline in philosophy? To what extent do we gain an understanding of the fact that the historical is, according to its very sense, originally already there for us right within our philosophical problems, and that accordingly the problem of the relationship between the history of philosophy and systematic philosophy is at bottom a pseudo-problem.  

Not only does Heidegger’s move back to life open up the possibility of a more original understanding of the reality of history, but this also opens up the possibility of a more authentic understanding of the relationship between philosophy and its history. If the task of philosophy is to recover its origins in life, and if life is essentially historical, then the traditional distinction between systematic and historical methods of research in philosophy begins to break down. This is because historical life contains within it the essential unity of systematic and historical motivations for philosophy.

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3.8 Philosophy Between System and History

Heidegger draws these themes together in the Winter Semester of 1921/22 where he writes that:

Philosophising, as a fundamental *(prinzipielles)* knowing, is nothing other than the radical actualisation *(Vollzug)* of the historical facticity of life such that the historical and the systematic are equally foreign to it and all the more superfluous, as is their separation.\(^{57}\)

Here we see a clear expression of how the basic movement of Heidegger’s entire philosophical project is intended to overcome the traditional distinction between systematic and historical methods of research in philosophy. This claim was regularly repeated in the lead up to *Being and Time*. In the summer semester of 1925, for example, Heidegger writes that:

the basic question of philosophical research, the question of the being of entities, compels us to enter into an original area of research which *precedes* the traditional partition of philosophical work into historical *(historisch)* and systematic knowledge.\(^{58}\)

In 1928, just after the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger makes it clear that it is Dasein’s historicity and temporality that provides the key to understanding the unity of system and history in philosophy:

there is not a historical definition of philosophy and next to it a so-called systematic definition, nor conversely. What is needed, rather, is a definition ‘from historicity’.\(^{59}\)

This means that “philosophy can be characterised only from and in historical recollection”.\(^{60}\) This recollection must, however, be combined with a critical

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58 HCT, p. 7.
59 MFL, p. 8
60 MFL, p. 8.
reflection on the present. Heidegger uses this formulation to criticise two common ways of relating philosophy to its past. Philosophy cannot be defined by devising a modern definition, so that we may then consult the history of philosophy in retrospect to find out what has already been thought and intimated of our idea and what has not. Nor is it an appropriate procedure for us to pick out a philosophy from history, be it the philosophy of Plato or Aristotle, or of Leibniz or Kant, and simply install ourselves in it as in the presumptive truth, in order then to tailor and supplement it, as it were, for modern needs.  

Instead, there is really only a single philosophical clarification of the idea of philosophy. This clarification is in itself at once recollective and focused on the present. There is here an original unity, that is, the unity of the temporality of the philosophising factical Dasein itself; the full problematic must be unfolded from this unity.

The correct approach to philosophy requires both a critique of the present situation and a recollection. This recollection is not oriented towards history, as it has come to be understood or constructed by the historical sciences, but rather is oriented towards the recovery of the authentic reality of history. To understand this distinctive method of research, which Heidegger understands to be phenomenological, we must understand the basic structures of “the temporality of the philosophising factical Dasein”.

But what of *Being and Time* itself? To what extent is this problematic, discussed in early lectures and drafts, incorporated into *Being and Time*? The discussion of system and history in *Being and Time* is presented as part of a brief discussion of Dilthey and Count Yorck at the end of Heidegger’s chapter on historicity and temporality in the second division of *Being and Time*. This section is largely made up of a series of lengthy quotes from Count Yorck. If this section is read without an appreciation of Heidegger’s philosophical development in the lead up to *Being and Time*, it could easily be passed over as little more than a minor excursus into the writings of a rather minor figure in the

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61 MFL, p. 8.  
62 MLF, p. 9.
history of philosophy. The location of this discussion, however, confirms the significance of Heidegger’s claim that the problem of systematic and historical approaches to philosophy must be worked out within the problematic of historicity and temporality. That this problem is addressed as part of a discussion of Dilthey and Yorck is also of no small importance. *Being and Time* in fact began in 1924 as draft for an article entitled “The concept of Time (Comments on the Dilthey-Yorck Correspondence”).

This correspondence between Yorck and Dilthey concerns their “common interest in understanding historicity”. Heidegger begins his discussion of this correspondence in *Being and Time* by saying that “the analysis of the problem of history which we have just carried through has arisen in the process of appropriating the labours of Dilthey”. Heidegger quotes Yorck’s criticism of Dilthey who, according to Yorck, “put too little stress on differentiating generically between the ontical and the historical”. Heidegger then quotes Yorck’s argument that “in view of the inward historicity of self-consciousness, a systematic that is divorced from history is methodologically inadequate” and that, therefore, “the separation between systematic philosophy and historical presentation is essentially incorrect”. Heidegger concludes his discussion of this correspondence by presenting his own philosophical project as being able to fully clarify and resolve this difficulty:

If one has an interest in understanding historicity, one is brought to the task of working out a ‘generic differentiation between the ontical and the Historical’. *The fundamental aim of the ‘philosophy of life’* is tied up with this. Nevertheless, the formulation of the question needs to be radicalised *in principle*. How are we to get historicity into our grasp philosophically as distinguished from the ontical, and conceive it ‘categorically’, except by bringing both the ‘ontical’ and the ‘Historical’ into a *more primordial unity*, so that they can be compared and distinguished? But that is possible only if we attain the following insights: (1) that the question of historicity is an *ontological* question about the state of being of historical entities; (2) that the question of the ontical is the *ontological* question of the state of being of entities other than Dasein - of what is present-at-hand in the widest sense; (3) that the ontical


64 Quoted by Heidegger in *SZ* p. 398.

65 *SZ*, p. 449, 397.

66 *SZ*, p. 451, 402.

67 *SZ* pp. 401-2.
Heidegger goes on to say,

"the problem of differentiating between the ontical and the historical cannot be worked out as a problem for research unless we have made sure in advance what is the clue to it, by clarifying, through fundamental ontology, the question of the meaning of being in general. Thus it becomes plain in what sense the preparatory existential-temporal analytic of Dasein is resolved to foster the spirit of Count Yorck in the service of Dilthey's work." 69

Through a rigorous clarification of the temporal structures of Dasein's existence, Heidegger's fundamental ontology promises to enable a way of philosophising that overcomes the traditional distinction between systematic and historical methods of research in philosophy. In so doing, Heidegger's preparatory existential-temporal analytic of Dasein implicitly constitutes a discourse on method that explains why, in Heidegger's view, philosophy must be at once historical recollection and a critical reflection on the present. Moreover, this notion of historical recollection must clearly be distinguished from the traditional concepts and method of the historical sciences. It aims at a disclosure of the authentic reality of history rather than being limited to objects of traditional historical research as they are constructed using the concepts and method of the historical sciences.

3.9 Concluding Summary

In this chapter, I have tried to demonstrate that the basic thrust of Heidegger's philosophy as it was developed in the 1920s and presented in *Being and Time* brings into question the traditional distinction between systematic and historical approaches to research in philosophy. This is of immediate relevance to the contemporary debate over how to characterise and judge the claims Heidegger makes in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. If Heidegger succeeds in doing philosophy such that "the historical and the systematic are

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68 SZ, p. 403.
69 SZ, pp. 403-4. Footnote omitted.
equally foreign to it and all the more superfluous, as is there separation”, then the very basis of the contemporary debate over Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is brought into question. Heidegger claims neither to be making historical claims about Kant, as the term “history” is traditionally understood, nor to be presenting us a comparison between Kant’s philosophy and his own systematic account of philosophy as fundamental ontology. Indeed, in the year before *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* was published, Heidegger explicitly rejected attempts to “consult the history of philosophy in retrospect to find out what has already been thought and intimated in our idea and what has not”.

This also provides the basis for distinguishing Heidegger’s strategy for the interpretation of Kant from other attempts at a philosophical reading of Kant’s *Critique*. These early writings indicate that Heidegger is attempting something far more radical than merely, as Sherover characterises it, seeking “what is still relevant or suggestive in the work of an original thinker from a bygone era”. The basis for Heidegger’s strategy of interpretation is to be found in Heidegger’s account of the “temporality of the philosophising factual Dasein”. That is to say, the existential analytic of Dasein presented in *Being and Time* founds the distinctive nature of Heidegger’s method for interpreting Kant. The significance of Heidegger’s early lectures and writings is that they provide the clues necessary to develop an interpretation of *Being and Time* that is able to recover the unsaid basis for Heidegger’s project in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Heidegger’s attempt to distinguish between the basic concepts and method of traditional historical research and the authentic reality of history also suggests the basis for Heidegger’s attempt to make genuinely historical claims about the nature of Kant’s philosophy in a manner that is distinguishable from historical knowledge as it is traditionally understood.

I have also tried to show in this chapter how Dreyfus’s approach to the interpretation of *Being and Time* conceals the very aspects of Heidegger’s philosophical project that are needed to understand the relationship between

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71 MFL, p. 8.

Being and Time and Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics and thereby understand both Heidegger’s original philosophical project and the nature and significance of his interpretation of Kant. In particular, Dreyfus, disregards the sense in which a “destruction” of the history of ontology is an integral part of Heidegger’s philosophical project such that the correct method for doing philosophy necessarily contains an “historical” component, where history is understood in Heidegger’s sense of authentic history. Moreover, by disregarding the entire second division of Being and Time, Dreyfus loses sight of the way in which Heidegger’s account of the temporal structure of existence governs both Heidegger’s method for doing philosophy in general, understood as a “retrieval” of the question of being, and Heidegger’s retrieval of Kant’s Critique in particular. The result is not only that the lines of argument needed to make sense of Heidegger’s strategy for interpreting Kant are lost from view but also that Heidegger’s entire conception of philosophy is distorted.

Nevertheless, Heidegger’s early lectures and writings provide only the initials clues for correctly understanding how Heidegger’s fundamental ontology provides the basis for his strategies for reading Kant. It is one thing to point out that in Heidegger’s view the relationship between philosophy and its past must be worked out from within the “the unity of the temporality of the philosophising factual Dasein”,73 it is quite another thing to show in detail exactly how Heidegger does this. This is the task of the following two chapters.

73 MFL, p. 9.
PART III

THE METHOD OF DESTRUCTIVE RETRIEVAL

In the previous chapter, I introduced Heidegger’s claim that fundamental ontology is a mode of research that is logically prior to the distinction between historical and systematic methods of research in philosophy. This way of doing philosophy involves both a critique of the present and a recollection of the past. In the following two chapters, I will attempt, on the basis of an interpretation of *Being and Time* informed by Heidegger’s early lectures and writings, to provide a more detailed account of this way of doing philosophy. In so doing, I hope to show how the problematic of the original unity of systematic and historical methods of research in philosophy is worked out by Heidegger in terms of the temporality and historicity of Dasein. My discussion will focus on two pivotal terms used by Heidegger: destruction and retrieval.

A number of commentators refer, in part for quite good reasons, to Heidegger’s method of “destructive retrieval”. Heidegger in fact took up the terms “destruction” and “retrieval” at different stages in his philosophical development and they have quite distinct nuances of meaning. The term destruction was used by Heidegger to characterise his method for doing philosophy from the early 1920s. The method of destruction was developed within the context of the problem of how to grasp “life in itself”. And destruction constitutes a fundamental aspect of the phenomenological return the matters themselves. In contrast, the notion of a “retrieval”, understood as one key aspect of the temporalisation of authentic existence, did not play a
significant role in Heidegger’s philosophy until *Being and Time* itself. And while destruction is explicitly used as a central methodological notion in Heidegger’s philosophy, Heidegger does not explicitly use the term “retrieval” in *Being and Time* as a methodological concept.

As I hope to show in the following two chapters, the method of phenomenological destruction culminates in an event of appropriation. This event of appropriation is nothing other than retrieval understood as the methodological correlate of Dasein’s authentic temporality. The basis for Heidegger’s method of “destructive retrieval”, and with it the basis for Heidegger’s conception of philosophical method as such, is to be found in the temporal structures of Dasein’s existence. Moreover, when Dasein’s authentic temporality is actualised at the level of explicit historical understanding, it enables an authentic historiography. It is this authentic historiography that enables the mode of genuine historical understanding that surpasses the traditional distinction between systematic and historical research in philosophy.

It is only on the basis of such an explicit recovery of Heidegger’s implicit formulation of the method of “destructive retrieval” that we can properly raise, if not finally resolve, the problem of how Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is to be understood and judged. Only in this way can we understand the full significance of Heidegger’s method of “retrieving” the “concealed” “possibilities” inherent in Kant’s philosophising, understood as the “happening” of metaphysics. Only in this way, can we really understand what Heidegger means when he talks about the genuine “motivation” for Kant’s philosophising. And it is this way of approaching the problem that enables us to understand why Heidegger argues that this destructive retrieval is an integral component of philosophical method and must be clearly distinguished from the traditional methods of historical research.

These are the issues that need to be worked out if one is to provide a critical clarification of Heidegger’s method for reading Kant. By clarifying the basis for this method of destructive retrieval implicit in Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, one can provide an important corrective to those interpretations which have failed to grasp what is really at issue in Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant precisely because they have passed over these “unsaid” aspects of Heidegger’s own philosophical project.
4.1 Introduction

When in the early 1920s Heidegger first characterised his method for doing philosophy as "destruction", he understood it as the method of phenomenological critique. In the early Heidegger, destruction is most clearly associated with the struggle to break through, destroy or dismantle the traditional concepts of philosophy that are derived from a limited focus on the concepts of the positive sciences. As we saw in the previous chapter, Heidegger argued that these concepts tend to block our access to a genuine understanding of "life in itself". Despite the importance of the term destruction for Heidegger's early account of phenomenological method, Heidegger's use of this term in his early works is as indeterminate as it is ubiquitous. As Pöggeler notes, "the word 'destruction' is one of those terms that permeates Heidegger's philosophy from the outset, and as if its meaning were self-evident". The meaning and significance of Heidegger's notion of destruction is, however, far from self-evident.

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In the first part of this chapter, I will outline Heidegger’s arguments for why an historical destruction is integral to phenomenology in the sense that such a destruction is implicit in the very idea of a phenomenological return to the matters themselves. In so doing, I will highlight some of the more important differences between Heidegger’s formulation of the task of a destruction, which is ultimately to be understood as a counter-movement to Dasein’s falling, and traditional formulations of the problem of the prejudicial effect of the tradition. These differences provide a useful way of highlighting some of the key aspects of Heidegger’s understanding of the historicity of philosophy. In the second part, I will introduce Heidegger’s analytic of the “care” structure of Dasein. This discussion will focus on Heidegger’s account of Dasein’s existence as fallen into the “idle talk” of the “they” (das Man). I will argue that Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein in the first division of Being and Time provides the basis for Heidegger’s account of the basic structures that determine how philosophy can be done. As such, Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein can be read as a discourse on philosophical method. This will prepare the ground for my reading, in the following chapter, of Heidegger’s temporal interpretation of the care structure of Dasein in the second division of Being and Time as providing a more fundamental elucidation of the method of fundamental ontology.

**Phenomenology and Destruction.**

4.2 “To the Matters Themselves”

Phenomenology means for Heidegger nothing other than the proper method of philosophy. The essential nature of phenomenological method, and with it the essential nature of philosophy, is encapsulated for Heidegger in Husserl’s demand that philosophy return “to the matters themselves”. What, then, is meant by a phenomenological return to the matters themselves? In Husserl’s words:

we take our starting from what lies prior to all standpoints: from the total realm of whatever is itself given intuitationally and prior to all theorising, from everything that one can immediately see and seize upon - if only one does not let

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1 See HCT, pp. 75-79.
himself be blinded by prejudices and prevented from taking into consideration whole classes of genuine data.\(^4\)

For Heidegger, and for the early Husserl, phenomenology is an essentially descriptive enterprise. It is, in Heidegger’s words, the “accentuating articulation of what is in itself intuited”.\(^5\) Phenomenology is nothing other than the “pure dedication and submission to the subject matter”.\(^6\) The method of proof used by phenomenology is not one of deriving conclusions from propositions in the manner of traditional logic. Phenomenological “argument” and “proof” is based on a “pointing out” or, rather more technically in Heidegger’s terms, a letting “that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself”.\(^7\) As Heidegger told his students in 1919, phenomenology is not about theories but about “genuine insights versus the ungenuine” and “the genuine ones can be obtained only by an honest and unreserved immersion in life itself in its genuineness”.\(^8\) Of course, not every description counts as phenomenological. For Heidegger, phenomenology is the method of ontology; its task is “to allow entities to be seen as entities in their being”.\(^9\) Phenomenology has as its ultimate subject matter those ontological structures that enable us to encounter entities.

It is, above all else, this radical demand for a return to the matters themselves that is at the heart of phenomenology for Heidegger. In particular, “the phenomenological maxim ‘to the matters themselves’ is addressed against construction and free-floating questioning in traditional concepts which have become more and more groundless”.\(^10\) Phenomenology is “opposed to taking over any conceptions which only seem to have been demonstrated; it is opposed to those pseudo-questions which parade themselves as ‘problems’, often for generations at a time”.\(^11\) Heidegger’s own criticisms of Husserl are based on the claim that Husserl failed to apply this maxim with sufficient rigour with the

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\(^{5}\) HCT, p. 78.


\(^{7}\) SZ, p. 34.

\(^{8}\) Quoted in Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time.* op. cit. p. 17

\(^{9}\) HCT, p. 137.

\(^{10}\) HCT, p. 76.

\(^{11}\) SZ, p. 28.
result that Husserl's phenomenology continued to make use of unfounded presuppositions that were taken up from the tradition. According to Heidegger, Husserl remains trapped in "the tradition of Descartes and the problematic of reason stemming from him". Thus, Heidegger criticises Husserlian phenomenology for being "unphenomenological". Heidegger promises to go beyond Husserl by applying this maxim with even greater rigour than Husserl. His radicalisation of the demand for a return to the matters themselves even led Heidegger, after the so-called Kehre, to abandon the very term "phenomenology". Heidegger abandoned the term "phenomenology" to describe his own philosophy, not because he finally abandoned this maxim, but rather, by abandoning the terminology of phenomenology, Heidegger hoped to give better effect to this maxim. Heidegger concludes "My way to Phenomenology", first published in 1963, by stating that if phenomenology is understood, not as a school, but as a possibility of thinking and "of corresponding to the claim of what is to be thought" then the term phenomenology "can disappear as a designation in favour of the matter of thinking". The issue of philosophical method gives way to the matter of philosophy precisely because this method is nothing more than a demand for absolute fidelity to the matter of philosophy.

But what is really so significant about this methodological demand for a return to the matters themselves? Surely everyone seeking genuine knowledge, whether it be in the natural sciences, historical sciences or philosophy, strives to avoid unfounded prejudices. Heidegger is well aware of this question, this maxim, one may rejoin, is abundantly self-evident, and it expresses, moreover, the underlying principle of any scientific knowledge whatsoever. Why should anything so self-evident be taken up explicitly in giving a title to a branch of research?

The answer to this question is that this seemingly self-evident maxim becomes extremely radical when an attempt is made to apply it rigorously.

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12 See esp. HCT, pp. 128-9.
13 HCT, p. 130.
14 HCT, p. 120.
16 SZ, p. 28.
both Husserl and Heidegger use this maxim to develop a radical critique of those positivist and naturalising philosophies that uncritically accept the absolute authority of natural science as the arbiter of what counts as a genuine object of knowledge within philosophy. As Husserl writes in the *Ideas*,

If ‘positivism’ is tantamount to an absolutely unprejudiced grounding of all sciences on the ‘positive’, that is to say, on what can be seized upon *originaliter*, then we are the genuine positivists. In fact, we allow no authority to curtail our right to accept all kinds of intuition as equally valuable legitimating sources of cognition - not even the authority of ‘modern natural science’.

Phenomenology does not question the legitimacy of the sciences within their field of competence. Phenomenology does, however, reject the positivist claim that the subject matter of philosophy should be limited by the worldview of the sciences. It is because positivism has come to dominate philosophy that it is necessary to make this seemingly self-evident maxim into a battle-cry. Phenomenology refuses to disregard the evidence of particular types of intuition simply because they would be disregarded by positivist philosophies as merely subjective.

Two concrete examples from *Being and Time* may help to clarify what the method of phenomenology means for Heidegger and how phenomenological descriptions operate as a radical critique of positivism in philosophy. The first is taken from an admittedly rather brief description of the way we hear. This phenomenological description is implicitly contrasted with traditional theories of experience that make use of the notion of sense impressions. Heidegger argues that:

What we ‘first’ hear is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking wagon, the motor-cycle ... It requires a very artificial and complicated frame of mind to ‘hear’ a ‘pure noise’. The fact that motor-cycles and wagons are what we proximally hear is the phenomenal evidence that in every case Dasein, as being-in-the-world, already dwells *alongside* what is ready-to-hand within-the-world.

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18 See HCT, p. 76.
19 SZ, pp. 163-4.
This phenomenological description is directed against traditional theories of experience that explain experience in terms of an isolated subject that somehow receives sense impressions from objects outside of it. Heidegger’s phenomenological description is intended to show that such a theory of experience is simply inadequate as an account of the way we really experience things. We simply do not experience sensations as such, instead we live in the world. Heidegger’s description demonstrates the sense in which humans exist first and foremost as “being-in-the-world”. The meaning and significance of the notion of sensations derives, not from a careful description of the way in which we actually live and exist, but instead from the philosophical tradition. The method of phenomenology promises to dismantle such artificially constructed concepts and theories by showing that their meaning and significance have not been adequately demonstrated from the matters themselves.

Another instructive example of the way in which phenomenological descriptions operate in *Being and Time* is provided by Heidegger’s description of the workshop and, in particular, Heidegger’s famous description of the way in which we ordinarily deal with equipment such as a hammer.\(^20\) Heidegger notes that in ordinary life we simply take up a hammer in the practice of hammering. The hammer is taken up in order to do something within a project, for example, in order to fix a roof, in order to keep the rain out, in order to keep dry, etc. When it is dealt with in this way, the hammer is not dealt with or understood as an isolated object. Instead, the hammer is understood and dealt with only to the extent that it belongs to the complex set of practical concerns and references of “in order to” (*Um-zu*) that make up the entire project with which the person is concerned.\(^21\)

What, then, of the hammer as a specific object? The hammer is only experienced as an isolated object with particular properties that can be studied when it no longer operates unproblematically as part of such a project, for example, when the hammer breaks. Then, and only then, do we “see” the hammer as a specific object: a “hammer-thing” (*Hammerding*) as Heidegger

\(^20\) See esp SZ. §§ 15 & 16.
\(^21\) See SZ, p. 68 where Heidegger writes: “Taken strictly, there ‘is’ no such thing as *an* equipment”.

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calls it. Heidegger uses this type of phenomenological description to provide a particularly clear instance with which to distinguish between two ways of understanding the being of things: “ready-to-hand” (zuhanden) and “present-at-hand” (vorhanden). We understand the being of something as ready-to-hand when it is encountered within the world of our concerns as we live in it. We understand the being of something as present-at-hand when we understand it on the basis of its specific properties as an isolated object. It is important to note that the use of tools or equipment only constitutes a sub-set of our way of understanding things as ready-to-hand. When we hear the creaking of a wagon or the wind in the trees, we experience them as ready-to-hand not as present-at-hand even though they are not thereby taken up as equipment in any meaningful sense.

It is only when things are dealt with and “seen” as isolated objects that are made up of specific properties that they can they be dealt with theoretically. Natural science is the quintessential way of understanding the being of things as present-at-hand. In effect, Heidegger’s phenomenological description provides us with an account of the “existential genesis of science”. When entities are seen in this way, however, the being of these entities as ready-to-hand is lost from view:

no matter how sharply we just look at the ‘outward appearance’ of things in whatever form this takes, we cannot discover anything ready-to-hand.

When a thing is understood as “present-at-hand” and thereby dealt with in a theoretical manner, its existence as ready-to-hand is concealed. The way of understanding the being of entities as present-at-hand both discloses the object of theoretical viewing while at the very same time concealing its being as ready-to-hand. This dual structure of both showing and concealing is of fundamental importance for Heidegger.

The problem with the philosophical tradition, according to Heidegger, is that philosophy has come to privilege the theoretical way of seeing things as present-at-hand that is characteristic of natural science. The being of things has

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22 SZ, p. 69.
23 See SZ, p. 358.
24 SZ, p. 69.
become exclusively associated with their specific properties. When this way of understanding comes to dominate philosophy, the problem of knowledge, in particular, the problem of how an isolated subject is to gain knowledge of external objects, becomes a central philosophical problem. This separation between knowing subject isolated from external objects creates such a gulf that the very existence of external objects is taken to be a problem. Alluding to Kant's claim that it is a scandal of philosophy that there remains no satisfactory proof for the existence of things "outside us", Heidegger writes that:

The 'scandal of philosophy' is not that this proof has yet to be given, but that such proofs are expected and attempted again and again. Such expectations, aims and demands arise from an ontologically inadequate way of starting with something of such a character that independently of it and 'outside' of it a 'world' is to be proved as present-at-hand.

The problem of skepticism is, for Heidegger, a classic pseudo-problem based upon a phenomenologically inadequate description of the way in which we exist in the world. This problem arises only if we first assume the existence of a "worldless" subject which then inquires into the things that exist outside of it as present-at-hand. When our way of existing as being-in-the-world is properly understood, however, this entire problematic simply dissolves. It ceases to make sense to even raise this problem, "the question of whether there is a world at all and whether its being can be proved, makes no sense if it is raised by Dasein as being-in-the-world; and who else would raise it?".

4.3 Heidegger's rejection of traditionalism

Essential to the conception of phenomenology is the claim that, it is not decisive, in philosophy, to deal with the things once again by means of traditional concepts on the basis of an assumed traditional philosophical standpoint, but instead to disclose new domains of the matters themselves and to bring them under the jurisdiction of science by means of a productive concept formation. This is the criterion of a scientific philosophy. The criterion is not the possibility of constructing a system, a construction which is based purely on

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25 See footnote, Bxxxix.
26 SZ, p. 205.
an arbitrary adaptation of the conceptual material transmitted by history.²⁸

The method of phenomenology acquires its critical edge precisely by promising to break away from traditional philosophical standpoints. In this regard, Heidegger presents his own method as having a decisive advantage over Neo-Kantianism. According to Heidegger, the Neo-Kantians, despite, and in part because of, the naivété of their attempt to escape the limitations of history, remain prisoners of the contingent historical limitations of the tradition. In Heidegger’s view, Neo-Kantianism is traditionalistic in this respect both in its systematic reduction of philosophy to the philosophy of science and in its return to Kant.

It will be recalled from chapter two that the Neo-Kantians started with the fact of a given science and asked about its possibility. Heidegger criticises Neo-Kantian philosophy of science precisely because it limits itself to the investigation of the conceptual structure of the given fact of “an accidental, historically given science”.²⁹ According to Heidegger, this means that Neo-Kantianism becomes a victim of the historical contingency of its own starting point. In contrast, phenomenology is “productive” or, as Heidegger describes it in Basic Problems of Phenomenology, constructive.³⁰ Above all else, this means that phenomenology does not allow itself to be limited by the conceptual tools of the natural and historical sciences. For reasons that were discussed in the previous chapter, this is.

because reality - nature as well as history - can be reached only by leaping over the sciences to some extent, this prescientific - actually philosophical - disclosure of them becomes what I call a productive logic, an anticipatory disclosure and conceptual penetration of potential domains of objects for the sciences.³¹

Phenomenology does not allow the chance state of the natural and historical sciences to be accepted as a definitive account of what is ultimately real. Instead, phenomenology constantly struggles to open up new ways of access to

²⁸ HCT, p. 18.
²⁹ HCT, p. 2.
³⁰ BP, pp. 21-22.
³¹ HCT, p. 2.
the matters themselves. In so doing, the method of phenomenology is about keeping philosophy alive as a genuinely productive, primary form of research rather than limiting philosophy to a secondary reflection on the methods of the already extant sciences.\(^32\)

Heidegger also criticised as traditionalistic the Neo-Kantian attempt to restore philosophy by returning to Kant,

the [Neo-Kantian] renewal takes place not in an original return to the matters at issue but by going back to a historically established philosophy, that of Kant. Philosophy is thus traditionalistic; it assumes a well-defined complex of a well-defined line of questioning and thus in turn comes to a well defined position toward the concrete sciences.\(^33\)

Heidegger consistently rejects as methodologically illegitimate any uncritical use of the history of philosophy. Heidegger tells us, for example, that the mere historical fact that the question of being came to life in Classical Greece, "should not be taken as an authority which establishes the correctness of the question".\(^34\) In Being and Time, Heidegger even says that "any attempt to clarify the method of ontology by tracing its history is automatically ruled out".\(^35\) Heidegger’s rejection of such traditionalism in philosophy is absolute. Heidegger’s own return to Kant and his claim that a destruction of the history of philosophy is integral to phenomenology must, if Heidegger is to avoid a gross inconsistency, be clearly distinguishable from such traditionalism.

To clarify what is at stake here, it may be helpful to compare Heidegger’s position with some well-known statements about the prejudicial effect of the history of philosophy by Descartes and Husserl. Descartes begins his Meditations on First Philosophy with the suggestion that:

Some years ago I was struck by the large number of falsehoods that I had accepted as true in my childhood, and by the highly doubtful nature of the whole edifice that I had subsequently based on them. I realised that it was necessary, once in the course of my life, to demolish everything completely and start again right from the foundations if I

\(^{32}\) See SZ, p. 10 and HCT, pp. 136-7.

\(^{33}\) HCT, p. 13.

\(^{34}\) HCT, p. 137 see also p. 136.

\(^{35}\) SZ, p. 27.
wanted to establish anything at all in the sciences that was stable and likely to last.\textsuperscript{36}

Husserl makes a similar claim in his \textit{Paris Lectures}, which were presented as something of a eulogy to Descartes,

anyone who seriously considers becoming a philosopher must once in his life withdraw into himself and then, from within, attempt to destroy and rebuild all previous learning. Philosophy is the supremely personal affair of the one who philosophises. It is a question of his \textit{sapientia universalis}, the aspiration of his knowledge for the universal.\textsuperscript{37}

Such claims are hardly peculiar to Descartes and Husserl, and these statements seem to express a crucial feature of philosophical research. Is not philosophy the embodiment of the call to abjure all dogmatic reliance on the work of others and to have the courage to use one's own understanding and judgement? Philosophers as diverse as Kant and Nietzsche would surely agree on this much at least. The significance of such a demand that we overcome the prejudicial effect of the past can, however, be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, there is a demand for a genuine confrontation with the philosophical issues themselves. To do genuine philosophy one must think through the issues for oneself. On the other hand, such statements may be interpreted as part of a much stronger demand that philosophy break away from history altogether and establish an absolute, rational, and, in this sense, ahistorical foundation.

In the third of his \textit{Rules for the Direction of the Mind}, Descartes distinguishes between a genuine engagement with the issues and a methodologically illegitimate reliance on what others have said. Descartes begins by noting that,

we ought to read the writings of the ancients, for it is of great advantage to be able to make use of the labours of so many men. We should do so both in order to learn what truths have already been discovered and also to be informed about the points which remain to be worked out in the various disciplines. But at the same time there is a considerable danger that if we study these works too closely traces of their

errors will infect us and cling to us against our will and
despite our precautions.38

Descartes goes on to say that, no matter how well we know the past, we must
ultimately rely on our own judgement,
even though we have read all the arguments of Plato and
Aristotle, we shall never become philosophers if we are
unable to make a sound judgement on matters which come up
for discussion; in this case what we would seem to have learnt
would not be science but history.39

Here we see the formulation of a clear split between philosophy as science and
history. In a letter to Hogelande of February 8, 1640, Descartes writes:

By ‘history’ I understand everything which has been
discovered already and is contained in books. By ‘science’ I
mean the skill to solve every problem, and thus to discover by
one’s own efforts everything capable of being discovered in
that science by our native human intelligence.40

History may help to clarify what matters are still at issue in philosophy, but
philosophy is ultimately about making a sound judgement about these matters.
To do this we need a method that will ensure the validity of our judgements.

Husserl makes a similar although much more subtle point in his essay
published in the journal Logos entitled “philosophy as rigorous science”, which
is famous for its attack on Dilthey and Weltanschauung philosophy:

Of course, we need history too. Not, it is true, as the historian
does, in order to lose ourselves in the developmental relations
in which the great philosophies have grown up, but in order to
let the philosophies themselves, in accord with their spiritual
context, work on us as an inspiration. In fact, out of these
historical philosophies there flows to us philosophical life - if
we understand how to peer into them, to penetrate to the soul
of their words and theories - philosophical life with all the
wealth and strength of living motivations.41

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38 The Philosophical Writings of Descartes. op. cit. vol. 1, p. 13.
41 Edmund Husserl, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science” in Phenomenology and the Crisis of
For Husserl, an understanding of the history of philosophy reveals not simply what questions still need to be answered but also reveals the constant, underlying motivation for all genuine philosophy. This underlying motivation is the demand for an absolute, rational foundation that can satisfy the “loftiest theoretical needs” and render “possible from an ethico-religious point of view a life regulated by pure rational norms”. In the Logos essay, this use of the history of philosophy is, however, immediately qualified:

But it is not through philosophies that we becomes philosophers. ... The impulse to research must proceed not from philosophies but from things and from the problems connected with them.

The very ideal of philosophy, although grasped through an appreciation of the history of philosophy, contains within it a demand that we make a radical break with history in favour of the matters themselves. In this way, Husserl tries to revive the spirit of Descartes’ radicalness, “the radicalness of the beginning philosopher” and subjects to a “Cartesian overthrow the immense philosophical literature with its medley of great traditions”. Understood as the search for absolute validities, there is, according to Husserl, an unavoidable gulf between the ideal of philosophical knowledge and historical knowledge of particular historical philosophies. Historical knowledge is, strictly speaking, irrelevant to the question of universal validity for the same reason that contingent empirical facts can never form the basis of an argument for absolute validity. This means that historical science ultimately has nothing to say either for or against “absolute validities in general”.

Heidegger, however, argues that the history of philosophy is integral to phenomenology. The sheer force of Heidegger’s rejection of traditionalism makes Heidegger’s claim that research in the history of philosophy is integral to phenomenological investigations appear somewhat problematic. The method of phenomenology appears to be directed against any use of history because it sees the historically given merely as the source of phenomenologically unfounded, traditional approaches to the basic concepts and problems of

43 Husserl, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science” ibid p. 146.
44 Husserl, Cartesian Meditations. op. cit. p. 5.
45 See Husserl, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science” op. cit. p.127.
philosophy. On this reading, history is relevant to philosophy only in a purely negative sense as the source of prejudices and pseudo-problems that need to be overcome. In what sense, then, can a program of research in the history of philosophy operate as a positive element of a phenomenological return to the matters themselves? Is it not sufficient to simply engage in phenomenological descriptions and then, on the basis of the results, present a critique of the way in which the problems of philosophy have been traditionally formulated?

4.4 The need for a positive appropriation of the tradition

By presenting phenomenology as a method for overcoming the pernicious effects of the tradition and by rejecting all forms of traditionalism, Heidegger maintains a separation between philosophy and the history of philosophy. This separation is based upon the phenomenological demand for a return to the matters themselves. At the same time, however, Heidegger argues that phenomenology requires a more fundamental engagement with the tradition,

we not only want to understand that such a contact with the tradition brings prejudices with it. We also want to establish a genuine contact with the tradition ... Thus, the contact with the tradition, the return to history, can have a double sense. On the one hand, it can be purely a matter of traditionalism, in which what is assumed is itself not subject to criticism. On the other hand, however, the return can also be performed so that it goes back prior to the questions which were posed in history, and the questions raised by the past are once again originally appropriated.46

The phenomenological method of destruction is not therefore to be understood in an entirely negative sense of shaking off the tradition. Instead, this destruction is to be understood as staking out “the positive possibilities of the tradition”.47 Such a movement requires a positive appropriation of the tradition that would enable us to fully realise the authentic possibilities of its questions.48 It is this call for a positive appropriation of the authentic possibilities that are implicit within the manner of questioning of the past that clearly distinguishes Heidegger’s position from the traditional formulation of the relationship

46 HCT, p. 138.
47 See SZ, p. 22.
48 See SZ, p. 21.
between philosophy and its past that emphasises the problem of the prejudicial effect of the tradition.

Two lines of argument are particularly important for Heidegger's attempt to introduce a destructive appropriation of the tradition into the method of phenomenology. The first concerns a radicalisation of the phenomenological maxim “to the matters themselves” which is taken by Heidegger to capture the very essence of philosophy. The second line of argument concerns the unavoidable historicity of human existence and with it the unavoidable historicity of philosophy.

Heidegger affirms and radicalises the claim that philosophy requires a genuine confrontation with the philosophical issues themselves while at the same time rejecting the claim that such a view implies the need to establish an absolute, rational foundation that can ground claims to absolute validity. For Heidegger, the demand for a return to the matters themselves contains within it the genuine spirit of philosophy, while the ideal of absolute validity is contaminated with a range of illegitimate metaphysical assumptions about the nature of truth and human existence. Properly understood, philosophy is not, according to Heidegger, about establishing absolutely valid knowledge and philosophical method is not, therefore, about establishing the principles that make such knowledge possible. Instead, philosophy and its method are about keeping alive the very possibility of a genuine confrontation with the matters themselves. Phenomenology is not, therefore, about constructing theories or defending doctrines, it is not even about generating results that add to the store of human knowledge:

The greatness of the discovery of phenomenology lies not in factually obtained results ... it is the discovery of the very possibility of doing research in philosophy. But a possibility is rightly understood in its most proper sense only when it continues to be taken as a possibility and preserved as a possibility. Preserving it as a possibility does not mean, however, to fix a chance state of research and inquiry as ultimately real and to allow it to harden; it rather means to keep open the tendency toward the matters themselves and to liberate this tendency from the persistently pressing, latently
operative and spurious bonds [of the tradition]. This is just what is meant by the motto ‘back to the matters themselves’.\textsuperscript{49}

This way of characterising philosophy enables Heidegger to tread a fine line between the idea of philosophy as rigorous science and the idea of philosophy as worldview. On the one hand, Heidegger remains true to the ideal that philosophy requires a genuine confrontation with the matters themselves. As such, philosophy must resist the prejudicial effect of traditional philosophical viewpoints and worldviews. On the other hand, Heidegger rejects the ideal of absolute validity in so far as it implies that we can finally escape history and attain an ahistorical viewpoint. We must do philosophy for ourselves, but we cannot do so without the resources of the tradition that permeate not only our ways of thinking, but the very way we experience:

the store of basic philosophical concepts is still so influential today that this effect of tradition can hardly be overestimated. It is for this reason that all philosophical discussion, even the most radical attempt to begin all over again, is pervaded by traditional concepts and thus by traditional horizons and traditional angles of approach, which we cannot assume with unquestionable certainty to have arisen originally and genuinely from the domain of being and the constitution of being they claim to comprehend.\textsuperscript{50}

In phenomenological terms this means that even our most straightforward perceptions are already permeated with traditional concepts and interpretations: "it is not so much that we see the objects and things but rather that we first talk about them. To put it more precisely: we do not say what we see, but rather the reverse, we see what one says about the matter".\textsuperscript{51} What we first see is not what is primarily and originally there. Instead, what we first see is the matter as it has been traditionally interpreted in accordance with concepts and theories that have become traditionally accepted. The phenomenological return to the matters themselves cannot, therefore, rely on a naive experience of what is given: "the demand for an ultimate direct givenness of the phenomena carries no implication of the comfort of an immediate beholding".\textsuperscript{52} In \textit{Being and Time}, Heidegger writes that, "the idea of grasping and explicating phenomena

\textsuperscript{49} HCT, p. 136.  
\textsuperscript{50} BP, p. 22.  
\textsuperscript{51} HCT, p. 56.  
\textsuperscript{52} HCT, p. 87.
in a way which is ‘original’ and ‘intuitive’ is directly opposed to the naïveté of a haphazard, ‘immediate’, and unreflective ‘beholding’. I may very well experience my computer, for example as an isolated object with specific properties, yet the apparent immediacy and self-evidence of that experience is not of itself sufficient to establish that such an experience is free of presuppositions that derive from the tradition.

It is for this reason that a process of destruction necessarily belongs to the phenomenological return to the matters themselves. The method of destruction is,

a critical process in which the traditional concepts, which at first must necessarily be employed, are deconstructed down to the sources from which they were drawn. Only by means of this destruction can ontology fully assure itself in a phenomenological way of the genuine character of its concepts.

Because phenomenology is nothing other than a method for breaking through the concealments generated by the tradition so as to grasp the matters themselves, destruction is integral to phenomenology. Indeed, since Heidegger understands the task of a destruction to include both the dismantling of the tradition and the appropriation of the genuine matter of philosophy, destruction is not only integral to phenomenology, it is coextensive with the method of phenomenology itself. This destruction is essentially a process of self-critique. Destruction involves a critique of the tradition in so far as it continues to control the way in which we do philosophy. It is for this reason that Heidegger says that “this destruction does not relate itself towards the past; its criticism is aimed at ‘today’ and at the prevalent way of treating the history of philosophy”.

The sense in which the method of destruction is oriented towards the current ways of understanding philosophy is a crucial point that tends to be overlooked. Part of the problem is that the method of destruction is introduced in Being and Time by way of an anticipation of his interpretation of Kant, Descartes, and Aristotle in the projected second division. This should not be

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53 SZ, p. 37.
54 BP, p. 23.
55 SZ, 22-23.
taken to mean, however, that the method of destruction is primarily a method for the interpretation of texts from the history of philosophy. The history of philosophy, as the object of destruction, is to be understood in the Diltheyian sense as “the history that we ourselves are.” This point is clearly formulated by Heidegger in the early 1920s, particularly in his review of Jaspers’ _Psychology of Worldviews_. The historical destruction of the tradition constitutes a genuine confrontation with the history that we ourselves are. And this confrontation would be something that is enacted within the very meaning of philosophizing. In the end, it is just this precisely oriented detour and the type of roundabout understanding enacted in it that make up the path to the things themselves.

The phenomenological return to the things themselves requires an historical detour. Moreover, since the basic motivations for philosophy emerge from this historical life experience, this phenomenological destruction is equivalent to “explicating the original motive-giving situations from which the fundamental experiences of philosophy have arisen.” This conception of the history that we ourselves are must be clearly and radically distinguished from history understood as a specific scientific discipline. The “sources” of this historical destruction are not documents but rather historical existence itself. When we attempt to clarify Heidegger’s method of destructive retrieval in this manner it becomes apparent that this method is nothing other than an explicating of the method of phenomenology itself.

We cannot, therefore, escape the pernicious effects of the tradition simply by turning away from the past and trying to start anew in a way that denies the historicity of philosophy. Indeed, it is precisely when we think that philosophy can be done without regard for the historical origins of our ways of understanding, our historicity, that we fall prey to the tradition:

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58 Ibid., p. 3 (translation altered).
When tradition thus becomes master, it does so in a way that what it ‘transmits’ is made so inaccessible, proximally and for the most part, that it rather becomes concealed. Tradition takes what has come down to us and delivers it over to self-evidence; it blocks our access to those primordial ‘sources’ from which the categories and concepts handed down to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn. Indeed it makes us forget that they have such an origin, and makes us suppose that the necessity of going back to these sources is something which we need not even understand. 59

When something is accepted as self-evident, it ceases to be regarded as a subject matter of productive research. It is no longer thought necessary to try to grasp the matter for oneself. Instead, the dominant interpretation is uncritically accepted without question. The very self-evidence of a particular way of understanding is taken by Heidegger to be an indicator, not that a matter has been fully understood, but on the contrary that it is no longer genuinely understood. The process whereby something comes to be accepted as being self-evident is itself, according to Heidegger, an historical process. At the same time, however, self-evidence conceals this historical process. When something is accepted as self-evident we no longer think it necessary to inquire into the historical process by which it came to be accepted as self-evident. Without such an inquiry, however, the very possibility that there may be alternative ways of interpreting the matter is never entertained as a possibility.

The most important example of this process for Heidegger is, of course, to be found in the way in which the question of being itself has come to be forgotten. According to Heidegger, the question of being provided the stimulus for the work of Plato and Aristotle who gained an initial insight into the phenomena of being, yet,

that which the ancient philosophers found continually disturbing as something obscure and hidden has taken on a clarity and self-evidence such that if anyone continues to ask about it he is charged with an error of method. 60

The interpretation of the being of entities as present-at-hand has become so self-evident that the question of the meaning of being is no longer raised. This interpretation is thought to be so obvious that it is no longer understood as the

59 SZ, p. 21.
60 SZ, p. 2.
culmination of an historical process. The possibility that there may be alternative interpretations of the meaning of being, interpretations that are concealed by the interpretation of being as present-at-hand, is thereby overlooked. The most basic task of Heidegger's phenomenology is, therefore, to rekindle "the battle of the giants concerning being" and in so doing to keep philosophy alive as the very possibility of a productive inquiry into the meaning of being. At its most basic level, therefore, Heidegger's task is to make the meaning of being questionable.

The traditional neglect of the question of being is not some accidental oversight of philosophers. Rather, these omissions serve to manifest the history of our very Dasein - history understood not as the totality of public events but as the mode of happening of this Dasein. That this neglect is possible and reigns in this manner for thousands of years manifests a particular mode of the being of Dasein, a specific tendency to fall (Verfall). This means that Dasein in this mode of being of falling (Verfallen), from which it does not escape, first really comes to its being when it rebels against this tendency. 61

Both Heidegger's formulation of the problem of falling and the traditional formulation of the problem of prejudice motivate a call to do philosophy for oneself. Heidegger's own formulation of this methodological demand to do philosophy for oneself gains its distinctive character from this account of falling. It is this account of falling that is intended to disclose history as "the mode of happening of Dasein" which is Heidegger's reformulation of Dilthey's conception of history as that which we ourselves are. Heidegger takes up the phenomenological return to the matters themselves as a necessary counter-movement to the problem of falling, understood as an essential aspect of the ontological structure of Dasein. It is therefore, to Heidegger's analytic of Dasein and his account of falling that we must turn if we are to fully clarify Heidegger's position.

61 HCT, pp. 129-130 (translation altered).
4.5 The existential Analytic of Dasein

In formulating his analytic of Dasein, Heidegger sets out an extremely complex and tightly structured set of “existentialia” which are the constitutive aspects of our way of being. These existential structures, which are never formally catalogued by Heidegger, include such matters as being-in, being-with, worldhood (Weltlichkeit), understanding, projection, possibility, discourse (Rede), state-of-mind (Befindlichkeit), disclosedness (Erschlossenheit), truth, and meaning (Sinn). This list is far from exhaustive. With these existentialia, Heidegger is trying to fulfil the basic motivation of Dilthey’s attempt to break away from the categories of traditional philosophy, which are limited by their orientation towards the problem of natural scientific knowledge, and rigorously formulate the “categories of life”. It is these structures of life that constitute the “basic reality of history”. Heidegger believes that he can complete this task because, unlike Dilthey, Heidegger has explicitly raised the question of being. Heidegger argues that it is only when life is analysed in this ontological manner that its structures can be set out in a rigorous and genuinely philosophical manner. I will not attempt to discuss all, or even most, of these structures. Instead, this introduction to Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein will focus on Heidegger’s formulation of the ‘care’ structure of the being of Dasein. This discussion will itself be developed simply to introduce the basic structure and terminology of Heidegger’s philosophy that will enable us to correctly understand the issue of Dasein’s being-fallen and thereby clarify how Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein understood as ‘care’ provides the basis for his account of phenomenological method understood as a counter-movement to Dasein’s falling.

I will begin by explaining why Heidegger’s attempt to raise the question of being necessarily leads him to the preliminary task of setting out an analytic of Dasein. The task of Being and Time is to raise the question of being. What does being mean? The very act of raising this question reveals, according to Heidegger, the peculiar fact that,  

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62 See HCT, pp. 17 & 18.
we do not know what ‘being’ means. But even if we ask, “What is ‘being’?”, we keep within an understanding of the ‘is’, though we are unable to fix conceptually what that ‘is’ signifies.

We already have a vague understanding of what being means and it is this understanding that enables us to first raise the question of being in a meaningful manner. In making this claim, Heidegger is not simply making a point about the ubiquity and intelligibility of the copula. Instead, he is giving us a reason for thinking that the way to answer this question must be a hermeneutics of everyday experience. This is because our entire way of existing in the world presupposes some understanding of being, “in all comportment towards entities ... an understanding of being is already involved. For an entity can be encountered by us as an entity only in the light of the understanding of being”.

This understanding of being is “the condition of the possibility of discovering entities which are encountered in the world ... and which can thus make themselves known as they are in themselves”. Heidegger’s conception of this “understanding of being” is extremely broad and includes all possible ways in which we experience and deal with things in the world. Indeed, it includes all the ways in which we can exist in the world. This unthematic and necessarily vague “understanding” of being constitutes the unavoidable starting point for any phenomenological inquiry into the meaning of being.

The term Dasein is used by Heidegger to refer to this distinctive way in which the very possibility of our existence in the world is determined by our ability to understand being. In Heidegger’s terminology “Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological”. Of course, this does not mean that as Dasein we have always already formulated an explicit ontology. Instead, this understanding of being is said by Heidegger to be “pre-ontological”. All ontologies and specific interpretations of the being of entities arise, according to Heidegger, from this pre-ontological understanding of being. The basic structures of any area of research, be it history, language, life, and so on, “have already been worked out after a fashion in our pre-scientific ways of

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63 SZ, p. 5.
64 BP, p. 275.
65 SZ, p. 87.
66 SZ, p. 12.
experiencing and interpreting". It is, therefore, by means of a preliminary analytic of Dasein’s pre-ontological understanding of being that Heidegger hopes to disclose the meaning of being as such before it is narrowed down to a specific region of entities that delimit the objects of scientific research, for example, nature and history. It is in this way that Heidegger’s analysis of the basic structures of Dasein’s existence is to be understood as part of the task of fundamental ontology.

Heidegger’s analytic of the basic structures that determine the way in which Dasein exists as that which understands being must be clearly distinguished from an investigation into the ways in which humans exist. Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein is distinguishable from anthropology, psychology and what has come to be known as existentialism precisely because it is entirely oriented towards the understanding of being, that is to say Dasein, and is not concerned simply to describe the different ways in which humans live. It is for this reason that Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein is to be understood as ontological and so genuinely philosophical rather than, for example, anthropological. The analytic of Dasein is nevertheless directed at what it is to be human in a quite fundamental sense. This is because the being of Dasein “is in each case mine”. Because Dasein has this character of “mineness”, one “always use a personal pronoun when one addresses it [Dasein]: ‘I am’, ‘you are’”. As Dasein, “we are ourselves the entities to be analysed” in the analytic of Dasein. There remains, however, a basic disjunction between humans and Dasein. To highlight this disjunction Heidegger speaks of the “Dasein in man”.

It is because the being of Dasein is in each case mine that this being is always a matter of concern for us as Dasein. The being of Dasein is always an issue for Dasein even if it is not addressed in an explicitly ontological manner. The very motivation to raise the question of being comes from this distinctive feature of Dasein’s very existence,

if to interpret the meaning of being becomes our task, Dasein is not only the primary entity to be interrogated; it is also that

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67 SZ, p. 9.
68 SZ, p. 41.
69 SZ, p. 42.
70 See esp. KPM, p. 161.
entity which already comports itself, in its being, towards what we are asking about when we ask this question. But in that case the question of being is nothing other than the radicalisation of an essential tendency-of-being -- which belongs to Dasein itself -- the pre-ontological understanding of being. 71

In characterising Dasein’s being as “care” Heidegger is first of all highlighting the sense in which Dasein finds its being troubling. It is concerned with its own being and it is for this reason that working out the meaning of being can become a genuine task for Dasein. The very motivation for Heidegger’s attempt to grasp the meaning of being as the most fundamental matter or issue (Sache) of philosophy originates in Dasein itself. Fundamental ontology is nothing other than an attempt to genuinely take up, in the sense of authentically appropriate, and to work out rigorously the most fundamental, pre-ontological understanding that motivates Dasein’s entire existence.

As Dasein, our existence is always an issue for us. This means that Dasein is always concerned about the possible ways it can exist. Dasein always understands itself in terms of such possibilities, “Dasein is in every case what it can be, and in the way in which it is its possibility”.72 In this sense, Dasein exists as an “understanding potentiality-for-being.”73 This means that Dasein is always in some sense “ahead of itself” in that it is always directed towards possibilities.74 Dasein can never exhaust its possibilities. So long as Dasein exits, there will always be something still outstanding which Dasein can be but which has not yet become actual.75 Heidegger also uses the term “projection” to express the sense in which Dasein is always oriented towards its possibilities. As such, Dasein is characterised by Heidegger as a “self-projective being towards its ownmost potentiality-for-being”.76

The notion of “possibility” is a crucial “existentiale” in Heidegger’s characterisation of Dasein. Heidegger suggests that “possibility as an existentiale is the most primordial and ultimate positive way in which Dasein is

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72 SZ, p. 143.
73 SZ, p. 231.
74 See SZ, pp. 191-2.
75 See SZ, pp. 236 & 233.
76 SZ, p. 191.
characterised ontologically. In characterising Dasein in this way as a self-projective potentiality-for-being, Heidegger is not suggesting that Dasein can determine itself by freely selecting from an infinite array of possibilities. Dasein has always, already gotten itself into definite possibilities. Dasein always finds itself thrown into a world which discloses its possibilities. Dasein is to be understood, therefore, as “thrown possibility” or “thrown projection” or more fully “ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-in-a-world”.

This idea of thrown projection contains within it two of the three basic features of Heidegger’s characterisation of the care structure of the totality of the being of Dasein. That is to say, the structure that determines the way in which being becomes an issue for Dasein. At least terminologically, the easiest way to set out this structure is by using Heidegger’s threefold characterisation of care in terms of Dasein’s existentiality, facticity, and being-fallen. Existentiality refers to Dasein’s understanding self-projective ability-to-be, its being-ahead-of-itself. Facticity refers to Dasein’s thrownness into the world, its “already-being-in-a-world”. Within this framework, being-fallen is introduced in terms of Dasein’s “being alongside” the world. The complete formulation of the “existential totality of Dasein’s ontological structural whole”, which constitutes an elucidation of Dasein as being-in-the-world, is: “ahead-of-itself-being-already-in-(the world) as being alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)”. This constitutes the complete structure of Heidegger’s ontological explication of Dasein’s being as care. The crucial point to note is that this structure determines the way in which the being of Dasein becomes an issue for Dasein.

4.6 Das Man, Dasein’s Falling and Idle Talk

It is Dasein’s character as fallen that is of particular importance for us. As we have seen, it is an essential feature of Dasein that it exists as thrown into a world that is not of its own making. The world of Dasein is always a with-world (Mitwelt) in the sense that being-in-the-world is always being-with

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77 See SZ, pp. 143-4.
78 SZ, 144, cf. p. 223.
80 SZ, p. 192, cf., 249-250.
This world has always already been interpreted by others. The term falling is used by Heidegger to express the sense in which Dasein loses itself in the world as it has already been interpreted. If we are to avoid misunderstanding Heidegger from the start, it is important to note that the notion of falling is not used by Heidegger to signify "a fall from a purer and higher 'primal status'". Falling is not, therefore, to be interpreted in a theological manner. Nor does this term refer to "a bad and deplorable ontical property of which, perhaps, more advanced stages of human culture might be able to rid themselves".

Falling is not used to express any negative evaluation, but is used to signify that Dasein is proximally and for the most part alongside the 'world' of its concern. This absorption in ... has mostly the character of being-lost in the publicness of the 'they'. Dasein has, in the first instance, fallen away from itself as an authentic potentiality for being its self, and has fallen into the 'world'.

It is with the discussion of falling that the issue of authenticity and inauthenticity comes firmly into view.

As we have seen, Dasein is in each case mine: "in every case I am myself the entity which we call Dasein". The being of Dasein is an issue precisely because that being is mine. Yet, at the same time, Heidegger suggests that "proximally and for the most part" Dasein is not itself. This is because Dasein always first finds itself thrown into a world that has already been interpreted by others. As Heidegger points out in the section on destruction in Being and Time, "Dasein has grown up both into and in a traditional way of interpreting itself". Dasein understands the being of itself and with it the being of the world as it has been traditionally interpreted. It is from the tradition that, "everyday Dasein draws its pre-ontological way of interpreting its being". This means that in our everyday ways of existing, "it is not 'I', in the sense of my own self, that 'am', but rather the Others, whose way is that of the

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81 SZ, p. 118.  
82 SZ, p. 176.  
83 SZ, p. 176.  
84 SZ, p. 176.  
85 SZ, p. 313.  
86 SZ, p. 20.  
87 SZ, p. 130.
In response to the question, who is Dasein in its everyday way of being, Heidegger says that “the ‘who’ is not this one, not that one, not oneself, not some people, and not the some of them all. The ‘who’ is the neuter, ‘das Man’.” For want of a better word, I shall follow the convention of interpreting “Man” as the “they”. This “they-self” is to be distinguished from the authentic self.

The self of Dasein is constituted by the “they”. But who, we may ask, is the “they”? Heidegger’s somewhat paradoxical answer is “nobody”. The difficulty in understanding the significance of this claim is in no small part a difficulty with the interpretation of the term “Man”. The significance of the term “Man” is in part drawn from the common use in German of phrases with the form, Man kann ..., Man muß ..., etc. Such phrases refer to what can, must, or should be done in particular circumstances. This usage of “Man” is roughly equivalent to the English personal pronoun “one” as in “one should always ...”. In this way, the field of what is possible, in the sense of being appropriate, is implicitly determined. The word “Man” is also used to refer to what is thought to be the case as well as referring to received knowledge, as in the phrase “Man hat mir gesagt ...” (someone told me ...). This use of the “they” does not, however, refer to any class of people who somehow create and enforce the rules of appropriate behaviour and are the source of accepted knowledge. It refers instead to an essential feature of Dasein. Heidegger tells us that “the ‘they’ is an existentiale; and as a primordial phenomenon, it belongs to Dasein’s positive constitution”. “They” refers to those interpretations with which Dasein first comes to understand its own possibilities but which are not Dasein’s own. In this sense, the “they” plays a positive role in Dasein’s constitution because it is by means of the “they” that Dasein first comes to understand itself and the world. The world is first disclosed to Dasein by the “they” who articulate “the referential context of significance”. At the same time, however, the interpretations of the “they”,

88 SZ, p. 129.
89 SZ, p. 126.
90 SZ, p. 129.
91 See SZ, p. 128.
92 SZ, p. 129.
93 SZ, p. 129.
has already restricted the possible options of choice to what
lies within the range of the familiar, the attainable, the
respectable - that which is fitting and proper. This levelling
off of Dasein’s possibilities to what is proximally at its
everyday disposal also results in a dimming down of the
possible as such.\footnote{94}

The “they” controls and distributes the possibilities open to everyday Dasein.\footnote{95} The “they” is, therefore, problematic in two respects. The “they” constitutes Dasein’s self as inauthentic and in so doing limits and conceals Dasein’s possibilities.

Heidegger’s way of formulating this problem makes it particularly prone to misunderstanding. One way of misunderstanding Heidegger’s position is to equate the distinction between the “they” and authentic Dasein with the distinction between the authentic individual and society. Olafson, for example, takes Heidegger to be indicating that human existence, as essentially social, necessarily demands a degree of conformity that underpins the depersonalising character of mass society. By characterising the “they” as inauthentic, Olafson takes Heidegger to be maintaining a strongly negative attitude to mass society. On the basis of this interpretation, Olafson criticises Heidegger for failing to distinguish between “the innocuous and the objectionable forms of social anonymity”.\footnote{96} As a counter-example, Olafson points out that post codes are both depersonalising and beneficial. Heidegger’s interpretation is flawed on this view because it fails to recognise the benefits of mass society. If the “they” is equated with the anonymous character of mass society, Heidegger’s analysis begins to look like a rather elitist attack on mass society that is indifferent to the needs of the majority of people. The inadequacy of this and other like interpretations that equate the “they” with society becomes clear if we ask, what has a critique of mass society to do with the question of being? What has a critique of the depersonalising effect of social organisations like the mail to do with a phenomenological attempt to disclose the meaning of being? The answer is almost nothing. Either Heidegger’s description of the phenomenon of the “they” is an ultimately irrelevant digression or such interpretations have missed the point of Heidegger’s analysis. I will argue for the latter view by

\footnote{94} SZ, pp. 194-5.
\footnote{95} See SZ, p. 167.
\footnote{96} Frederick Olafson, “Heidegger à la Wittgenstein or ‘Coping’ with Professor Dreyfus” Inquiry, 37 (1994) pp. 45-64, at p. 57.
showing how Heidegger’s description of the way in which Dasein falls into the ‘they’ is of fundamental significance to the question of being.

Part of the difficulty with understanding Heidegger’s description of the “they” is one of distinguishing between Heidegger’s descriptions of the structures of everyday Dasein and the basic ontological structures that such descriptions are intended to disclose. By pointing out that the “they” determines what is “fitting and proper”, for example, Heidegger is not primarily interested in the way in which social norms determine behaviour. Instead, Heidegger uses such descriptions to generate new ways of expressing and thereby disclosing for the first time fundamental ontological structures that have remained concealed because of inadequacies inherent in the categories of traditional philosophy. Heidegger’s description of the phenomenon of idle talk provides a particularly clear example of how this distinction operates, not least because the notion of idle talk appears to refer to an everyday phenomenon of no philosophical or ontological significance whatsoever. As I hope to show, however, the notions of the “they” and “idle talk” are, along with Heidegger’s entire account of the care structure of Dasein’s being, fundamental to Heidegger’s conception of phenomenology.

The “they” expresses itself in idle talk. Idle talk represents one of the three ways in which Dasein is fallen in the way in which it is being-with-one-another. The other two ways are “curiosity” and “ambiguity”. “Idle talk” refers to a type of discourse that is “uprooted” in the sense that it lacks a genuine understanding of what the discourse is about:

because this discoursing has lost its primary relationship-of-being toward the entity talked about, or else never achieved such a relationship, it does not communicate in such a way as to let this entity be appropriated in a primordial manner, but communicates rather by following the route of gossiping and passing the word along. What is said-in-the-talk as such, spreads in wider circles and takes on an authoritative character. Things are so because one says so.

Idle talk refers to the possibility of understanding without “previously making the thing one’s own”. Because idle talk is taken up as authoritative, with all

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97 SZ, p. 252.
98 SZ, p. 168.
99 SZ, p. 169.
the claims to self-evidence and certainty that this implies, “idle talk discourages any new inquiry and any disputation”.100 This phenomenon of idle talk is not limited to “vocal gossip” but extends to the way in which we read:

It feeds upon a superficial reading. The average understanding of the reader will never be able to decide what has been drawn from primordial sources with a struggle and how much is just gossip. The average understanding, moreover, will not want any such distinction, and does not need it, because, of course, it understands everything.101

On the face of it Heidegger seems to be presenting us with a rather elitist attack on the facile nature of most people’s understanding. Towards the end of his discussion of idle talk, however, Heidegger’s provides a crucial clue to the real import of this account of the fallen Dasein understood as the “they” which expresses itself in idle talk. Heidegger tells us that the dominance of the public way in which things have been interpreted has been so decisive that the “they” “determines what and how one ‘sees’”.102 Indeed, this groundless idle talk constitutes “Dasein’s most everyday and most stubborn ‘Reality’”.103 This is the real confirmation of Heidegger’s claim that his interpretation of Dasein’s falling in idle talk “is purely ontological in its aims, and is far removed from any moralising critique of everyday Dasein, and from the aspirations of a philosophy of culture”.104 The phenomenon of idle talk as it is articulated by Heidegger has nothing to do with what we ordinarily think of as idle talk, except in so far as these everyday phenomena are used to develop concepts that enable Heidegger to find new ways to express, and thereby disclose, fundamental ontological structures. Heidegger is not making a point about how we spend most of our time in everyday life gossiping in the manner of the proverbial fishwife. Nor is Heidegger making a point about the ubiquity of hearsay and ignorance in everyday conversation. Heidegger’s real target is the interpretation of being as present-at-hand. His real target is the traditional interpretation of reality. Heidegger’s claim is that the traditional interpretation of reality is a matter of idle talk in the sense that it is taken up and accepted everywhere as authoritative and self-evident, even while the basis of this

100 SZ, p. 169.
101 SZ, p. 169.
102 SZ, p. 170.
103 SZ, p. 170.
104 SZ, p. 167.
interpretation is no longer genuinely understood. Our most self-evident understanding of the being of things, our very way of “seeing” reality is in fact groundless. The ubiquity of this groundless interpretation that closes off the possibility of alternative interpretations illustrates the basic structure of Dasein’s falling.

It is inherent in the structures of Dasein’s existence that Dasein first of all finds itself lost in the idle talk of the “they”. It is by means of these anonymous and essentially groundless interpretations that Dasein first understands its own being and the being of the world. Heidegger’s interpretation of the “they” as constituting Dasein’s self is not intended to detract from Heidegger’s initial assertion that “mineness” is an essential feature of Dasein. Because Dasein is essentially its own possibility,

it can, in its very being, ‘choose’ itself and win itself; it can also lose itself and never win itself; or only ‘seem’ to do so. But only in so far as it is essentially something which can be authentic - that is, something of its own - can it have lost itself and not yet won itself. As modes of being, authenticity and inauthenticity ... are both grounded in the fact that any Dasein whatsoever is characterised by mineness.105

The distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity, which is fundamental to Dasein’s existence, is a distinction between, on the one hand, an interpretation of one’s being and the being of the world that is taken up as one’s own, in the sense that the original understanding that motivates the interpretation is appropriated, and on the other hand, an interpretation that is not appropriated in this manner.

It is because Dasein first of all finds itself lost in interpretations that are not its own but rather those of the “they” that Dasein is set the task of finding itself.106 This does not mean however that authentic being-one’s-self somehow requires Dasein to detach itself from the “they”. Since the “they” constitutes one of the essential ontological structures of Dasein’s existence, Dasein can no more completely escape from the “they” than it can escape from its own being. Authenticity does not involve an absolute break with inauthenticity but rather

105 SZ, pp. 42-43.
106 See SZ, p. 268.
constitutes a modification of Dasein’s “they-self”.\textsuperscript{107} As such, there is always an essential relation between authenticity and inauthenticity. Dasein has grown up in the first instance into the interpretations of the they,

\begin{quote}
with never a possibility of extrication. In it, out of it, and against it, all genuine understanding, interpreting, and communicating, all re-discovering and appropriating anew, are performed. In no case is a Dasein, untouched and unseduced by this way in which things have been interpreted.\textsuperscript{108}
\end{quote}

Dasein is never and can never find itself “set before the open country of a ‘world-in-itself’, so that it just beholds what it encounters”.\textsuperscript{109} Dasein’s struggle to genuinely grasp its being and the being of the world cannot be achieved by starting anew in a naive beholding, but rather must be attained by means of a positive struggle, an \textit{Auseinandersetzung}, with the idle talk of the they that constitutes Dasein’s most stubborn “reality”. It is this sense in which Dasein is essentially and unavoidably fallen that is at the heart of Heidegger’s account of Dasein’s historicity.

\section{4.7 Concluding Summary}

In this chapter, I have introduced Heidegger’s argument for the necessity of historical inquiry for phenomenology. A range of parallels are clearly evident between Heidegger’s formulation of the method of phenomenology, discussed in the first section of this chapter, and his explication of the structure of the being of Dasein understood as care, discussed in the second section of this chapter. These parallels are no accident. While Heidegger does not explicitly set out the connection between the method of phenomenology and his analytic of Dasein, this connection is fundamental to the way in which Heidegger’s entire philosophical position is developed.

Philosophy is nothing other than one possible way in which Dasein can exist. The very nature of philosophy and the ways in which philosophy can be done are fundamentally pre-determined by the basic structures of Dasein’s existence because philosophy is always done by Dasein. The way in which

\begin{footnotes}
\item[107] See \textit{SZ}, p. 130.
\item[108] \textit{SZ}, p. 169.
\item[109] \textit{SZ}, p. 169.
\end{footnotes}
Heidegger's analytic of Dasein constitutes an elucidation of the basic structures that necessarily govern every genuine attempt to do philosophy becomes particularly clear when we consider the parallels between Heidegger's account of Dasein's falling and the phenomenological struggle to return to the matters themselves.

As we have seen, the essence of phenomenology is contained in the demand for a return to the matters themselves. This slogan is directed against the dogmatic acceptance of all traditional stand points and worldviews. Instead, we must break away from the tradition and, to this extent, begin anew. This conception of philosophical method is hardly peculiar to phenomenology understood as a particular historical school of thought. It captures the very essence of philosophical research. On this point philosophers as diverse as Descartes, Nietzsche, Husserl and Kant, just to name a few, would be in agreement with Heidegger. The problem, in Heidegger's view, is that this genuine insight into the essential nature of philosophy has been distorted, not least we might say, because the basic features of this conception of philosophy are accepted as self-evident. In particular, the very nature of the tradition is not itself taken up as a philosophical problem and the philosophical basis for the conception of genuinely understanding a matter for oneself remains entirely unclear. Moreover, it is naively assumed that the tradition can be overcome by an "immediate beholding" of the matters at issue. In so doing, these philosophers do not overcome the tradition, but rather fall prey to the most pernicious effects of the tradition.

Heidegger, in contrast, attempts, by means of his existential analytic of Dasein, to provide a genuinely philosophical account of structures that implicitly determine every possible attempt to do philosophy. From this perspective, Heidegger's account of the way in which Dasein falls into the idle talk of the they constitutes a fundamental ontological explication of what we ordinarily understand by the term tradition. The very idea of the "tradition" is no longer understood merely in a vague, everyday way as the source of prejudices. Instead, the basic structures of our vague, everyday understanding of the tradition are explicated in terms of the basic existential structures of Dasein. The phenomenological attempt to overcome the pernicious effects of the tradition and grasp the matters themselves is, therefore, to be understood more fully as a counter-movement to Dasein's being-fallen. This way of formulating the problem of the tradition is intended to show, among other
things, why we can never fully escape from the tradition. Indeed, if we are to in any way escape the pernicious effects of the tradition, we must explicitly engage with the tradition, understood as the history that we ourselves are. It is by grasping the sense in which the tradition is inauthentic that we gain an insight into the problem of authenticity. And it is with this conception of authenticity that Heidegger provides us with a philosophical elucidation of what is meant by the claim that we must do philosophy for ourselves. Since we can never make an absolute break with the tradition, the possibility of genuinely doing philosophy for one’s self requires that we engage in a genuine appropriation of the tradition. The precise nature of this authentic appropriation of the tradition is presented in Heidegger’s temporal interpretation of Dasein’s care structure.
CHAPTER FIVE

TEMPORALITY, RETRIEVAL, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF AUTHENTIC HISTORIOGRAPHY

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed Heidegger’s arguments for why a process of historical destruction is integral to phenomenology, where phenomenology is understood as an attempt to break through the concealments brought about by the tradition and return to the “matters themselves”. Heidegger’s account of the nature and necessity of this destruction for the method of phenomenology is based upon his interpretation of Dasein’s existence as thrown and fallen into the inauthentic and groundless interpretations of the “they”. It is this account of the “they”, understood as an essential element of Dasein’s existence, an “existenzial”, that provides Heidegger with the basis for his account of the tradition. And it is precisely because the “they” is an existenzial that phenomenological destruction is not to be understood as an entirely negative attempt to overcome the tradition, as if the tradition were something external to Dasein and from which Dasein could finally escape.

The very inauthenticity of the way in which Dasein takes up the interpretations of the “they”, interpretations that are not Dasein’s own, raises the question of the possibility of authentic understanding. How can Dasein be authentic if it can never escape the inauthenticity that is a fundamental part of its existence? This is also the question of how Dasein can “return to the matters themselves” if it can never escape this inauthenticity. One thing at least is clear: authenticity, understood as a task, cannot mean the task of breaking absolutely with the tradition. Instead, for Heidegger, a process of appropriation, of making the tradition one’s own, is central to the notion of authenticity. Phenomenological destruction culminates in the positive appropriation or “retrieval” of the tradition understood as the past that we ourselves are.

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The structures that determine the possibility of authenticity are to be found in Heidegger's temporal interpretation of the care structure of Dasein. The central significance of Heidegger's temporal interpretation of Dasein for the method of destruction and retrieval is made apparent from the very beginning of Heidegger's discussion of "the task of destroying the history of ontology" in Being and Time. Heidegger notes that:

All research - and not least that which operates within the range of the central question of being - is an ontical possibility of Dasein. Dasein's being finds its meaning in temporality. But temporality is also the condition which makes historicity possible as a temporal kind of being which Dasein itself possesses, regardless of whether or how Dasein is an entity 'in time'.

According to Heidegger, therefore, temporality is the basis for Dasein's historicity. Heidegger goes on to explain that "historicity",

stands for the state of being that is constitutive for Dasein's 'happening' (Geschehens) as such: ... Dasein 'is' its past in the way of its own being, which, to put it roughly, 'happens' (geschieht) out of its future on each occasion.

With this arresting reference to the way in which the past happens out of the future, which will be discussed later in this chapter, we get a glimpse of the quite extraordinary nature of Heidegger's temporal interpretation of the historical character of human existence.

Not only does Heidegger argue that temporality is the basis of historicity, he also argues that historicity is always "prior" to and more fundamental than the science of history. On the basis of his temporal interpretation of Dasein, Heidegger promises to provide a philosophical account for the very possibility of history and with it historiography. Heidegger tells us that:

In terms of temporality, it then becomes intelligible why Dasein is, and can be, historical in the basis of its being, and why, as historical, it can develop historiography.

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1 SZ, p. 19.
2 SZ, pp. 19-20.
3 SZ, pp. 234-235.
Moreover, Heidegger’s account of temporality also aims at disclosing the possibility of a type of authentic historical inquiry that is more fundamental than what we ordinarily understand by historical research. Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein’s temporality provides a glimpse into the very heart of the problematic of *Being and Time* while at the same time suggesting the possibility of a new, authentic way of doing historical research.

**Temporality and Care**

5.2 The Ontological Significance of Time

Heidegger’s aim in the first part of *Being and Time* is “the interpretation of Dasein in terms of temporality (Zeitlichkeit), and the explication of time as the transcendental horizon for the question of being”. The clue that suggests time as the horizon for any understanding whatsoever of being is to be found, according to Heidegger, in the way in which time has long been used as a criterion for distinguishing between various realms of entities. We have already seen that the early Heidegger tried to distinguish between history and natural science on the basis of the different ways in which these two types of inquiry use and understand time. On a much grander scale, Heidegger argues that the total sphere of possible entities has long been divided up between things that are taken to exist “in” time and things the very nature of which is determined by their being “outside” of time. A distinction is made between “temporal” entities, such as natural and historical events, and “non-temporal” or “supra-temporal” entities which are the subject matter, for example, of logic, mathematics and metaphysics. On this view, to say that something is “timeless” is not to cease referring to time. On the contrary, it is to use time precisely as a way of defining the very nature or being of the entity that is said to be “timeless”. It is with this fundamental, ontological sense of time that Heidegger’s discussion of temporality is ultimately concerned.

Heidegger also points out that the distinction between “in” time and “outside” of time has been traditionally used to contrast, “the ‘timeless’ meaning of propositions with the ‘temporal’ course of propositional assertions”. It is of

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4 SZ, p. 1.
5 SZ, p. 18, cf. HCT, p. 5.
6 SZ, p. 18.
no small significance that this distinction has also traditionally been used to provide an important philosophical argument for the separation between the subject matter of history and the subject matter of philosophy. Philosophy is said to be concerned with the absolutely valid and “timeless” meanings of propositions which are distinguishable from the temporal context within which propositions are uttered. Philosophy asks questions about the validity of a judgement and does not primarily concern itself with “historical” questions about when, where, why, or by whom a judgement was uttered at a particular time. According to Heidegger, however, this very distinction is itself based on a particular use of time as a way of distinguishing between the temporal and historical, on the one hand, and, the “timeless” and a-historical, on the other.

Unfortunately, this line of questioning was never developed in Being and Time. While the sense in which time provides the horizon for every possible understanding of being is clearly the central concern of Being and Time, the published version never progressed beyond the preliminary analytic of Dasein. Just as Heidegger’s attempt to retrieve the question of being in Being and Time never really progressed beyond the interpretation of Dasein’s understanding of being, so too his account of the Temporality of being never progressed beyond a preliminary interpretation of the temporality of Dasein. Heidegger uses the term Zeitlichkeit when referring to the “temporality” of Dasein and the term Temporalität when referring to the “Temporality” of being. Heidegger’s account of the temporality (Zeitlichkeit) of Dasein was intended to prepare the way for an account of the Temporality (Temporalität) of being as such. While the following discussion of temporality will be largely confined to Heidegger’s account of the temporality (Zeitlichkeit) of Dasein, as it is developed in the second division of Being and Time, it is important to keep in mind that this account of Dasein’s temporality had as its goal an account of the Temporality of being as such.

5.3 The Everyday Concept of Time

To properly understand Heidegger’s account of temporality, this notion of temporality must be clearly distinguished from our everyday understanding of time. The ordinary conception of time is limited to what Heidegger calls “within-time-ness” (Innerzeitigkeit). Ordinarily, time is used to refer to events that happen “in” time in the sense of occurring at a particular time. The most distinctive feature of this common understanding of time is, according to Heidegger, that time is understood and experienced as a “sequence of nows”.
Heidegger argues that this way of understanding time has been dominant, in both everyday experience and in philosophy, at least since Aristotle. It is worth noting, however, that one important exception to this general claim is provided by the early Christian experience of time and Heidegger’s own attempt to break away from the dominant interpretation of time clearly draws some of its conceptual resources from the Christian tradition.  

With the everyday conception of time,

time shows itself as a sequence of ‘nows’ (Jetzt) which are constantly ‘present-at-hand’, simultaneously passing away and coming along. Time is understood as a succession, as a ‘flowing stream’ of ‘nows’, as the ‘course of time’.

When time is understood in this way it operates primarily as a measure. Understood as a homogeneous sequence of nows, time tells us when something happened in relation to all the other moments in time. With this conception of time, we speak of events as earlier and later. Heidegger develops a striking phenomenological description of the way in which this ordinary understanding of time manifests itself explicitly in the use of clocks. Heidegger does not limit his use of the term “clock” to any particular way of measuring time, for example, by means of a wrist-watch or by marking the course of the sun with a sun dial. A “clock”, in Heidegger’s terminology, is nothing other than an indicator of a succession of nows that is used to measure the “course of time” and anything that can be used in this way is, by definition, a “clock”. The term “clock” is not, therefore, used to refer to any particular class of things but rather indicates a way of interpreting time. When time is interpreted in this way,

it is made public, in such a way that it is encountered on each occasion and at any time for everyone as ‘now and now and now’. This time which is ‘universally’ accessible in clocks is something that we come across as a present-at-hand multiplicity of ‘nows’, so to speak.

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8 SZ, p. 422.
9 See SZ, pp. 413-418, 421; BP, pp. 257-8
10 SZ, p. 418.
By means of this everyday conception of time, every Dasein is able to encounter entities within the world as entities within the same, shared world-time (Weltzeit). This public, world-time is the time "in which" the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand entities that exist within-the-world are encountered and it is for this reason that we call these entities "within time".

In addition to presenting time as a public measure, the everyday understanding of time privileges the present. When time is understood as a succession of nows, the present stands out from the past and the future:

- time is already interpreted as present, past is interpreted as no-longer-present, future as indeterminate not-yet-present; past is irretrievable (unwiederbringlich), future indeterminate.

This way of understanding time conditions the way in which we understand the past and the future. The past and the future are defined negatively as that which is not present. The "nows" that have "passed away" make up what we call the past and the "nows" that are yet to come define the future. This succession of nows also has a directional sense that is inexorable and irreversible, "everything that happens (Geschehende) rolls out of an infinite future into an irretrievable past".

With this account of time, Heidegger captures what is immediately intelligible and recognisable in our ordinary conception of time. What could be more obvious than this account of the passing of time which is everywhere attested to and publicly measured by clocks? Heidegger clearly accepts that,

*the ordinary representation of time has its natural justification.*

It belongs to Dasein’s average kind of being, and to that understanding of being which proximally prevails.

In the ordinary course of events, it is perfectly justifiable that we should use and understand time as a measure. Indeed, according to Heidegger, this way of

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11 See SZ, pp. 414 & 419-420.
12 See SZ, p. 412.
14 See SZ, p. 423.
15 *The Concept of Time, op. cit.* p. 18.
16 SZ, p. 426.
using time as a measure is fundamental to the very possibility of natural science. And Heidegger is certainly not trying to suggest through his analysis of the ordinary conception of time that natural science is somehow unjustifiable or invalid.

It is also perfectly justifiable to say that the passing of time is irreversible. It is quite obvious that we cannot reverse the course of history. Nevertheless, Heidegger argues that this everyday interpretation of time loses its justification if it claims to be the “true” conception of time in such a way that it is prescribed as “the sole possible horizon within which time is to be interpreted”.17 We know from the discussion of the “they” in the previous chapter that in characterising something as “everyday” and self-evident, Heidegger is characterising it as fallen. In so far as Dasein understands itself in terms of the public measure of time, it “does not know this ‘time’ as its own” but rather utilises “the time with which ‘they’ reckon”.18 The problem with the ordinary understanding of time is that by establishing itself as the only correct interpretation of time it conceals the possibility of an authentic and more fundamental interpretation of time: time understood not in terms of the within-time-ness of entities within the world but rather time understood as temporality. This notion of temporality is intended to provide both the primordial meaning of Dasein’s being and the primordial source of the ordinary conception of time.19

5.4 Temporality and Care in Being and Time

The issue of temporality is formally introduced in the second division of Being and Time as part of a response to what Heidegger takes to be the limitations of the analytic of Dasein formulated in the first division. In setting out the care structure of Dasein’s being in the first division, Heidegger took as his starting point Dasein in its everydayness. Heidegger begins with the everyday understanding of being that is distinctive of Dasein as that which understands being. This means, however, that the structures worked out in this analytic were derived from Dasein’s inauthentic way of existing. Heidegger is acutely aware

17 SZ, p. 426.
18 SZ, p. 411.
of the problems that this creates for his interpretation and he begins the second division of *Being and Time* by suggesting that “one thing has become unmistakable: *our existential analysis of Dasein up till now cannot lay claim to primordiality*”.20 The very nature of Heidegger's starting point means that he cannot be certain that his own interpretation does not itself remain only an inauthentic account of Dasein. In response to this problem, Heidegger's temporal interpretation of Dasein is intended to establish temporality as “the primordial condition of the possibility of care”. What Heidegger hopes to show is that the unity and totality of Dasein's being, understood as care, is made possible by the structure of temporality. Moreover, Heidegger tries to provide concrete evidence of this by showing that the structural totality of Dasein's being as care set out in first division only “first becomes existentially intelligible” when it is interpreted in term of its temporality.21

In the previous chapter we saw that the totality of Dasein's being as care is to be understood in terms of Dasein's “ahead-of-itself-already-being-in (a world) as being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)”. This structure expresses the unity of Dasein's existentiality, facticity and falling. In the second division of *Being and Time*, Heidegger argues that it is temporality that “makes possible the unity of existence, facticity and falling, and in this way constitutes primordially the totality of the structure of care”.22 In this way, Heidegger tries to show that his interpretation of Dasein in terms of existentiality, facticity and falling is not arbitrarily pieced together. Instead, these structures arise out of the essential unity of the temporal structure of past, present and future.

Heidegger's basic claim is that the multiplicity and unity of Dasein's modes of being are made possible by the way in which temporality brings itself about or realises itself in Dasein.23 When setting out this structure, Heidegger refers to the way in which “temporality temporalises itself” (*Zeitlichkeit zeitigt sich*). Heidegger uses the verb *zeitigen* which, while it literally means to bring about or bring to fruition, is usually translated as “to temporalise” so as to capture the sense in which Heidegger is playing on the word *Zeit* (time) in

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20 See SZ, p. 233.
21 See SZ, p. 234.
22 See SZ, p. 328.
23 See SZ, p. 328.
Heidegger’s point is that Dasein is temporality in the sense that
Dasein’s possible ways of being are at the most fundamental level constituted by
temporal structures. More specifically, temporality can realise or temporalise
itself in both an authentic and an inauthentic manner:

temporality has different possibilities and different ways of
temporalising itself. The basic possibilities of existence, the
authenticity and inauthenticity of Dasein, are grounded
ontologically on possible temporalisations of temporality.

Not only are the basic structures of Dasein to be characterised in terms of their
temporal basis but this temporal structure can be realised in both an authentic and
an inauthentic manner which in turn grounds the possible ways in which Dasein
can exist as authentic and inauthentic. To speak of the way in which temporality
temporalises itself authentically is, in Heidegger’s terminology, to provide a
temporal interpretation of the way in which Dasein can exist authentically. This
means that the temporal structures of past, present and future, which make
possible and unify Dasein’s existentiality, facticity and falling, are to be
interpreted both with regard to the authentic and inauthentic way in which this
temporal structure is realised in Dasein’s existence.

In the second division of Being and Time, Heidegger repeats the
existential analytic of Dasein presented in the first division by interpreting the
essential structures of Dasein with regard to their temporality. The most basic
features of the temporal structure of care are set out by Heidegger as follows: the
“ahead-of-itself” is grounded in the future, the “being-already-in” has the
character of “having been” (Gewesenheit), and “being-alongside” becomes
possible in “making-present” (Gegenwärtigen). Accordingly, the primary
meaning of existentiality is to be found in the character of the future, the primary
meaning of facticity is to be found in having-been, and the primary meaning of
falling is to be found in making-present. Heidegger tries to show that the care
structure set out in the first division of Being and Time is implicitly and
essentially temporal in nature such that these structures can only be properly
grasped and made genuinely intelligible when these temporal features have been
made explicit. In what follows, I will briefly set out Heidegger’s account of

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24 SZ, p. 304.
25 SZ, p. 327.
26 For a discussion of this aspect of the structure of Heidegger’s argument, see Dahlstrom,
the authentic and inauthentic ways in which temporality temporalises itself. This will be done only in so far as it is necessary to provide an adequate context within which to introduce the notion of retrieval as one of the key elements of the way in which temporality temporalises itself authentically and which grounds the possibility of authentic historiography.

5.4.1 Future

In the first division of Being and Time, Heidegger characterised Dasein as an understanding “self-projective being towards its ownmost potentiality-for-being”. In the second division, Heidegger argues that this structure is to be understood in terms of the future:

when one understands oneself projectively in an existentiell possibility, the future underlies this understanding, and it does so as a coming-towards-oneself from the current possibility as which one’s Dasein exists. The future makes ontologically possible an entity which is in such a way that it exists understandingly in its potentiality-for-being.

Dasein is always directed towards and understands itself in terms of possibilities that Dasein can be but which Dasein is not. Heidegger argues that this structure of possibility is to be understood in an essentially temporal manner as being futural. The entire analytic of Dasein, in which this structure of potentiality-for-being is fundamental, gives a distinctive priority to the future. To be Dasein is to be futural.

While Dasein is always “ahead-of-itself” and therefore futural, Dasein can be futural in either an authentic or an inauthentic manner. Heidegger uses the term “anticipation” to characterise the authentic future. In contrast, the inauthentic future is said by Heidegger to have the character of “awaiting”. The structure of anticipation was first disclosed by Heidegger in his analysis of the phenomenon of “being-towards-death” in the first two chapters of the second division of Being and Time. One of the most important features of Heidegger’s analysis of the phenomenon of death is that it prepares the way for his later

27 SZ, p. 191.
28 SZ, p. 336.
temporal interpretation by concretely disclosing these implicitly temporal structures of anticipation and awaiting.

Death can be understood as an event that will occur sometime in the future. This is the way in which death is ordinarily understood. When understood in this way, death is understood as a public event which everyone knows about. At the same time, death is understood as an event that will occur at an entirely indeterminate time in the future and as such does not affect us now. Heidegger captures a particularly familiar aspect of the way in which death is ordinarily understood when he writes that, “one knows about the certainty of death, and yet ‘is’ not authentically certain of one’s own”.29 We all know that death is inevitable and yet somehow it is an event that will not happen to me, at least not yet. It is for precisely this reason that such an interpretation of death can be said to be inauthentic. The possibility of death is not taken up as one’s own possibility. Instead, this familiar interpretation of the “they” results in the dismissal of death as a genuine possibility. With this understanding of death, death is interpreted as a future event for which we wait.30

Death can also be understood as a fundamental phenomenon of life. According to Heidegger we are always and essentially “being-towards-death”. By this, Heidegger does not mean that to understand death authentically we must somehow constantly and explicitly think about death. In characterising Dasein as “being-towards-death”, Heidegger’s claim is that the possibility of death is an essential feature of Dasein’s existence. To be alive as Dasein is to have death as an unavoidable possibility. Death is the ultimate “not yet” towards which Dasein comports itself. Moreover, it is with death that Dasein stands before itself in its ownmost potentiality-for-being.31 Heidegger uses the term “anticipation” to refer to this “possibility of understanding one’s ownmost and uttermost potentiality-for-being”.32

One’s own death is the one thing that cannot be absorbed into the public interpretations of the “they”. The possibility of one’s own death is uniquely and unavoidably one’s own. No one can die in one’s stead. In this way, the

29 SZ, p. 258.
30 See SZ, p. 262
31 SZ, p. 250.
32 SZ, p. 263.
possibility of death forces us to confront our specificity or “mineness” (Jemeinigkeit) as Heidegger calls it. My own death is the one thing that is uniquely mine. As such, the unique “mineness” of the possibility of my own death wrenches me away from the “they”. This specificity is fundamental to Dasein’s existence and to the possibility of authentic existence, understood as resolutely taking up that which is most one’s own. It is death, understood in this distinctively existential manner, that gives content to the claim made at the beginning of Being and Time that Dasein is in each case “mineness” (Jemeinigkeit) and to the subsequent claim that because Dasein is in each case its own possibilities it can “choose” itself and win itself or lose itself.

Angst is the “state-of-mind” (Befindlichkeit) that is associated with an authentic understanding of death. Heidegger characterises Angst as a state-of-mind that “discloses an insignificance of the world; and this insignificance reveals the nullity of that with which one can concern oneself”. Angst in the face of death brings Dasein “back to the pure ‘that-it-is’ of one’s ownmost individualized thrownness”. In this way, Dasein is thrown into “uncanniness” (Unheimlichkeit). Dasein finds itself essentially homeless and out of place and in so doing is thrown out of the self-evidence of everydayness. This is not a negative but rather a productive event. It brings Dasein back to its existence as possibility, and, as a possibility that can be repeated, it reveals the possibility of an authentic potentiality-for-being.

Heidegger argues that when death is understood in this way, it is understood in a way that is distinctively temporal and which discloses a distinctive way of understanding the character of the future. Death indicates something that is futural but which, when authentically understood, surpasses the limitations of the ordinary understanding of the future precisely because it does not simply refer to some event that will happen at some future moment “in time”. Thus Heidegger writes that,

by the term ‘futural’, we do not here have in view a ‘now’ which has not yet become ‘actual’ and which sometime will be

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33 SZ, p. 263.
34 See SZ, p. 42.
35 SZ, p. 343.
36 SZ, p. 343.
37 SZ, p. 343.
for the first time. We have in view the coming (Kunft) in which Dasein, in its ownmost potentiality-for-being, comes towards itself. Anticipation makes Dasein authentically futural.\textsuperscript{38}

The authentic future involves a movement “towards­oneself” understood as a futural possibility that conditions our very way of existing. This movement brings into question our present ways of understanding by throwing Dasein into uncanniness and discloses the possibility of an authentic way of being. In this way, Heidegger introduces the possibility of a way of understanding the future in terms of a temporal interpretation of Dasein’s way of existing.

5.4.2 Past

In coming towards itself, Dasein has always already found itself thrown into the world and as such has always taken up a definite way of existing. This aspect of “being­already-in” is interpreted by Heidegger as having the temporal character of “having­been”. If it is to be properly understood, this temporal element of “having­been” must be grasped from the perspective of Dasein’s existentiality as futural:

As authentically futural, Dasein is authentically as “having­been”. Anticipation of one’s uttermost and ownmost possibility is coming back understandingly to one’s ownmost “been”. Only so far as it is futural can Dasein be authentically as having­been. The character of “having­been” arises, in a certain way, from the future.\textsuperscript{39}

This characterisation of Dasein’s “facticity” as “having­been” must, therefore, be clearly distinguished from talk about “facts” that are past. Heidegger maintains a strict terminological distinction between the “past” (Vergangenheit) and “having­been” (Gewesen). So long as Dasein exists it is never past. So long as it is Dasein (being­there), Dasein is not and can never be, “a fact which is present­at­hand, arising and passing away ‘in the course of time’, with a bit of it past already”.\textsuperscript{40} Instead, Dasein exists as “I am­as­having­been” (ich bin­gewesen). Understood authentically, the past is not an event that is no longer present, but rather a distinctive aspect of the way in which Dasein

\textsuperscript{38} SZ, p. 325.
\textsuperscript{39} SZ, p. 326.
\textsuperscript{40} SZ, p. 328.
exists, which is authentically understood as futural.\textsuperscript{41} That is to say, the way in which Dasein understands its past is, in this sense, conditioned by its understanding of the possibilities open to its existence.

Heidegger uses the term “retrieval” (\textit{Wiederholung}) to characterise Dasein’s authentic way of having-been and contrasts this with Dasein’s inauthentic way of having-been which Heidegger calls “having-forgotten” (\textit{Vergessenheit}).\textsuperscript{42} More literally \textit{Wiederholung} means repetition.\textsuperscript{43} Retrieval does not in any way refer to the repeatability of past events. Heidegger is not concerned with the question of whether or not past events can somehow, as a matter of fact, happen again. Heidegger writes that:

\begin{quote}
The Dasein that has-been-there is not disclosed in order to be actualised again. The retrieval of that which is possible does not bring again something that is ‘past’, nor does it bind the present.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

Retrieval does not involve binding the present to the past by simply repeating the past. Instead, “retrieval makes a \textit{reciprocative rejoinder} to the possibility of that existence which has-been-there”.\textsuperscript{45} It constitutes a productive appropriation and response to the past. At the same time, retrieval constitutes a “a disavowal of that which in the ‘today’, is working itself out as the ‘past’”.\textsuperscript{46} That is to say, retrieval constitutes a critique of the way in which the past is understood in the present inauthentically and as such a critique of the way in which the past binds the present in the form of the inauthentic, traditional understandings of the “they”.


\textsuperscript{42} On Heidegger’s notion of “retrieval” generally and its relationship to the Kierkegaardian notion of existential repetition and Husserl’s phenomenological return to beginnings see John Caputo’s \textit{“Hermeneutics as the Recovery of Man” Man and World}. 15 (1982) pp. 343-367.

\textsuperscript{43} I will use both “retrieval” and “repetition” to translate \textit{Wiederholung}, depending on context.

\textsuperscript{44} SZ, pp. 385-386.

\textsuperscript{45} SZ, p. 386.

\textsuperscript{46} SZ, p. 386.
Retrieval aims at the recovery of possibilities. Heidegger states that "in retrieval the Dasein which has-been-there is understood in its authentic possibility which has been". Because retrieval refers to the repeatability of possibilities rather than the repeatability of past events, retrieval is essentially oriented towards the future. Indeed, it is precisely because in speaking about Dasein's existence as "having-been" Heidegger is speaking above all else about possibilities, rather than facts that are past, that Heidegger can talk about the retrieval of Dasein's "having-been" and argue that "the character of 'having-been' arises, in a certain way, from the future". Since the very possibility of Dasein's authenticity lies in Dasein's existing as a "potentiality-for-being", for Dasein to be authentic it must understand its existence which is unavoidably "having-been" in terms of repeatable possibilities.

It must be constantly borne in mind that "having-been" does not refer to a past that has past and is no longer. "Having-been" as "I am-as-having-been" refers to a possibility of existence that has already implicitly come down to us. And because Dasein always finds itself first of all thrown into a particular situation with particular possibilities, there is always a hidden handing down to oneself of the possibilities that have come down to oneself from one's heritage. Retrieval is handing down explicitly a possibility of existence that has come down to us. Retrieval involves a process in which Dasein "hands itself down to itself ... in a possibility which it has inherited and yet has chosen". Heidegger equates the retrieval of a possibility of existence that has been with the possibility that Dasein may choose its hero. This is a choice "which makes one free for the struggle of loyalty following in the footsteps of that which can be repeated".

This choice is never the arbitrary choice of a free-floating, isolated individual. For Heidegger, Dasein does not and cannot exist as an isolated individual, but rather exists fatefully in the sense that its possibilities are already handed down to it implicitly from its generation. Moreover, since Dasein exists as being-with-others, Dasein has a destiny. Heidegger uses the term "destiny" (Geschick) to refer to the historical happening of a community. This means that for Heidegger "Dasein's fateful destiny in and with its 'generation' goes to make

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47 SZ, p. 395.
48 SZ, p. 326.
49 SZ, p. 384.
50 SZ, p. 385.
up the full authentic, historical happening (Geschehen) of Dasein.\textsuperscript{51} It is in retrieval that "fateful destiny can be disclosed explicitly as bound up with the heritage which has come down to us".\textsuperscript{52} And, therefore, it is by means of retrieval that "Dasein first has its own history made manifest".\textsuperscript{53} This does not mean that retrieval always or necessarily involves writing history. Heidegger explains that:

Dasein does not first become historical in retrieval; but because it is historical as temporal, it can take itself over in its history by retrieving. For this, no historiography is as yet needed.\textsuperscript{54}

It does mean, however, that retrieval makes authentic historiography possible.

Just as retrieval does not refer to the repeatability of past events, so too, Dasein’s inauthentic way of having-been in “having-forgotten” does not refer to the forgetting of past events. With this temporal interpretation of Dasein, Heidegger is certainly not trying to suggest that Dasein exists inauthentically when Dasein forgets or is ignorant of past events. Instead, what is forgotten in this state of “having-forgotten” is Dasein’s own potentiality-for-being. Dasein forgets that its “having-been” as a possibility can be retrieved and appropriated as its own. When Dasein forgets in this way, all that is left of Dasein’s “having-been” are the actual events that have been. Dasein inauthentically understands its “having-been” by retaining and accumulating these past events as factual knowledge about the past. As such, it is possible for one to have an encyclopaedic knowledge of facts about the past while still being “forgetful” in Heidegger’s sense of this term. An “antiquarian” approach to history is, therefore, characteristic for Heidegger of an inauthentic and forgetful way of understanding the past. This critique of the practice of understanding and writing history in a way that centres on the task of accumulating factual knowledge about the past, a critique that is a fundamental outcome of Heidegger’s distinction between authentic and inauthentic ways of “having-been” will be discussed in more detail in the second part of this chapter, once the full structure of Heidegger’s account of temporality has been set out.

\textsuperscript{51} SZ. pp. 384-385.
\textsuperscript{52} SZ. p. 386.
\textsuperscript{53} SZ. p. 386.
\textsuperscript{54} SZ. p. 386.
5.4.3 Present

The third and perhaps the most obscure aspect of Heidegger's temporal interpretation of Dasein's being as care concerns what we ordinarily understand as the present. Heidegger's attempt at a temporal interpretation of care becomes somewhat forced at this point. Having set out his temporal interpretation of Dasein's existentiality (ahead-of-itself) and facticity (being-already-in), Heidegger notes that he is without a temporal indication for the third item that is constitutive of care. While the "ahead-of-itself" and "being-already-in" are implicitly temporal in the way of ahead (future) and already (past), there is no such implicit temporal element to the "being-alongside which falls". Nevertheless, Heidegger tells us that,

this should not signify that falling is not also grounded in temporality; it should instead give us a hint that making-present, as the primary basis for falling into the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand with which we concern ourselves, remains included in the future and in having-been, and is included in these in the mode of primordial temporality.55

When Dasein exists authentically, it does so precisely to be more authentically "there" in the situation which has been disclosed. The authentic disclosure of Dasein's situation Heidegger calls the "moment of vision" (Augenblick). In speaking about the disclosure of Dasein's "situation", Heidegger is not making reference to spatial locations or to any spatial structure. No object or relation of objects is disclosed in the moment of vision. Instead, the "situation" refers to the totality of presuppositions that guide and make possible any interpretation. What is disclosed in the moment of vision is the very understanding that guides any interpretation. The situation that is disclosed in the moment of vision is, therefore, a hermeneutic situation rather than a spatial relationship between entities. And it is the structure of this hermeneutic situation that underpins the methodological character of Heidegger's existential analytic in general.

In contrast with this "moment of vision", Heidegger uses the term "making-present" to refer to the inauthentic present. Heidegger's use of the term making-present is somewhat ambiguous in this respect. As we have seen,

55 SZ, p. 328.
making-present is used by Heidegger in the triad of “future, making-present, and having-been” which refers to the basic structure of temporality, irrespective of whether or not this structure is realised in an authentic or an inauthentic manner. This formal use of the term “making-present” must be distinguished from Heidegger’s use of this term to refer to the inauthentic present. The key feature of this inauthentic making-present is the process of falling into the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand with which Dasein concerns itself. In so doing, Dasein loses itself in the world of its immediate concerns. Both the circumspective concerns which are characteristic of the way in which Dasein deals with equipment ready-to-hand and the theoretical way of dealing with objects present-at-hand are to be understood, according to Heidegger, as distinctive kinds of making-present. In this way, Heidegger tries to provide a temporal interpretation of his earlier analysis of the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand.

The ultimate significance of this distinction between, on the one hand, the authentic “moment of vision” in which the hermeneutic situation is disclosed and, on the other hand, the “making-present” characteristic of a theoretical way of dealing with objects present-at-hand is that it suggests a temporal basis for the corresponding distinction between two fundamentally different conceptions of truth and methodological rigour. In disclosing this more fundamental conception of temporality Heidegger is trying to disclose the basis for a more fundamental conception of truth and method. A conception of truth that is not based on the agreement of a judgement with an object, but rather based on disclosedness. And a conception of methodological rigour that is not based on reason but on the genuineness of insight. In this dissertation, however, we shall not be directly addressing Heidegger’s account of truth. Instead, this issue will be addressed only indirectly through an account of how Heidegger’s account of temporality and historicity underpins his theory of historical understanding.

5.5 The Unity of Dasein’s Temporality

As we have seen, Heidegger radically distinguishes his interpretation of Dasein’s temporality from the traditional interpretation of time. In so doing, Heidegger develops an interpretation of temporality that has two quite

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56 See SZ, p. 338.
57 See SZ, pp. 352-363.
extraordinary features. Firstly, Heidegger argues that the unity of temporality cannot be understood in a linear sense. In so doing, Heidegger opens the way for an account of temporality in which the future has a certain priority. Secondly, this interpretation of Dasein’s temporality cannot be equated with an interpretation of the way in which Dasein exists “within time”. These two claims have fundamental implications for Heidegger’s interpretation of Dasein’s historicity.

The temporal aspects of future, having-been and making-present make up an essentially unified structure with each aspect mutually implicating the other two. The basis for this unity is not to be understood in terms of the ordinary interpretation of time as a succession of “nows” in which priority is given to the present. Instead, temporality is unified in a way that gives a certain priority to the future. The way in which the three aspects of temporality come together in a non-linear manner is set out by Heidegger in the following terms:

The character of ‘having been’ arises from the future, and in such a way that the future which ‘has been’ (or better, which ‘is in the process of having been’) releases from itself the present. This phenomenon that is unified as a having-been-making-present future we call ‘temporality’.58

The future discloses the present in the process of coming back to the having-been. It is because of this structure that Heidegger feels able to speak of the past arising in a certain sense out of the future. Needless to say, this account of temporality does considerable violence to the traditional understanding of time. It is not at all clear how the future, which is ordinarily thought of as “not yet”, can not only “disclose” the present but somehow “come back” to the past which is ordinarily thought of as being no longer. To speak of the relationship between the past and the future in this way simply makes no sense if we think of time in the traditional manner as a linear succession of “nows”.

Heidegger is well aware of this problem and argues that the structure of temporality cannot be understood as long as while ever it is approached from the perspective of the everyday understanding of time. Indeed, Heidegger argues that inauthentic temporality, which is “the awaiting that forgets as it makes present”, is the condition for the possibility of the ordinary experience of time as

58 SZ, p. 326 (translation altered).
a sequence of nows. But exactly how are we to make sense of such temporal structures if we cannot do so on the basis of the ordinary experience of time?

The key to solving this problem is to be found precisely in the way in which the fundamental structure of temporality is concretely realised in the structure of Dasein's historicity and with it historical understanding. The authentic and inauthentic ways in which temporality "temporalises" or realises itself provides the basis for Heidegger's account of Dasein's historicity. Heidegger states that:

Only an entity which, in its being, is essentially futural so that it is free for its death and can let itself be thrown back upon its factual 'there' by shattering itself against death - that is to say, only an entity which, as futural, is equiprimordially in the process of having-been, can, by handing down to itself the possibility it has inherited, take over its own thrownness and be in the moment of vision for 'its time'. Only authentic temporality which is at the same time finite, makes possible something like fate - that is to say, authentic historicity.

Dasein's temporality provides the conditions of the possibility of Dasein's historicity. It is temporality that explains why and how Dasein finds itself thrown into a situation in which it has already implicitly inherited a possible way of being. And it is the structure of Dasein's temporality that explains why and how Dasein can exist authentically by retrieving the heritage of possibilities by explicitly handing them down to itself. In so doing, retrieval suggest the possibility of authentic historiography. And it is with the realisation of this possibility that Heidegger's account of authentic temporality can be concretely disclosed. In this way, we can see how Heidegger's interpretation of Kant provides a concrete elucidation of these more fundamental and obscure temporal structures. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the significance of the structures of authentic and inauthentic temporality is not limited to the question of historical understanding. The structures of temporality determine the way in which Dasein exists whether or not Dasein writes history.

Before we move on to the discussion of authentic historical understanding in the next section, one more general point needs to be made about Heidegger's

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59 See SZ, p. 425.
60 SZ, p. 385.
account of temporality. It would be a fundamental error to approach Heidegger’s interpretation of the essentially temporal nature of Dasein’s existence as being somehow based on the observation that human beings always exist within a particular time frame or historical context. It is true to say, of course, that human beings always do exist in a particular time. And the time “within” which humans exist is always, at least potentially, datable. Just as we can say that Kant lived from 1724 to 1804 and Heidegger lived from 1889 to 1976, so too every human being has lived within a particular time. Yet the basic thrust of Heidegger’s temporal interpretation is not to show that Dasein always exists as an entity “within” time but, on the contrary, to find a way of interpreting Dasein that does not reduce Dasein to a present-at-hand entity that exists “within-time”.

For the very same reason, Heidegger’s interpretation of Dasein’s historicity cannot be equated with a claim about the fact that Dasein always exists within history. Heidegger quite explicitly points out that the proposition “Dasein is historical” is far removed from the mere ontical establishment of the fact that Dasein occurs in a ‘world-history’. 61

Nor is the thesis that Dasein is historical primarily concerned with the fact that men and women are more or less important “atoms” in the working of history and are the playthings of circumstances and events. 62 Heidegger’s account of Dasein’s temporality and historicity must, therefore, be radically distinguished from any attempt to outline the philosophical implications that follow from the fact the humans always exist within world history. Indeed, in this regard, the significance of Heidegger’s position is to be found in the very attempt to develop an account of Dasein’s “historicity” that is not built upon the simple observation that humans always exist within the flow of world historical time as this is ordinarily understood. Instead, it is Dasein’s temporality that provides the basis for the possibility of Dasein’s historicity and thereby the possibility of anything like world history or historical world-views. Heidegger’s account of temporality aims therefore at establishing the universal structure that determines the possibility of anything like history and historical worldviews.

61 SZ, p. 332.
62 SZ, p. 382.
The Possibility of Authentic Historiography.

5.6 The Reality of History

Towards the end of his seminal 1924 lecture on The Concept of Time, Heidegger laments that:

the present generation thinks it has found history, it thinks it is even overburdened with history. It moans about historicism ... Something is called history which is not history at all. According to the present, one must attain the supra-historical again.63

Historicism can be roughly characterised in terms of the thesis that the meaning and validity of ideas and expressions are limited by the historical context within which those ideas and expressions are articulated. This thesis was first used to found a principle of historical understanding: to understand history correctly we must understand ideas as expressive of their time and avoid judging the ideas of other times by the standards of our own.64 The problem of historicism arises when this principle of historical understanding is universalised as a principle of human knowledge as such. Husserl famously attacked historicism as resulting in an extreme form of relativism in his 1911 essay “Philosophy as Rigorous Science”.65 Husserl argues that if historicism is accepted as a universal principle, the ideas of truth, theory, and science would then, like all ideas, lose their absolute validity. That an idea has validity would mean that it is a factual construction of spirit which is held as valid and which in its contingent validity determines thought. There would be no unqualified validity, or validity-in-itself, which is what it is even if no one has achieved it and though no historical humanity will ever achieve it.66

For Husserl, philosophy aims at the establishment of absolute validities and so stands in stark contrast with historicism. The Neo-Kantians also fought on the

63 The Concept of Time. op. cit. p. 20.
66 Ibid. p. 125.
side of the search for absolute validities against this perceived threat of historical relativism. According to Heidegger, however, the attempt to escape the threat of historical relativism by means of a “fantastical path to supra-historicity” is based on a fundamental misconstrual of the very nature of history and its origin in Dasein’s temporality. For Heidegger, the reality of history has been missed altogether by the tradition. And it is by re-thinking the very nature of history, by grasping the “reality” of history, that Heidegger hopes to find a way to escape what he considers to be a false choice between historical relativism and the search for ahistorical validity.

According to Heidegger, it is the futural nature of temporality that holds the key to this re-thinking of history:

*The possibility of access to history is grounded in the possibility according to which any specific present understands how to be futural. This is the first principle of all hermeneutics. It says something about the being of Dasein, which is historicity itself. Philosophy will never get to the root of what history is so long as it analyses history as an object of contemplation for method. The enigma of history lies in what it means to be historical.*

The problem of what it means to “be” historical and how to gain access to the “reality” of history is raised in the fifth chapter of the second division of *Being and Time* which is entitled “Temporality and Historicity”. This chapter is presented by Heidegger as an appropriation of the work of Dilthey. In so doing, Heidegger also develops his earlier critique of Neo-Kantian philosophy of history. The early Heidegger’s engagement with the work of Dilthey and the philosophy of history developed by the Southwest School of Neo-Kantianism has already been discussed in the second part of the third chapter of this dissertation. Of particular importance in this regard is Heidegger’s argument that the “reality” of history is to be understood, not as an object of historical research in the manner of the Neo-Kantians, but as an aspect of Dasein’s existence. The reality of history is, therefore, to be found in Dasein’s “historicity”. The distinction between these two ways of understanding history is marked in Heidegger’s work by means of the terminological distinction between the term *Geschichte*, which refers to the reality of history that is grounded in Dasein’s historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*), and the term *Historie* which is used to refer to the

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67 *The Concept of Time. op. cit. p. 20.*
science of history. I will use the term “historiography” to translate the term Historie, while the term “history” will be used to translate the term Geschichte.

In the chapter on temporality and historicity, Heidegger brings together the results of this earlier work and attempts to show that his analysis of temporality provides the key for resolving the problem of history that he had been struggling with in the years leading up to Being and Time. In particular, Heidegger tries to show that the distinction between the authentic and inauthentic ways in which temporality temporalises itself, outlined in the first part of this chapter, provides the basis for a distinction between authentic and inauthentic historical understanding. In so doing, Heidegger’s account of inauthentic temporality provides the fundamental ontological basis for a critique of the traditional way in which history has been understood and with it traditional, particularly Neo-Kantian, philosophies of history. At the same, time Heidegger provides us with an account of “the existential source of authentic historiography (Historie) in Dasein’s historicity”.68 This is explicitly presented by Heidegger as providing an initial outline for a more detailed “clarification of the task of destroying the history of philosophy historiographically” that was to be contained in the never published, second part of Being and Time.69

It is this account of the possibility of authentic historiography, as the basis for Heidegger’s destruction of the history of philosophy, that is of fundamental significance for our attempt to grasp the ontological foundations of Heidegger’s destructive retrieval of Kant. Before we consider Heidegger’s account of authentic historiography in detail, however, I will first set out some important features of the way in which Heidegger raises the problem of history in Being and Time.70

In the first section of the chapter on temporality and historicity, Heidegger notes that,

68 SZ, p. 392.
69 SZ, p. 392.
if we are to cast light on historicity itself in terms of temporality and primordially in terms of temporality that is authentic, then it is essential to this task that we can carry it out only by construing it phenomenologically.\textsuperscript{71}

For Heidegger, construing history phenomenologically means that the everyday interpretation of history must be overcome: “the existential-ontological constitution of historicity has been covered up by the way Dasein’s history is ordinarily understood; we must get hold of it \textit{in spite of all this}”.\textsuperscript{72} To find the “right position for attacking (\textit{Einsatzstelle}) the primordial question of the essence of history”, Heidegger analyses some of the ambiguities inherent in the ordinary way in which history is conceived. This is characteristic of Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenological method which recognises the unavoidable necessity of beginning with our everyday understanding of a matter while at the same time trying to break free of the limitations of merely traditional interpretations so as to grasp the matter itself.

With his phenomenological analysis, Heidegger tries to bring into question “the remarkably privileged position of the ‘past’ in the concept of history”.\textsuperscript{73} Heidegger does this by showing that the traditional interpretation of history in terms of once present events that are past is fundamentally inadequate as an account of the phenomenon of history. It is by revealing these inadequacies that Heidegger tries to show concretely the possibility of an authentic understanding of history based on authentic temporality.

Heidegger’s phenomenological analysis of the ordinary conception of history focuses on the sense in which antiquities, like a Greek temple or objects preserved in a museum that exist here and now, can be said to be historical. There appears to be something rather perplexing about calling something that exists here and now “historical”. Heidegger highlights this ontological difficulty by asking,

\textit{by what right do we call this entity ‘historical’ (geschichtlich), when it is not yet past? Or do these ‘things’ have ‘in}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{71} SZ, p. 375.
  \item \textsuperscript{72} SZ, pp. 375-6.
  \item \textsuperscript{73} SZ, p. 379.
\end{itemize}
themselves’ ‘something past’, even though they are still present-at-hand today? 74

Heidegger attempts to resolve this ontological difficulty by arguing that when we speak of antiquities as being historical what is said to be “past” is the “world within which they belonged to a context of equipment and were encountered as ready-to-hand and used by a concerned Dasein who was in the world”. 75 Entities that are still present-at-hand can be said to belong to the past and so “be” historical because they once belonged as equipment to a world that is no longer. Heidegger sums up this point in the following manner:

The antiquities which are still present-at-hand have a character of ‘the past’ and of history by reason of the fact that they have belonged as equipment to a world that has been - the world of a Dasein that has been there - and that they have been derived from that world. This Dasein is what is primarily historical. 76

It is Dasein that is primarily historical while what we encounter as entities within the world are only historical in a secondary and derivative sense. The problem with the traditional understanding of history is that it takes its orientation from what is secondarily historical, that is to say entities within the world, and in so doing misses what is primarily historical, that is to say Dasein. Heidegger uses the term “world-history” to refer to history understood in terms of “historical” entities rather than Dasein. Dasein’s way of understanding history primarily in terms of “world-history” is a consequence of Dasein’s fallenness, which fundamentally obscures the reality of history. The basic structure of Heidegger’s position in this respect deserves to be quoted in full:

because factual Dasein, in falling, is absorbed in that with which it concerns itself, it understands its history world-historically in the first instance. And because, further, the ordinary understanding of being understands ‘being’ as presence-at-hand without further differentiation, the being of the world-historical is experienced and interpreted in the sense of something present-at-hand which comes along, has presence, and then disappears. And finally, because the meaning of being in general is held to be something simply self-evident, the question about the kind of being of the world-historical and about the movement of historizing in general has

74 SZ, p. 380.
75 SZ, p. 380.
76 SZ, pp. 380-1.
The failure to grasp the reality of history, to even raise the question of the reality of history as a serious philosophical question, is a specific concrete instance of Dasein’s general failure to genuinely confront the question of being. This, in turn, is a symptom of Dasein’s fallenness into the self-evidence of the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand with which Dasein concerns itself in its everyday way of existing. In this way, the question of the reality of history comes to play a crucial strategic role in Heidegger’s attempt to formulate a fundamental ontology. Asking about the being of history is one way in which the question of being in general can take on concrete significance. Moreover, it is in history that the connection between being and time becomes most evident.

5.7 Authentic Historiography

As we saw in the first part of this chapter, the tendency to ontologically privilege the present-at-hand is based on a particular way in which being is understood in terms of the present. More specifically, it is based on the way in which temporality temporalises itself inauthentically. Entities are understood as existing “within-time”, within a linear sequence of “nows”. Present-at-hand entities arise and pass away within this course of time. When time is understood in this way, the task of history is simply to retain these past events and order them in terms of “earlier” and “later” using the public world-time as its standard and measure.

In this way, Heidegger’s account of inauthentic temporality is meant to disclose the ontological foundations of the traditional conception of history and reveal it as inauthentic. This attempt to characterise traditional historiography as inauthentic only fully makes sense if it is effectively contrasted with the possibility of authentic historiography. The most important challenge facing Heidegger is to show how his analysis of authentic temporality, outlined in the first part of this chapter, suggests the possibility of an alternative, authentic way of understanding, and indeed of doing, history. At the same time, the real force of Heidegger’s account of temporality becomes apparent when it can be shown to

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77 SZ. p. 389.
provide the basis for an account of authentic and inauthentic historical understanding.

Remains, monuments and records that are still present-at-hand are the proper material of historical research, according to Heidegger, only in so far as they are the material for a concrete disclosure of the Dasein which has-been-there. Historical research does not begin with the sifting of this material. Instead this material becomes the material of historical research only after we have first oriented ourselves towards the Dasein that has-been-there. But what is the Dasein that has-been-there if not the totality of facts about that Dasein’s existence? We have also seen that according to Heidegger the essence of Dasein lies in its existence as a “potentiality of being”. Dasein is essentially nothing other than thrown possibility. This leads to a rather curious conclusion that “possibility” is the real object of authentic historiography.

Heidegger is well aware that this claim is counter-intuitive:

Is historiography thus to have the possible for its theme? Does not its whole ‘meaning’ point solely to the ‘facts’ - to how something has factually been?\(^78\)

Yet even Heidegger’s Neo-Kantian contemporaries knew that there is more to history than facts. A selection must have always already been made if historical research is not simply to be overwhelmed with an infinite, and therefore ultimately meaningless, array of facts. For Neo-Kantians like Rickert, the logical necessity for such a selection pointed to the need for universal principles to ensure the validity of this selection and with it the objectivity of historical research. For Heidegger, however, the necessity of such a selection indicates that historiographic disclosure temporalises itself in terms of the future even in its most trivial and mechanical procedures. That is to say, historical interpretation is always guided by a prior understanding that is necessarily used to make sense of the infinite array of past facts.

Against the Neo-Kantians, Heidegger argues that the search for universal validity has no place in genuine historical research:

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\(^{78}\) SZ, p. 394.
In no science are the ‘universal validity’ of standards and the claims to ‘universalality’ which the ‘they’ and its common sense demand, less possible as a criteria of ‘truth’ than in authentic historiography.\textsuperscript{79}

The question of whether the object of historiography is just to put “individual” events into a series, or whether it also has “laws” as its object, is, according to Heidegger, one that is radically mistaken.\textsuperscript{80} It is radically mistaken because, if historiography, which itself arises from authentic historicity, reveals by retrieval the Dasein which has-been-there and reveals it in its possibility, then historiography has already made manifest the “universal” in the particular (\textit{Einmaligen}) …

The theme of historiography is neither a singular happening (\textit{einmalig Geschehene}) nor something universal that floats above it, but the possibility which has been factically existent. This possibility does not get repeated as such - that is to say, understood in an authentically historiographic way - if it becomes perverted into the colourlessness of a supratemporal model.\textsuperscript{81}

The possibility that is retrieved is not an empty, free-floating possibility, but the possibility that has been resolutely and authentically taken up “factically” by the Dasein that has been there. Genuine history discloses primarily not past facts but possibilities that have been concealed by the tradition and which can be retrieved and used to disclose our own future possibilities. This disclosure is not a matter of mere arbitrary invention. Rather, it is a process of explicitly appropriating and thereby transforming possibilities that have already been handed down implicitly in one’s generation. Properly understood, retrieval is always \textit{fateful} in this sense. The retrieval of possibilities is regulated by Dasein’s fateful destiny.

In this way, authentic historiography is characterised by Heidegger as the retrieval of the authentic possibility of the Dasein which has-been-there. It is distinguished from inauthentic historiography because it is oriented towards “possibilities”, understood as the essence of Dasein’s existence, rather than facts or laws. Because inauthentic historiography is “blind for possibilities, it cannot retrieve what has been, but only retains and receives the ‘actual’ that is left over, the world-historical that has been”.\textsuperscript{82} It is precisely because inauthentic

\textsuperscript{79} SZ, p. 395.
\textsuperscript{80} SZ, p. 395.
\textsuperscript{81} SZ, p. 395 translation altered.
\textsuperscript{82} SZ, p. 391
historiography in concerned with past facts that it can be seen as empty antiquarianism: the mere preservation of past facts.

Heidegger also argues that inauthentic historiography as inauthentic is lost in the "making present" of the "today" and therefore always tries to understand the past in terms of the present.

On the other hand, the temporality of authentic historicity, as the moment of vision of anticipatory retrieval, deprives the 'today' of its character as present, and weans one from the conventionalities of the 'they'. When, however, one's existence is inauthentically historical, it is loaded down with the legacy of a 'past' which has become unrecognisable, and seeks the modern. But when historicity is authentic, it understands history as the 'recurrence' of the possible, and knows that a possibility will recur only if existence is open for it fatefully, in a moment of vision, in resolute retrieval. 83

As authentically futural, retrieval is about opening up future possibilities by appropriating anew the possibilities inherent in the past. And this is the only way that Dasein, as always already thrown into an historical world, can ever be open to future possibilities; not by trying to create artificially the future out of nothing, but by making the past one's own. The task of authentic historiography is, therefore, "the retrieval of the heritage of possibilities by handing these down to oneself in anticipation". 84

Calvin Schrag has criticised what he takes to be Heidegger's tendency to reduce history to a mode of personal existence. Schrag argues that,

Heidegger neglects, as do most existentialist thinkers, the community of selves with their common social memory which is the very stuff out of which history is made. To be sure, for Heidegger, being-in-the-world is always being-with-others, but it is the radically isolated Dasein who determines the significance of this communal world for his personal existence. The context of historical meaning arises not from the interdependent experiences and reflections of a community of selves, but from the individual projects of a solitary Dasein who is concerned for his authentic existence. 85

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83 SZ. pp. 391-2.
84 SZ. p. 390.
85 Calvin Schrag, "Phenomenology, Ontology, and History in the Philosophy of Heidegger" Revue Internationale de Philosophie. 12 (1958) pp. 117-132, at p. 132. See also Calvin
It is certainly correct to say that for Heidegger, historical understanding, as with any mode of understanding, is governed by the basic structures that determine Dasein’s existence. The structures of authentic and inauthentic temporality are fundamental to Dasein’s existence in general and, therefore, to the possibility of historical understanding, as with the possibility of any other form of understanding. But this certainly does not mean that Heidegger reduces historical understanding down to the individual projects of a solitary Dasein searching for authentic existence. Heidegger’s conception of authentic historiography is not about effacing the common memory of the communal world by projecting one’s personal aspirations into historical writing. On the contrary, for Heidegger, Dasein’s own past “always means the past of its ‘generation’.”86 Dasein can never escape its historicity and always exists fateful in the sense that its possibilities are already handed down to it implicitly from its generation. For Heidegger, it is an error to understand Dasein as an individual that can somehow exist in isolation from its tradition and generation.

It would be a serious error to interpret Heidegger’s notion of “authenticity” in terms of the personal projects of an isolated individual. Heidegger’s consistently affirms Dasein’s existence is determined by being-with-others and Dasein’s fateful destiny in and through its generation makes up Dasein’s authentic historical happening. It follows from this, that the “mineness” of Dasein, which underpins the possibility of any authentic appropriation, is never merely personal. This is confirmed by Heidegger in his 1935 lecture course, published in 1953 as *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Commenting on the statement “Dasein is in every case mine” as it occurs throughout *Being and Time*, Heidegger notes that “this means neither ‘posited through me’ nor ‘apportioned to an individual ego’.”87 When, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger states that anticipation of death, “individualizes Dasein down to itself”,88 Heidegger is not suggesting that Dasein is individualised down to its personal projects or psychological states. Instead, “this individualizing is a way in which

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87 SZ, p. 20.


89 SZ, 263.
the ‘there’ is disclosed for existence”. 89 It wrests Dasein from its lostness in the “they” such that Dasein is confronted with its potentiality-for-being. This prepares the way for Dasein to be authentically futural by means of a retrieval and appropriation of the possibilities that have been. The move from inauthenticity to authenticity is fully mediated by Dasein’s historicity.

The move from inauthentic to authentic historiography is, therefore, not a move from the inauthentic community of the “they” to the authentic aspirations of an isolated Dasein. Instead, it is a process whereby the possibilities that are handed down to Dasein in the form of the self-evident and unstated assumptions of the “they” are explicitly appropriated by Dasein in the process of retrieval. By means of this appropriation, Dasein makes explicit and so understands more fully its situation. In this way, “authenticity” is given a richly historical meaning rather than a merely personal meaning. Schrag’s account disregards the extent to which Dasein, whether authentic or inauthentic, is essentially historical. In so doing, Schrag gives a quite false impression that Heidegger reduces history to the personal interests of an isolated individual. What is striking about Heidegger’s account of authentic historiography is, however, quite the opposite. Authentic historiography, by making explicit Dasein’s fateful destiny, discloses the depth of Dasein’s historicity. Authenticity makes Dasein’s history manifest through retrieval, and in so doing, reveals the illusory nature of any attempt by Dasein to escape its historicity. As such, Dasein’s freedom is disclosed as being limited to a freedom to choose its fate. It is by means of such a choice that Dasein can transform its understanding of its situation, “if only so that this existence may accept the thrownness of its own ‘there’ in a way which is more free from Illusion”.

90 This way of articulating historicity enables Heidegger to affirm, in a quite radical manner, Dasein’s historicity without reducing absolutely Dasein down to its historical situation such that Dasein is fully determined by its past. Dasein remains free to choose itself or lose itself; to genuinely understand its situation in its historicity and temporality or to lose itself in the illusions of the “they”.

89 SZ, p. 263.
90 SZ, p. 391.
5.8 Concluding Summary

In this chapter, I have tried to show how Heidegger's account of the fundamentally temporal structure of Dasein's existence, and in particular the distinction between authentic and inauthentic ways in which temporality temporalises itself as Dasein, provides the ontological foundation for Heidegger's distinction between the authentic and inauthentic ways in which Dasein understands history. Just as temporality is inauthentically realised as a linear sequence of "nows" in which the past is made up of those events that are no longer, so in inauthentic historiography the past is interpreted simply in terms of past facts. The primary task of historiography when understood inauthentically is simply to conserve and order these past facts within the linear sequence of time, and to set out relations between these events in terms of "earlier" and "latter". In this sense antiquarianism is a clear symptom that history is being understood inauthentically in Heidegger's view. In contrast, authentic temporality is marked by a non-linear realisation of time in which future possibilities are given a certain priority. When authentic temporality is concretely realised in historical understanding, that is to say when historiography is authentic, it is primarily concerned not with past facts but with possibilities that have come to be concealed but which, when recovered, suggest new ways of understanding being. These concealed possibilities constitute the genuine reality of history and the subject matter of authentic historiography.

The understanding of being that is concealed in the "having been" of Dasein is authentically retrieved when it is uncovered and appropriated such that it offers a new possible way of understanding being in the future. This is what Heidegger means when he speaks of the past happening out of the future. When such a retrieval takes place, this unconcealed possibility enables us to establish a critical relationship with the present. It is by appropriating this retrieved possibility that we are able to wrest free, at least to a limited extent, from the everyday interpretations of the "they" that first dominate our present ways of understanding being. Authentic historiography understood retrieval is, therefore, fundamental to the phenomenological destruction of the concealments brought about by the everyday understandings of the "they" that are taken up from the tradition. This destruction is fundamental to the phenomenological move back to "the matters themselves". There is, therefore, an essential unity between the phenomenological destruction that enables the move back to the matters themselves and the fundamentally temporal and historical movement of
"retrieval" formulated in *Being and Time*. And it is for this reason that phenomenology is for Heidegger fundamentally and necessarily historical in character.

I have also tried to demonstrate that Heidegger's conception of authenticity should not be understood in terms of the personal projects of an individual Dasein. Dasein always exists as being-with-others. Authentic historiography is not about writing history from a personal perspective. Indeed, correctly understood, there can be no purely personal history because Dasein's past is always the past of its generation. Authentic historiography aims at making explicit this past. In so doing, authentic historiography discloses Dasein's historicity more fully by making explicit that which has already been implicitly handed down to Dasein in and through its generation. Authentic historiography is, therefore, always regulated by Dasein's fateful destiny, rather than being the invention of an individual Dasein.
CONCLUSION

AUTHENTIC HISTORIOGRAPHY: HEIDEGGER’S PROJECT IN KANT AND THE PROBLEM OF METAPHYSICS

This dissertation began with the problem of how to understand correctly the method of interpretation that guides Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Heidegger attempts to show that Kant’s *Critique* is ultimately motivated by the same problem that Heidegger confronts in *Being and Time*, such that Kant’s transcendental philosophy can be more adequately articulated using the philosophical framework developed by Heidegger in *Being and Time*. As discussed in chapter one of this dissertation, this results in a particularly “violent” interpretation in which Heidegger reformulates Kant’s arguments in a manner that at times is directly contradicted by what Kant actually wrote in the *Critique*. To take a few examples discussed in chapter one of this dissertation, while Kant argues that one outcome of the *Critique* is that “the proud name of an ontology ... must ... give place to the modest title of a mere analytic of pure understanding”,¹ Heidegger argues that Kant’s *Critique* is a work of ontology and is essentially motivated by the question of what it means for an entity to be. While Kant maintains a dualism of intuition and understanding, Heidegger argues that Kant’s *Critique* demonstrates that “all thinking is merely in the service of intuition”.² Although Kant speculates that intuition and understanding “perhaps spring from a common, but to us unknown, root”,³ Heidegger argues that the transcendental power of the imagination is this unknown root. In so doing, Heidegger suggests he has overcome a tension between Kant’s assertion that there are three subjective sources of knowledge (sense, imagination, and apperception) and Kant’s claim that all knowledge arises from only two stems (sensibility and understanding).

¹ A247/B303.
² KPM, p. 15.
³ A15/B29.
Heidegger goes on to argue that, once the true significance of the faculty of imagination is worked out, it becomes apparent that the three modes of pure synthesis in the first edition transcendental deduction (pure apprehension, pure reproduction, and pure recognition), are not three in number because they arise from the three subjective sources of knowledge, but because they are time forming. As such, Heidegger tries to show that the transcendental power of imagination plays a central role in Kant’s Critique because “the understanding of being must be projected upon time from out of the ground of the finitude of the Dasein in man”. This means that “the I, pure reason, is essentially temporal”. The implication being that Kant’s Critique in fact “rattles the mastery of reason” and deprives logic of its pre-eminence in metaphysics.

On the one hand, Heidegger argues that Kant was the first person to investigate the phenomena of temporality in the sense of letting himself be drawn by the “coercion” of this phenomena. One the other hand, Heidegger accepts that Kant failed to explicitly grasp the nature of Dasein’s temporality or to explicitly raise the question of being. Indeed, Heidegger argues that Kant “shrank back” from the transcendental power of the imagination because Kant was afraid of eliminating the priority of transcendental apperception and with it the privileged position of logic within metaphysics. This explains, in Heidegger’s view, why Kant, in the second edition of the Critique, presents synthesis as a function of the understanding. By means of this self-correction, Kant conceals the role of the time-related synthesis of the imagination as the real basis for the problem of metaphysics, a role that was first hinted at by Kant’s own investigation into the nature and function of the synthesis of the imagination. It is for this reason that:

the entire problematic of the Critique, in its structure and in the form of its execution, is not suited to the originality of the insight to which Kant arrives in the most decisive segment of

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4 KPM, p. 137.
5 KPM, p. 170.
6 KPM, p. 134.
7 KPM, pp. 170-1.
8 See SZ, p. 23.
9 KPM, pp. 112-120 and PIK, pp. 279-280.
the Critique, where he unhinges himself and undermines his own foundation.¹⁰

Heidegger’s interpretation aims at “entrusting itself to the concealed inner passion of a work in order to be able, through this, to place itself within the unsaid and force it into speech”.¹¹ What is decisive in Kant’s Critique is, according to Heidegger, not “what is said in uttered propositions” but rather what “it sets before our eyes as still unsaid, in and through what has been said”.¹² Heidegger’s aim is to show that the unsaid event that motivates Kant’s philosophising is the “concealing projection of being upon time”, even though this was never explicitly grasped by Kant himself.¹³ In this sense, Heidegger is concerned not with Kant’s philosophy, understood as a static system of propositions, but with Kant’s philosophising, understood as a dynamic struggle to articulate basic insights. Heidegger’s aim is to retrieve the fundamental experiences that motivate Kant’s philosophy. If Heidegger’s interpretation is correct, then he should be able to demonstrate that he understands the basic motivation of Kant’s philosophy better than Kant himself.¹⁴

Heidegger’s interpretation has been criticised by some scholars because Heidegger attributes to Kant ideas and arguments that Kant himself could not have intended or could not have accepted. Heidegger argues, however, that his approach to the interpretation of Kant’s Critique means that his interpretation is not subject to the laws of traditional historical research. Heidegger characterises his interpretation of Kant as a “retrieval” of a basic problem (Grundproblem). This is understood as the “opening-up of its original, long concealed possibilities” by means of which the problem is transformed.¹⁵ This basic structure is sufficient to establish that Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics constitutes an example of what has become known as Heidegger’s method of “destructive retrieval”. However, Heidegger never presents us with a clearly worked out account of the method of destructive retrieval.¹⁶ If we are to

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¹⁰ PIK, p. 145.
¹¹ KPM, p. 141.
¹² KPM, p. 140.
¹³ KPM, p. 169.
¹⁴ KPM, p. 143.
¹⁵ Heidegger promised such an account in his 1927 Marburg lecture course on The Basic Problems of Phenomenology. The third part of these lectures was to be on “the scientific method of ontology and the idea of phenomenology” with a chapter on “the basic components of phenomenological method: reduction, construction, destruction”, see BP,
understand correctly Heidegger’s method and so understand more fully Heidegger’s project in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* it is necessary to reconstruct this aspect of Heidegger’s thinking. Moreover, Heidegger never really explains in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* why he attempts such an extraordinary interpretation of Kant. Yet without an understanding of what motivates Heidegger’s interpretation our understanding of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* remains deficient. By clarifying Heidegger’s conception of the unity of philosophy and the history of philosophy, a reconstruction of the philosophical basis of Heidegger’s method of destructive retrieval promises to shed light on the motivation behind Heidegger’s project in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

I have attempted such a reconstruction in this dissertation. This reconstruction is possible because, as I have argued in this dissertation, Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein in *Being and Time* constitutes an implicit discourse on philosophical method. As we have seen, Heidegger maintains that because all research, including philosophical research, is an ontical possibility of Dasein, the possibilities open to philosophy are governed by the structures that determine, at the most basic level, the possibilities open to Dasein’s existence. For Heidegger, philosophy is nothing other than the most radical actualisation of Dasein’s existence. This means that the basic structures that determine Dasein’s existence necessarily determine how philosophy can be done. As such, the method of destructive retrieval is to be understood as the methodological correlate of the retrieval that is at the heart of Heidegger’s account of the possibility of Dasein’s authentic temporal existence.16

If the approach to the interpretation of *Being and Time* taken in this dissertation is correct, then it should be possible to use this interpretation of *Being and Time* to clarify the methodological basis for Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. In what follows, I will draw together some of the key points discussed in this dissertation to demonstrate more clearly how this interpretation of *Being and Time* can be used to clarify the method of destructive retrieval as it is worked out concretely in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. In so doing, I will try to show how this way of

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reading Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant can be used to move beyond some of
the sticking points in the controversy in the secondary literature over Heidegger’s
interpretation of Kant. Of particularly concern is the way in which Heidegger’s
interpretation of Kant has been analysed in terms of the traditional conflict
between philosophical and historical approaches to the interpretation of texts
from the history of philosophy. My aim, however, is not to defend Heidegger’s
interpretation of Kant, not least because Heidegger ultimately accepted that
Kant’s question is foreign to the question raised in Being and Time. Instead,
my aim is to clarify the basis for Heidegger’s method of destructive retrieval and
the motivations behind Heidegger’s project in Kant and the Problem of
Metaphysics.

Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein aims at demonstrating first of all that
Dasein exists as being-in-the-world, which includes being-with-others. Dasein
can never exist as an isolated subject. It can no more escape from its situatedness
within an historical world than it can escape from itself. As discussed in chapter
four of this dissertation, Dasein always understands itself and the world first of
all in terms of purely traditional interpretations. Dasein is in this sense fallen.
Dasein is first of all not itself but rather understands itself in terms of the
traditional interpretations of the “they”. As against the interpretation of Frederick
Olafson, I argued in chapter four that the “they” does not refer to the anonymous
structures of mass society. Instead, it refers to the what is uncritically taken by
Dasein from the tradition in the form of those most self-evident assumptions that
determine the way in which we see and understand reality.

This has immediate implications for philosophy. All philosophy, even
the most radical attempt to begin all over again, is pervaded by traditional
concepts. The phenomenological return to the matters themselves cannot,
therefore, be achieved by means of a naive beholding of what is simply there.
Indeed, any attempt to do philosophy without an explicit engagement with the
tradition from which one first necessarily draws one’s most basic concepts
would simply result in one becoming even more ensnared in these traditional

17 See Heidegger’s preface to the fourth edition of Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics
published in 1972 where Heidegger accepts that Kant’s question is foreign to the question
raised by Heidegger in Being and Time: KPM, pp. xvii-xviii.
18 See SZ, division one, chapters two to four.
19 BP, p. 22.
concepts. Philosophy falls victim to the tradition precisely when it fails to see the origin of its basic concepts in the tradition and instead accepts these concepts to be self-evidently applicable.

But this does not mean that Dasein is absolutely lost in inauthenticity. Heidegger is not affirming an historicism whereby philosophy is reduced down to an entirely traditional exercise. According to Heidegger, what has been handed down to us through the tradition contains within it the seeds of an original insight that provided philosophy with its original motivation. For Heidegger, this is, of course, the original disclosure of the being of entities. Heidegger argues that this original disclosure has continued to determine the most basic ways in which we understand the world and ourselves down through the ages even though we are no longer explicitly aware of this origin. As such, the method of phenomenology requires a process of destruction. Phenomenological destruction is a task,

in which by taking the question of being as our clue, we are to destroy the traditional content of ancient ontology until we arrive at those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of being - the ways which have guided us ever since.\(^{20}\)

If the method of phenomenology is to enable us to articulate the “matters themselves”, the phenomena of phenomenology, it must do so by means of an essentially historical movement aimed at going “back” to this origin, thereby enabling us to wrest the phenomena free from the traditional interpretations that hold sway in the present. Heidegger recognised the need for such a roundabout detour as early as his 1919/21 review of Jaspers’s *Psychology of Worldviews* in which he notes that that “the path that leads to the ‘things themselves’ treated in philosophy is a long one”.\(^{21}\) Phenomenology requires,

a genuine confrontation with the history that we ourselves ‘are’. And this confrontation would be something that is enacted within the very meaning of philosophizing. In the end, it is just this precisely oriented detour and the type of

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\(^{20}\) SZ, p. 22.

roundabout understanding enacted in it that make up the path to the things themselves.  

It is in this sense that the history of philosophy belongs to philosophy for Heidegger. Indeed, it is for this reason that Heidegger argues in his 1922 introduction to Aristotle that, 

philosophical research is 'historical' knowing in the radical sense of that term. For philosophical research, the destructive confrontation [Auseinandersetzung] with philosophy's history is not merely an annex for the purposes of illustrating how things were earlier ... The destruction is rather the authentic path upon which the present must encounter itself in its own basic movements; and it must encounter itself in such a way that through this encounter the continual question springs forth from history to face the present.  

Phenomenology involves a critical process whereby our traditional concepts are dismantled down to the original sources from which they were drawn. This destruction is directed at what has been handed down to us in the history of ideas. Such a destruction is, in effect, an explication of "the original motive-giving situations from which the fundamental experiences of philosophy have arisen". The "sources" for this type of historical research are not, therefore, primarily texts, as in traditional historical research, but rather the event of the disclosure of the being of entities that guides and motivates philosophy throughout history.  

If Dasein's fallenness provides Heidegger with his account of the necessity of a process of destruction, then the structure of Dasein's temporality provides Heidegger with his account of how this destruction is to be fully realised in an event of appropriation understood as authentic retrieval. The method of destructive retrieval is nothing other than the explicit realisation of authentic temporality at the level of philosophical method. When destructive retrieval is worked out at the level of explicit historical understanding, it constitutes authentic historiography. Moreover, the method of destructive retrieval understood as authentic historiography is nothing other than an  

22 Ibid, pp. 4-5.  
24 Martin Heidegger, "Comments on Karl Jaspers's Psychology of Worldviews" op. cit., at. p. 3 (translation altered).
explication of the basic elements of the method of phenomenology understood as a return to the matters themselves.

I set out the basic structures of Heidegger’s notion of authentic historiography, and the account of Dasein’s temporality upon which it is based, in chapter five of this dissertation. Of particular significance is the way in which Heidegger’s account of authentic and inauthentic temporality provides the basis for Heidegger’s distinction between traditional historical research and authentic historiography.

When time is understood inauthentically, it is understood in terms of a linear succession of “nows” that is used as a measure. The past is understood in terms of the now that is past and no longer present while the future is understood as an indeterminate not-yet-present. In this way, the present is given a certain priority. The past and future are grasped in terms of the present. Inauthentic temporality understands time in terms of the “within-time-ness” of entities within the world. When history is understood on the basis of inauthentic temporality, the past is understood in terms of once actual events that are past. Inauthentic historiography is concerned with cataloguing past events and determining the relationship between these events in terms of what is “earlier” and “later”. Given this analysis of inauthentic temporality, we can see that when the history of philosophy is understood inauthentically, the history of philosophy is understood in terms of a series of philosophical constructions or positions that are “past” and are understood entirely from the perspective of the present, which means understood in terms of the assumptions that have been uncritically accepted in the “present”. In this way, the present falls victim to the past precisely because it has forgotten the origin of its most basic assumptions. It has lost sight of its genuine connection with the past. It loses sight of its original and genuine connection with the past, the history that we ourselves are, because it loses sight of the way in which past has always already been handed down to it.

In contrast, when time is understood authentically, past, present and future form an essential unity in which the future has a certain priority. The future has a certain priority in the sense that the past and present are understood primarily in terms of possibilities rather than the actual. The unified structure of temporality is characterised by Heidegger in the following manner:

The character of ‘having been’ arises from the future, and in such a way that the future which ‘has been’ (or better, which
‘is in the process of having been’) releases from itself the present.”

Here, the past is understood as an aspect of the way in which Dasein exists. It is the “I am as having-been” of Dasein. Moreover, as authentically futural, we are concerned primarily with the possibilities that are inherent in Dasein’s having-been. It must also be emphasised that Dasein is not to be understood as an isolated subject. As being-in-the-world and therefore being-with-others, the past as having-been is always constituted by the having-been of Dasein’s generation.

Authentic temporality is realised in the process of retrieval. Retrieval is a process whereby the possibilities that have been handed down to Dasein through the tradition are explicitly appropriated. Dasein “hands itself down to itself ... in a possibility which it has inherited and yet has chosen”. Dasein hands “itself down to itself” in the sense that by means of this retrieval, Dasein discloses to itself its own possibilities by wresting itself free from the inauthentic interpretations of the “they”. This does not result, however, in a free projection of possibilities. It is, instead, the appropriation and transformation of the possibilities that Dasein has inherited. Retrieval is always guided by Dasein’s fateful destiny. In this way, Dasein discloses to itself its authentic situation, it discloses the “there” of its being by making its own history manifest. Dasein’s genuine connection with the past, its historicity, is thereby retrieved. As authentically futural, retrieval is about opening up future possibilities and understanding the present by appropriating anew the possibilities inherent in the past. Only in this way can Dasein, which is constituted by temporality and therefore historicity, ever be open to future possibilities; not by trying to create artificially the future out of nothing, but by making the past its own. The task of authentic historiography is, therefore, “the retrieval of the heritage of possibilities by handing these down to oneself in anticipation”.

Authentic historiography is, therefore, a process whereby that which has already been implicitly handed down is explicitly appropriated. Heidegger provides an important clarification of this structure as it relates to philosophical

25 SZ, p. 326 (translation altered).
26 SZ, p. 384.
27 SZ, p. 390.
research in his 1955 lecture, “What is Philosophy?” In that lecture, Heidegger argues that:

The answer to the question “What is philosophy?” consists in our corresponding to [answering to] that towards which philosophy is on the way. And that is - the being of entities. In such correspondence we listen from the very outset to that which philosophy has already said to us ... We find the answer to the question, “What is philosophy?” not through historical assertions about the definition of philosophy but through conversing with that which has been handed down to us as the being of entities. This path to the answer to our question is not a break with history, no repudiation of history, but is an adoption and transformation of what has been handed down to us. Such an adoption of history is what is meant by the term ‘destruction’. The meaning of this word has been clearly described in *Sein und Zeit*. Destruction does not mean destroying but dismantling, liquidating, putting to one side the merely historical assertions about the history of philosophy. Destruction means - to open our ears, to make ourselves free for what speaks to us in tradition as the being of entities. By listening to this interpellation we attain the correspondence. 28

This statement from 1955 is perfectly consistent with Heidegger discussion of the nature of phenomenological destruction in the 1920s. In particular, it provides a clarification of Heidegger’s statement from 1928 that:

There is not a historical definition of philosophy and next to it a so-called systematic definition, nor conversely. ... There is really only a single philosophical clarification of the idea of philosophy. This clarification is in itself at once recollective and focused on the present. There is here an original unity, that is, the unity of the temporality of the philosophising factical Dasein itself; the full problematic must be unfolded from this unity. 29

Heidegger’s use of the term “present” in the above quote is somewhat ambiguous. If it is to be authentic, philosophy must be “focused on the present” in the sense that it is able, by means of a retrieval, to wrest free from the interpretations of the “they” that hold sway in the present.

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The essential unity of philosophy is to be found within the temporality of the philosophising factual Dasein. For Heidegger, philosophy is not something that is created by human beings in systems and doctrines, "rather, the understanding of being, its projection and its rejection, happens in Dasein as such".30 This projection of being upon time provides the basic experiences that motivate philosophy. As such, the projection of being upon time constitutes the "innermost happening in the understanding of being for ancient and subsequent metaphysics".31 Heidegger’s aim is to show that the projection of being upon time is the authentic reality of the history of philosophy, where history is understood not as a collection of past events, but rather is understood in the Diltheyian sense as the history that we ourselves are. That is to say, the authentic reality of history is understood as a structural feature of Dasein’s existence.

For this reason, Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein is not presented by Heidegger as a new discipline, a new philosophical system or worldview. Instead, it prepares the way for the destruction of the history of philosophy, interpreted as the history of ontology, that will confirm the genuine character of the basic concepts of Heidegger’s fundamental ontology. In this way, fundamental ontology makes explicit and appropriates the event that provides the history of philosophy with its most basic motivation: the projection of being upon time. It is for this reason that the very first section of Being and Time is dedicated to a discussion of "the necessity of an explicit retrieval (ausdrücklichen Wiederholung) of the question of being".32 Being and Time is from the very beginning, nothing other than an explicit retrieval of the question of being. Fundamental ontology is neither system nor history, but rather, a way of doing philosophy that undermines the very distinction between systematic and traditional, historical approaches to philosophy.

Once the full structure of the project of destructive retrieval is set out, we can more fully grasp Heidegger’s project in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. This structure can be used to highlight a problem with the way in Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant has been analysed by a number of commentators. In chapter two of this dissertation, I argued that much of the secondary literature on Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics has become trapped

30 KPM, p. 170.
31 KPM, p. 169.
32 SZ, p. 2 (translation altered).
in an impasse. On the one hand, there are commentators who judge Heidegger’s interpretation according to the standards of traditional historical research. On the other hand, there are commentators who judge Heidegger’s interpretation in terms of the possibilities for philosophical development it offers, without regard to its historical adequacy. The problem that arises when Heidegger’s interpretation is criticised from the perspective of the traditional partition between systematic and historical approaches to philosophy is neatly summed up by Brandt:

when Kant ‘puts something before our eyes’ it needs no further words; when, on the other hand, Heidegger does, why then the recourse to the writings of Kant.\(^\text{33}\)

Either we read *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* for the light it sheds on what Kant said, in which case it is bound by the laws of objective historical research. Or we read *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* for its philosophical insights, in which case the references to are Kant simply irrelevant. These criticisms are valid while ever Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is treated as either a work of philosophy or a work of history. These criticisms fail, however, to the extent that the basic direction of Heidegger’s philosophising “compels us to enter into an original area of research which precedes the traditional partition of philosophical work into historical and systematic knowledge”.\(^\text{34}\)

By directing his interpretation at what remains “unsaid” in Kant’s *Critique*, Heidegger clearly distinguishes the subject matter of his interpretation from that of traditional historical research. Heidegger’s aim is to recover the basic experiences that motivate Kant’s philosophising. These basic experiences constitute the objective ground (*sachlichen Grund*) of Kant’s philosophy.\(^\text{35}\) Heidegger’s retrieval aims at disclosing that objective ground. In Heidegger’s language this means “to free and keep watch over those inner forces which make it possible, on the basis of its essence, as a problem”.\(^\text{36}\) At the same time, this involves working through this matter more fully than Kant himself. By means of


\(^{34}\) HCT, p. 7.

\(^{35}\) See PIK, p. 3.

\(^{36}\) KPM, p. 143.
such an authentic retrieval, Heidegger chooses Kant as his hero and loyally follows in the footsteps of that which can be repeated.37

Heidegger tries to show that this objective ground is nothing other than the projection of being upon time understood as the essence of Dasein's existence. Of course, Kant himself does not explicitly raise the question of being and time. Heidegger argues, however, that this is because Kant remains trapped within a merely traditional understanding of philosophy such that, in effect, the conceptual resources at his disposal are not sufficient to allow him to fully articulate the most basic insights that motivate his philosophy. As such, Heidegger presents us with an image of Kant who, in a fumbling and rough sort of way, struggles but ultimately fails to articulate the basic structures of the philosophical insight that Heidegger himself managed to more fully articulate in Being and Time.

Heidegger's interpretation is to be confirmed by using the insights developed in Being and Time not only to explain the basic direction of Kant's philosophising but also to clarify precisely those points where Kant's own philosophising falters, so as to resolve the points of contradiction and confusion that Kant himself was unable to resolve. The structure of Heidegger's interpretation of Kant has already been set out in some detail in chapter one of this dissertation. The point to be made here is that Heidegger's interpretation necessarily breaches the rules of traditional historical research to the extent that those rules prohibit ascribing to Kant views that Kant did not and could not have expressed. However, this may not necessarily undermine the legitimacy of Heidegger's interpretation if Heidegger can show, by means of his interpretation, that he has uncovered the basic insights that really do motivate Kant's philosophy.

This aspect of Heidegger's strategy of interpretation follows from his view that the history of philosophy has a genuine subject matter. That is to say, the history of philosophy is not simply constituted by a series of artificial, theoretical constructions and worldviews that have no meaning beyond that ascribed to them by their author understood within his or her historical context. Instead, the history of philosophy is made up of attempts to articulate basic

37 See SZ, p. 385.
experiences that transcend the limits of particular historical attempts at articulation. Indeed, in this sense, all genuine philosophy is for Heidegger phenomenological, in so far as it aims at articulating the genuine matter of philosophy. This does not mean that the subject matter of philosophy is timeless or absolute. Instead, this transcendence is always a “finite transcendence”; it is always mediated by the process of concealing and revealing that marks any attempt at interpretation and understanding by a being like Dasein’s who exists as thrown projection. If we accept this view of philosophy, then it becomes meaningful to attempt to uncover what this something is in a manner that goes beyond the particular expressions of individual philosophers. It is in this sense that Heidegger’s interpretation constitutes a thoughtful dialogue between thinkers about the matter of philosophy. And it is for this reason that Heidegger believes that he can legitimately breach the laws of traditional historical research.

Of course, this does not mean that what Kant actually said can be entirely disregarded by Heidegger. What Kant actually said is clearly relevant to a disclosure of the basic experiences that motivate Kant’s philosophising. Heidegger articulates these basic experiences that constitute the “unsaid” motivation of Kant’s philosophising by working through in minute detail what Kant actually says. This means, however, that what Kant actually writes cannot be used as the ultimate determiner of what that real subject matter of Kant’s philosophy was. Heidegger interpretation must, therefore, be judged according to its ability to illuminate the real subject matter of Kant’s philosophy in a manner that goes beyond what Kant actually says.

Nevertheless, there remains something a little suspicious about the way in which Heidegger uses his own philosophical position to show that the basic experiences that motivate Being and Time are also operative in the work of a past philosopher. Cassirer, for example, argues that Heidegger approaches Kant, not as a commentator,

but as usurper, who penetrates, as it were, by force of arms into the Kantian system in order to subdue it and make it serviceable for his problem.38

Even Heidegger’s disciple Gadamer seems to criticise Heidegger’s violence along these lines:

All in all, Heidegger’s attempt to think through the history of philosophy exhibits the violence of a thinker who is driven by his own questions and who seeks to recognize himself in everything. Thus his “destruction” of metaphysics becomes a kind of wrestling-match with the power of this tradition of thought.39

Is Heidegger’s method of destructive retrieval simply a process by which Heidegger arbitrarily projects his own philosophical position onto the text of a past philosopher? Heidegger recognises the danger of such arbitrariness in his interpretation. In response to criticisms of his interpretation, Heidegger stated in the preface to the second edition of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*:

In contrast to the methods of historical philology, which has its own agenda, a thoughtful dialogue is bound by other laws - laws which are more easily violated. In a dialogue the possibility of going astray is more threatening, the shortcomings are more frequent.40

Heidegger also states that the violence of his interpretation cannot legitimately be a mere matter of “roving arbitrariness”.41 A similar point is made by Heidegger in his discussion of interpretation in *Being and Time*. Heidegger writes that the, constant task is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions, but rather to make the scientific theme secure by working out these fore-structures in terms of the things themselves.42

The rigour of Heidegger’s interpretation is ultimately based upon the phenomenological principle of fidelity to the matters themselves. Heidegger’s interpretation is guided and must ultimately be judged by its capacity to distinguish genuine philosophical insights from the un genuine. As we have seen, phenomenology is necessarily mediated by the process of historical appropriation. Heidegger’s destructive retrieval establishes its phenomenological

40 KPM, p. xx.
41 KPM, p. 141.
42 SZ, p. 153.
legitimacy to the extent that Heidegger can show that he has faithfully disclosed the basic experiences that motivate the history of philosophy and constitute the origin of its insights.

This structure explains why a purely philosophical interpretation of Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, one that is concerned simply with the adequacy of Heidegger’s philosophical insights, without regard to their historical significance, is not sufficient to establish the basis for a critique of Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. Heidegger’s interpretation, although distinct from traditional methods of historical research, involves a strong claim about what actually motivates Kant’s philosophising. The key point to note is that this involves something quite different from a critique and speculative development of the arguments contained in Kant’s Critique. Heidegger’s project is quite different from the sorts of rational reconstruction engaged in by Anglo-American philosophers such as Strawson and Bennett or the development of Kant’s Critique by the Neo-Kantians. Heidegger does not attempt to move beyond Kant simply by means of a rational clarification and development of Kant’s thought. Instead, Heidegger tries to move forward by going back to the basic experiences that actually motivate Kant’s philosophising. This involves a distinctively historical claim about the way in which the projection of being upon time, understood as an event that occurs within Dasein, provides the origin of the most basic experiences that motivate Kant’s philosophising. To read Heidegger’s interpretation simply for the “deeper comprehension of our present situation and the possibilities it yet offers” without regard to the historical character of Heidegger’s interpretation is ultimately to render Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant superfluous. Indeed, it is to lose sight of precisely the distinctive sense in which Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics constitutes a work of authentic historiography.

Heidegger’s destructive retrieval is, therefore, to some extent dependent upon the historical interplay of philosophical insights worked out through the tradition. Heidegger clearly recognised this. Heidegger concluded his 1927/28 lectures on Kant in the following way:

When some years ago I studied the Critique of Pure Reason anew and read it, as it were, against the background of Husserl’s phenomenology, it opened my eyes; and Kant became for me a crucial confirmation of the accuracy of the path which I took in my search. Certainly an authority as such is never a justification, and something is not true just because
Kant has said it. Nevertheless ... one can trust him fully. In Kant as in no other thinker one has the immediate certainty that he does not cheat. And the most monstrous danger in philosophy consists in cheating, because all efforts do not have the massive character of a natural scientific experiment or that of an historical source. But where the greatest danger of cheating is, there is also the ultimate possibility for the genuineness of thinking and questioning. The meaning of doing philosophy consists in awakening the need for this genuineness and in keeping it awake.\(^{43}\)

For Heidegger there is no greater certainty in philosophy than that provided by the genuineness of philosophical insight. This is not to say that philosophy lacks rigour, only that the rigour of philosophical work is necessarily based upon the distinction between genuine and ungenuine insights. It is this that is at the heart of Heidegger’s conception of phenomenology as the only proper method for philosophy. However, this also highlights the ultimate limit of Heidegger’s attempt to confirm his own philosophical position by demonstrating that it constitutes an articulation of the basic experiences that motivate philosophy throughout history. Since this is done by means of a retrieval of the Dasein that has been there, it always involves, as Heidegger says in *Being and Time*, Dasein choosing its hero.\(^{44}\) This is a choice “which makes one free for the struggle of loyally following in the footsteps of that which can be repeated”.\(^{45}\) In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger clearly chooses Kant as his hero. This choice is based on a conception of the genuineness of Kant’s philosophising. However, this choice is itself ultimately guided by Heidegger’s own conception of what counts as a genuine insight. This is not necessarily a criticism of Heidegger’s method of destructive retrieval. As Heidegger clearly argues, it may simply reflect a basic fact about human understanding, that it is always guided by preconceptions. In this regard, even the Neo-Kantian Cohen recognised that “one can express no judgement concerning Kant without betraying in every line the world one carries in one’s own head”.\(^{46}\) Indeed, it is perhaps only by recognising that this danger is ever-present and unavoidable that any interpretation can hope to struggle against it.

\(^{43}\) PIK, pp. 292-293.

\(^{44}\) SZ, p. 385.

\(^{45}\) SZ, p. 385.

Nevertheless, Heidegger's choice of Kant as his hero does raise an important question about the way in which the method of destructive retrieval relates to the present. As we have seen, phenomenological destruction is directed, not against the past as such, but against what is most obvious and self-evident in our present understanding of the history of philosophy. It is by means of this destruction that Dasein wrests itself free from the inauthentic interpretations of the "they". In his 1922 introduction to Aristotle, Heidegger writes:

According to what has been said about the tendency towards falling which affects every interpretation, it follows that precisely 'what is obvious' about this interpretedness (what is not discussed about it, what is assumed not to require any further clarification) will be that which inauthentically (i.e. without explicit appropriation on the basis of its origins) maintains the dominating effective force as regards the posing of the problems and the direction of the questioning.47

The method of destruction is inherently radical and quite extraordinarily so. The mere fact that something is accepted as obvious renders it, in Heidegger's view, inauthentic and questionable.

There is much to be said for Heidegger's notion of destruction if it is taken to mean that we should always look behind what appears to be obvious. Heidegger is surely right to suggest that every interpretation must first of all make use of concepts that have been uncritically accepted from the tradition. Even our most straightforward perceptions and conceptions are always already the result of traditional interpretations. And it is precisely when these most basic interpretations are accepted as obvious that there is the greatest risk of uncritically accepting concepts and interpretations that may ultimately prove to be groundless. And it is for this reason that a critical encounter with the history of philosophy belongs essentially to philosophy because any attempt to do philosophy already implicitly takes its direction from the history of philosophy.

But does not this radical rejection of what is most obvious run the risk of leading Heidegger's own efforts astray? Indeed, Heidegger's method of destruction appears to run the risk of becoming a form of extremism. Not

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because of any rejection of the history of philosophy, but because of its radical rejection of the most obvious aspects of the present interpretation of that history. This has clear implications for the basic direction of Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant.

The key point to note is that Heidegger’s destructive retrieval of Kant is first of all a destruction of the traditional interpretation of Kant that held sway in Heidegger’s time. That is to say, it is an attempt first of all to destroy the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant. As discussed in chapter two of this dissertation, the Neo-Kantians were the dominant force in German philosophy from around 1870 until 1920. The diverse philosophical movements encompassed by the term “Neo-Kantianism” mean that it resists definition. Nevertheless, Neo-Kantianism can be roughly defined as an attempt to establish philosophy as a rigorous, scientific discipline by orienting philosophy towards the sciences; either the natural sciences in the case of the Marburg Neo-Kantianism of Cohen or the historical sciences in the case of the Southwest German school of Rickert. For these Neo-Kantians, the conditions of the possibility of science are to be worked out through the establishment of a transcendental logic that grounds the possibility of universally valid knowledge.

As a number of commentators have noted, the Neo-Kantians are “the unannounced adversaries throughout Being and Time” and “the movement against which Heidegger rebels with all his strength”.48 According to Heidegger, the Neo-Kantians reduce philosophy to a theory of knowledge in which, “knowledge equals judgement, truth equals judgedness equals objectivity equals valid sense”.49 Heidegger’s own attempt to renew the spirit of philosophy by raising anew the question of being is directed against precisely this Neo-Kantian conception of the basic concepts of philosophy.

As the term suggests, the Neo-Kantians took the basic direction for their philosophy from Kant. As we have seen, from at least the 1850s Kant had become the “Atlas” of German philosophy such that “whoever wishes to know what problems have still to be solved, what demands have still to be fulfilled,

49 GP, p. 201.
will always have to orient himself by [Kant’s] works”.

In the same vein, Cassirer characterises the work of the Marburg Neo-Kantian Cohen in the following terms:

From within Kant’s system, Cohen decided upon the really fateful question of philosophy: the question of the relationship between philosophy and science. The reconstruction of this system from its original driving force leads us into the midst of the world-historical struggle over the existence of philosophy itself.

Heidegger challenges the Neo-Kantian conception of philosophy precisely by challenging the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant. Cassirer clearly recognised this aspect of Heidegger’s interpretation in his review of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Cassirer writes that,

what Heidegger regards as the dominant idea of his interpretation of Kant is doubtless the effort to overcome that Neo-Kantianism that sought to found the entire Kantian system in his critique of knowledge and finally to let it disappear into mere epistemology.

Heidegger’s interpretation is directed above all else against Cohen’s interpretation of Kant as a “theoretician of the mathematico-physical theory of knowledge”. As outlined in this dissertation, Heidegger rejects this Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant’s Copernican revolution as situating the question of the possibility of scientific knowledge at the centre of Kant’s philosophy. Instead, Heidegger argues that with this revolution, the question of Dasein’s existence as that which understands being is brought to the fore. Heidegger argues against the Neo-Kantian claim that Kant gained a seminal insight into the need to establish philosophy as a autonomous, transcendent logic which founds the possibility of valid judgements. Instead, Heidegger argues that Kant’s *Critique* in fact “rattles the mastery of reason” and renders “inconceivable” the idea of a

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53 Martin Heidegger “Davos Disputation between Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger” in *KPM*, Appendix IV, p. 193.
transcendental logic that could claim to be autonomous and absolute. While the Neo-Kantians argued that Kant exposed the need to replace ontology with transcendental logic, Heidegger argued that Kant’s philosophising reveals the need for an ontology of Dasein that would enable the realisation of metaphysics. Most importantly, while the Neo-Kantians sought in Kant the key to understanding theoretical reason, Heidegger argues that Kant’s philosophising came up against the unavoidably temporal and finite nature of human existence.

It is only when this Neo-Kantian context is introduced that the full structure of Heidegger’s destructive retrieval of Kant, as it is worked out in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, becomes apparent. The method of destructive retrieval is a process whereby the possibilities that have been inherited are handed down explicitly in a manner that enables the present to wrest free from the limitations of the traditional interpretations of the “they”. As such, Heidegger engages in a destruction of the present understanding of the history of philosophy because it is this understanding that conditions the way in which the present understands the possibilities open to philosophy. This destruction enables a retrieval of possibilities that have been concealed by the present interpretation of the past. Heidegger destroys the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant in an attempt to set philosophy on a new path; not by constructing a new philosophical system, but by retrieving a possibility from Kant’s philosophy that had been concealed by the Neo-Kantians.

It is here that we find the real basis for Heidegger’s over-interpretation of Kant. This basis is to be found not simply in Heidegger’s attempt to argue that the projection of being upon time provides the real motivation for Kant’s *Critique*, although this is of course an important aspect of Heidegger’s interpretation. Rather this basis is to be found in Heidegger’s attempt to overcome the Neo-Kantian conception of philosophy by dismantling the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant and supplanting it with his own appropriation of Kant. Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is motivated by an attempt to overcome the Neo-Kantian conception of philosophy by overcoming the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant. This leads Heidegger to attempt to find the phenomenon of the projection of being upon time in precisely those parts of the *Critique* that seem most clearly directed towards the establishment of the conditions of

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54 KPM, pp. 170-1.
empirical objectivity because it is these aspects that are at the heart of the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant. And it is perhaps this that leads Heidegger astray. Heidegger's interpretation does not simply disclose the most basic experiences of Kant's philosophy. Instead, it is driven by an attempt to counteract the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant. This reveals a kind of "Neo-Kantianism" implicit in Heidegger's own interpretation of Kant. Heidegger tries to overturn the Neo-Kantian understanding of philosophy and confirm the correctness of his own philosophical position by substituting the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant with his own interpretation of Kant. Indeed, when read within this Neo-Kantian context, Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics constitutes the most radical as well as the last great expression of an age when the possibilities open to philosophy were determined through the interpretation of Kant.

Heidegger's conception of philosophy as authentic historiography is not limited to this particular application of it in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. Heidegger continued to struggle with the problematic of the historical nature of philosophy throughout his philosophical career. The account of Heidegger's method of destructive retrieval in this dissertation is only part of the story that leads, for example, to Heidegger's conception of "the history of being" and the "event of appropriation" (Ereignis) in late works. Moreover, Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics provides only one instance of Heidegger's many engagements with works from the history of philosophy. It would be wrong, therefore, to use the single instance of Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics to formulate a general critique of Heidegger's conception of the historicity of philosophy. Nevertheless, by interpreting Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics from the perspective of Heidegger's philosophical work in the 1920s and by reading it within the historical context provided by the Neo-Kantians, it is possible to retrieve some of the basic motivations that guide Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. In this dissertation, I have tried to show how such a retrieval of Heidegger's work can both demonstrate the limitations associated with some of the secondary literature on Heidegger while also bringing to light a kind of "Neo-Kantianism" in Heidegger's own attempt to destroy the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant and explicitly hand down the possibilities inherent in the tradition by supplanting the Neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant with his own interpretation of Kant in a way that is meant to confirm the correctness of Heidegger's own philosophical insights.
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