

## HEIDEGGER ON KANT'S DEFINITION OF BEING

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**ABSTRACT:** Heidegger's 1927 lecture course, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, includes an examination of the Kantian conception of being as it appears within the first *Critique's* refutation of the ontological proof of God's existence. There, Heidegger maintains that the Kantian definition of being as position is beset with an ambiguity that Kant could not resolve, as such a resolution would require the repudiation of the traditional ontology of the subject that Kant presupposes. Heidegger then claims that his own ontology of Dasein, articulated in *Being and Time*, addresses the ambiguity in the Kantian position, and thus in Kantian being, through a phenomenology of the *intentio/intentum* relation—an analysis in which Heidegger attempts to move beyond the traditional ontology. Heidegger's assessment of Kant, here, is characteristic of Heideggerian Kant-interpretation. That is, Heidegger typically views Kant as having pushed the traditional ontology to its limits, and then as having retreated from the radical implications of his own thought, due to his allegiance to that ontology. And in the context of his Kant-interpretations, Heidegger characterizes his own philosophical position as resulting from the pursuit of these radical implications of Kantian thought.

### I.

IN a well-known argument from his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger maintains that Kant retreated from the radical, and disquieting, implications of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (See Heidegger 1997a, 112–120 and 150–153). For, according to Heidegger, the first *Critique's* “unveiling of the essence of the subjectivity of the subject” (Heidegger 1997a, 117) reveals that essence to be the transcendental power of imagination—a conclusion from which Kant “had to shrink back” (Heidegger 1997a, 118). Kant retreated from his discovery of the imagination's centrality to the structure

of subjectivity because this conception of subjectivity conflicts with one of his own fundamental presuppositions, i.e., the essential rationality of the human subject. The implications of Kant's analysis of the nature of subjectivity, then, ultimately undermined the grounding assumption of that very analysis. As Heidegger puts it, "Kant himself undermines the floor upon which he initially placed the *Critique*" (Heidegger 1997a, 150).

So, Kant was faced with a dilemma: he either had to reject his discovery that the ontological structure of subjectivity is found in imagination, or had to reject his presupposition that the ontological structure of subjectivity is found in reason. And according to Heidegger, Kant was compelled to assume the essential rationality of the subject, as this conception of subjectivity is in keeping with the traditional ontology of the subject (see Heidegger 1997a, 117). Thus, Kant's allegiance to the philosophical tradition forced him to reject his own discovery of the centrality of the imagination since the traditional ontology of the subject is unable to accommodate this centrality.<sup>1</sup> Due to this inability, the first *Critique's* analysis of subjectivity led Kant to a conception of the subject that is incomprehensible from within the strictures of the traditional ontology. As thus incomprehensible, this conception was tantamount, for Kant, to an "abyss" (Heidegger 1997a, 118 and 151). His ontology of the subject led him "into darkness" (Heidegger 1997a, 150), and so Kant shrank back from the implications of his own thought.

In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, we have a paradigm example of Heidegger's general view of Kant. On the one hand, he sees Kant as a pivotal figure in the history of philosophy insofar as Kant pushes the traditional ontology, in Heideggerian terms the ontology of the "present-at-hand," to its limits. On the other hand, he sees Kant as committed to the ontology of the present-at-hand, which prevents him from accepting the ultimate conclusions of his analyses. For to do so would demand that he move beyond the limits of the traditional ontology and into an "abyss," into the "darkness" of that which cannot be comprehended by that ontology. According to Heidegger, it is to this overturning of the ontology of the present-at-hand that Kant's thought repeatedly, and characteristically, leads him, and from which he repeatedly, and characteristically, retreats. In addition to noting the key moments of retreat in Kant's works, moments when Kant balks at the possibility of repudiating the traditional ontology, Heidegger's Kant-interpretations typically take the further step of pursuing the paths beyond this ontology, which Kant's thought opens up; and then of showing how Heidegger's own philosophical position can be seen as resulting from the pursuit of these radical implications of Kantian thought.<sup>2</sup>

In view of Heidegger's assessment of Kant, we can see that his Kant-interpretations yield not only a way of reading Kant, but also a point of access to Heidegger's thought itself.<sup>3</sup> Here, we will examine a particularly clear case of this approach to Kant, which is found in Heidegger's 1927 lecture course, entitled *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Specifically, we will examine the lecture course's analysis of the Kantian definition of being or existence (Heidegger 1982, 27–76).

## II.

Kant's thesis regarding being occurs within his refutation of the ontological proof of God's existence (Kant 1965, 500–507). And, as Heidegger notes, the Kantian thesis has both a negative aspect and a positive aspect (Heidegger 1982, 32–33). Negatively, Kant maintains that “being is not a real predicate” (Heidegger 1982, 27; see Kant 1965, 504). That is, the existence of a thing is not among the properties, or determinations, that make it the type of thing that it is; actual existence is not part of a thing's conceptual content. In Heidegger's words, “something like existence does not belong to the determinateness of a concept” (Heidegger 1982, 32). But if existence is not a content-bearing determination, then what, exactly, is it? According to Kant, Heidegger points out, “existence equals absolute position” (Heidegger 1982, 32; see Kant 1965, 504). Here, we find the positive aspect of the Kantian thesis.

It is with regard to the positive aspect of Kant's view that Heidegger carries out his critique of Kant.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, Heidegger's critique intends to “push this understanding of being and existence—being equals position—still further in the direction of Kant's account” (Heidegger 1982, 42), in order to see whether this conception of being can be brought to “a greater degree of clarity within the Kantian approach itself” (Heidegger 1982, 42), or if, instead, pursuing Kant's thesis will “perhaps lead us into the dark” (Heidegger 1982, 43). The question that determines Heidegger's analysis, then, asks whether Kant's thought can, ultimately, accommodate its own conception of being, or if, instead, the Kantian thesis about being leads him “into the dark,” to an abyss, perhaps the same abyss to which Heidegger refers in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. In other words, is Kant's conception of being comprehensible from within the strictures of his own thought? To answer this, Heidegger examines Kant's notion of position.

Heidegger begins his explication of Kantian position by contrasting it with Kantian predication. In predication, for Kant, a content-bearing determination is affirmed of a concept. Heidegger illustrates this with the example of a synthetic proposition—“[i]n the proposition ‘A is B,’ B is a real predicate adjoined to A” (Heidegger 1982, 45). On the other hand, a proposition that affirms a thing's existence does not append a real predicate to that thing's concept since, as Kant argues, any concept possesses the same content as does the actual thing corresponding to it (see Heidegger 1982, 38–39). Therefore, position, or the assertion of the existence of a thing corresponding to a given concept, does not add content to the concept in question. However, it must add something to the concept, or else there would be no difference at all between a concept and its corresponding thing. That is, position effects a synthesis, “even though it is not the synthesis of predication, of the addition of a predicate to a subject” (Heidegger 1982, 45; see also Heidegger 1982, 41). What, then, does position, the assertion of actual existence, add to a concept if not content? With what is a concept synthesized in the synthesis of position?

For Kant, position adds a *relation* to a concept. That is, by positing a corresponding object, position establishes a relation between a concept and its object, a relation of correspondence between them. The concept is no longer a mere thought, but an idea with an object added to it (see Heidegger 1982, 41 and 45).

As Heidegger puts it, “[i]n absolute position the object of the concept, the actual being corresponding to it, is put into relation, as actual, to the concept that is merely thought” (Heidegger 1982, 45). And since position establishes the existence of a thing corresponding to the concept in question, Kant’s positive thesis about being is that “existence . . . expresses a relationship of the object to the cognitive faculty” (Heidegger 1982, 45; see Kant 1965, 239).

So, Kant’s thesis about being, his claim that “being equals position,” maintains that to exist, to be an actual thing, is to stand in a certain relation to a cognizing subject, i.e., a relation that establishes a correspondence between cognition and the actually existing object. For Kant, to be is to be a correlate of cognition. And he further specifies the establishment of this relation by identifying actuality with perception.<sup>5</sup> Thus, Heidegger concludes, “the *specific character of absolute position*, as Kant defines it, reveals itself as *perception*” (Heidegger 1982, 46). And it is with this formulation in mind that Heidegger carries out his critique.

Heidegger’s critique of the Kantian equation of being with perception notes an unresolved ambiguity in this definition (Heidegger 1982, 47–49). For Kant never specifies whether, by ‘perception,’ he refers to the act of perception, the object perceived, or the relation between them, i.e., the being-perceived of the perceived object. Moreover, Kant’s notion of position is beset with the same ambiguity. It is here that Heidegger employs the previously mentioned critical strategy of pursuing Kant’s conception of being further than did Kant himself, in order to see if Kantian thought can accommodate, can comprehend, this conception. Specifically, Heidegger’s further pursuit of Kant’s conception of being addresses the unresolved ambiguity in Kant’s definition thereof.

As Heidegger sees it, the above ambiguity is intrinsic to the nature of perception since “perception and perceived belong together in the latter’s perceivedness” (Heidegger 1982, 57). That is, the three possible meanings of ‘perception’ are mutually implicative, rendering any attempt to disentangle them, ultimately, futile. And this ineluctable entanglement obtains insofar as perception is a type of “directedness-toward,” a type of “comportment.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, Heidegger addresses Kant’s unresolved ambiguity by examining the nature of directedness-toward in general; in Heidegger’s words, by examining “the ontological nature of position and perception”—an analysis that Kant failed to fully pursue (Heidegger 1982, 56).

### III.

Heidegger’s examination of directedness-toward, or comportment, is couched in the terminology of phenomenology, which uses the term ‘intentionality’ to refer to this phenomenon (Heidegger 1982, 58–76). He begins to clarify the structure of intentionality by contrasting it with two common misinterpretations thereof. These misinterpretations fail to properly construe the nature of two of the basic elements of any comportment, of any intentional relation—the comporting-toward, or the *intentio*, and that toward which the *intentio* is directed, or the *intentum*—and so misconstrues the relation between them. Heidegger distinguishes these two misinterpretations of the *intentio/intentum* relation insofar as one amounts to an

“*erroneous objectivizing* of intentionality,” while the other amounts to an “*erroneous subjectivizing* of intentionality” (Heidegger 1982, 65).

In the first case, the intentional relation is interpreted as “an extant relation between two extant entities” (Heidegger 1982, 59). The problem with this interpretation is that it conceives the *intentio* as the act of “an isolated psychical subject,” thereby failing to recognize that “the subject is structured intentionally within itself” (Heidegger 1982, 61). To understand this objection, we first note that for Heidegger an extant, or “present-at-hand,” entity is one whose ontological identity, whose definitive way of being, is determined without reference to any relations that it may have with other beings. To construe the intentional subject as present-at-hand, then, is to see it as an essentially isolated, self-contained entity, for whom intentional relations to other present-at-hand beings may or may not obtain, since such relations are not definitive of the subject thus construed. An intentional relation only accrues to such a subject if another extant entity enters its experiential field and if the subject performs an intentional act by which the other entity is apprehended, thereby establishing “an extant relation between two extant entities.”

In contrast to the above rendering of the intentional subject, Heidegger maintains that “the subject is structured intentionally in itself.” This characteristically phenomenological conception of subjectivity does not see the *intentio*, the directedness toward the intentional object, as the result of an act that an essentially isolated subject may or may not perform. Instead, being directed toward its objects is intrinsic to the very nature of the intentional subject, intrinsic to its ontological structure. Unlike the present-at-hand, its relations to other objects, specifically its intentional relations thereto, are definitive of its ontological identity. Thus, there could be no intentional subject without objects to which it continually and necessarily directs, or comports, itself. Heidegger refers to this as the “a priori comportmental character” (Heidegger 1982, 61) of the intentional subject.

In view of the above, we can see why Heidegger refers to the failure to recognize the intrinsically comportmental character of the intentional subject as an “*erroneous objectivizing* of intentionality.” For this failure overlooks the definitive ontological aspect of the subject, its being essentially directed-toward, and thus views it as nothing more than an object, as merely present-at-hand. However, the recognition of the intentional subject’s comportmental nature easily leads to the second common misinterpretation of intentionality—the “*erroneous subjectivizing* of intentionality.”

Unlike the objectivizing of intentionality, which is grounded in a misrepresentation of the nature of the *intentio*, or intentional subject, the subjectivizing of intentionality is grounded in a misrepresentation of the nature of the *intantum*, or intentional object. This misrepresentation correctly acknowledges that since comportment is intrinsic to the ontological structure of the intentional subject, the objects toward which it comports itself are necessarily correlates *of* the intentional subject, objects toward which it directs itself. For otherwise the *intentio/intantum* relation would obtain only if an independently existing, present-at-hand, object happened to enter its experiential field, which, as we have seen, is precisely what

Heidegger's phenomenological conception of subjectivity denies. Instead, the intentional subject and the intentional object mutually imply each other.

The error into which the acknowledgment of the intentional subject's intrinsically compartmental character easily leads views the intentional object as "immanent to the subject," and thus as belonging to "the subjective sphere" (Heidegger 1982, 61). That is, since the intentional object is necessarily the correlate of an intentional subject, its existence depends upon the subject, upon its being the *intantum* of an *intentionio*. Failing to exist independently of the intentional subject, the intentional object is interpreted as merely subjective.

In contrast to the above rendering of the intentional object, Heidegger maintains that the object's intrinsic correlation with the intentional subject does not imply that it is merely subjective. For, in that case, perceptual intentions would be directed toward "representational images and sensations" (Heidegger 1982, 63), whereas such intuitions are actually directed toward perceptual objects themselves. More generally, each type of *intentionio* has a specific type of *intantum* toward which it is directed, and thus with which it is correlated. Therefore, some intentional objects may be "immanent to the subject," such as one's merely subjective states, while other intentional objects are not, such as perceptual objects. This characteristically phenomenological conception of objects, then, denies the mere subjectivity of the *intantum* despite its being necessarily correlated with an *intentionio*.

So, the two common misinterpretations of intentionality that Heidegger invokes commit diametrically opposed errors. With regard to the intentional subject, the opposition is between interpreting the subject as essentially unrelated to its objects, as occurs in the objectivizing of intentionality; and interpreting the subject as essentially related to its objects, as occurs in the subjectivizing of intentionality. And these opposed conceptions of the intentional subject yield opposed interpretations of the intentional object. That is, the objectivizing of intentionality leaves the *intantum* completely independent of the *intentionio*, while the subjectivizing of intentionality leaves the *intantum* completely dependent upon the *intentionio*. Yet, despite the clear opposition between these views of the intentional relation, Heidegger sees them as grounded in the same fundamental mistake, i.e., the assumption of the ontology of the present-at-hand (Heidegger 1982, 66–67).

For Heidegger, the ontology of the present-at-hand interprets all existing things as present-at-hand, or extant, objects. Heidegger sees this ontology as the fundamental common thread uniting ancient philosophy with twentieth-century thought, and which Heidegger's own ontology is designed to overcome. Interpreting all that exists as present-at-hand leads to the dilemma between objectivizing intentionality and subjectivizing intentionality insofar as presence-at-hand is an essentially isolated, self-enclosed way of being. For if the intentional subject were thus self-enclosed, then its objects would exist either within this isolated realm of subjectivity or outside of it. In the first case, the object is completely subject-dependent, and so intentionality is subjectivized; in the second case, the object is completely subject-independent, and so intentionality is objectivized. And, according to Heidegger, Kant's thought assumes this ontology<sup>7</sup>—an assumption that directly affects his thesis about being.

## IV.

The effect that the ontology of the present-at-hand has on Kant's conception of being can be seen by first recalling that Kant's thesis that "being equals position" maintains that to be is to be a correlate of cognition, more specifically a correlate of perceptual cognition. Heidegger critiques this thesis by pointing out an unresolved ambiguity that results from the Kantian thesis. That is, Kant never specifies whether by 'perception' he means the act of perception, the object of perception, or the relation between them. In other words, he does not specify whether the correlate of cognition, or that which *is*, is to be understood as something subjective or as something objective.

Notice that to resolve the ambiguity inherent in Kant's thesis would be to opt for one of the horns of the dilemma that follows from the assumption of the ontology of the present-at-hand. For Kant's thesis can only be disambiguated by maintaining either that to be is to be subjective or that it is to be objective; the thesis can only be disambiguated by either subjectivizing intentionality or objectivizing intentionality. But if Kant assumes the ontology of the present-at-hand, and if this assumption directly affects his conception of being, as Heidegger claims, then why does he not resolve the above ambiguity, per the demands of that ontology? Why does Kant's leaving the ambiguity in his thesis about being intact not show that he has already moved beyond the traditional ontology and its demands?

In order to address the above questions, and to thereby gain a better understanding of how Heidegger sees Kant's relation to the ontology of the present-at-hand, we note how, according to Heidegger, the ambiguity in Kant's thesis arises. Kant's conception of being is ambiguous with regard to the subjective or objective character of that which is, insofar as this conception maintains that to be is to be a correlate of cognition, i.e., insofar as Kant interprets objects as, specifically, *intentional* objects. And, Heidegger maintains, the structure of intentionality harbors the "peculiarity of being neither objective nor subjective" (Heidegger 1982, 66). That is, both the objectivizing of intentionality and the subjectivizing of intentionality are mistaken, since a proper understanding of the intentional object sees it as neither completely dependent upon the intentional subject nor completely independent of the intentional subject. Instead, the intentional object is ambiguous in this regard.

So, according to Heidegger, Kant's thesis inevitably comes up against the ambiguity upon which it founders: "not only *can* the ambiguity mentioned arise but it *must* necessarily arise" (Heidegger 1982, 66). For the thesis defines that which is as a correlate of cognition, as an intentional object; and the ambiguity in question is intrinsic to the very structure of the intentio/intentum relation. It is an ambiguity that Kant's thought encounters "under duress from the things themselves" (Heidegger 1982, 67). Here, we can begin to understand Kant's precise relation to the ontology of the present-at-hand. By neither objectivizing nor subjectivizing intentionality, but rather allowing intentionality to retain its intrinsic ambiguity, Kant resists the demands of the traditional ontology. However, he fails to fully examine this ambiguity, to further pursue its implications. To do so would be to confront the traditional ontology's inability to account for intentionality, for the possibility of being directed toward objects, and thus would be tantamount to acknowledging

the ultimate inadequacy of the ontology of the present-at-hand. Kant's failure to pursue the ambiguity of intentionality, then, marks his allegiance to the ontology of the present-at-hand, his inability to see beyond it, despite the "duress from the things themselves."

In order to properly address the ambiguity intrinsic to the intentional relation, and thus to fully challenge the adequacy of the traditional ontology, what is required is an "adequate treatment of the ontology of the Dasein" (Heidegger 1982, 56). And Heidegger points us to *Being and Time*, which had been recently published at the time of our lecture course, for his own "attempt" (Heidegger 1982, 56) to carry this out. The connection between *Being and Time*'s ontology of Dasein and the ambiguity of intentionality can be seen by way of the following.

## V.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger addresses the question that asks what it is to be, by examining the relation between things that are, or beings, and that which is directed toward them. In other words, *Being and Time* approaches the question of being through an examination of the intentio/intentum relation. Furthermore, it concentrates its attention on the mode of being that is characteristic of the intentional subject, the mode of being that Heidegger names "Dasein." Hence, *Being and Time* articulates the "ontology of the Dasein" that Heidegger faults Kant for failing to pursue. And, Heidegger argues, the ontological structure of the entity whose way of being is Dasein is such that the beings toward which it is directed are neither completely dependent upon Dasein nor completely independent of Dasein. Instead, they are ambiguous in this regard.

The examination of the intentio/intentum relation, by which Heidegger establishes the above ambiguity is, more specifically, a phenomenology of that relation as it appears in our immediate, everyday involvement with objects. According to Heidegger, our immediate, everyday involvement with objects is such that they appear primarily as objects of use, or "ready-to-hand" entities, while the everyday subject correlated with the ready-to-hand is a possible user thereof, or "circumspective" Dasein.<sup>8</sup> And since useful objects can only be useful for a possible user, circumspective Dasein makes the ready-to-hand possible.<sup>9</sup> Specifically, circumspective Dasein is a possible user of the useful, is competent to use the ready-to-hand, insofar as it comprehends the usefulness that is definitive of the useful entity; and so it is through an act of understanding that it makes the useful entity possible (see Heidegger 2010, 84–86 and 138–140). Thus, the immediate, everyday intentio/intentum relation is one in which the ready-to-hand object is dependent upon circumspective Dasein, one in which circumspective Dasein makes the useful object possible, or in this sense constitutes the useful object.

However, the ready-to-hand is not completely dependent upon circumspective Dasein, insofar as the usefulness of the useful entity is pre-determined. That is, circumspective Dasein cannot arbitrarily determine the proper uses that define the ready-to-hand object, since, if it could, useful objects could not be misused, but would conform without resistance to any and all of circumspective Dasein's acts of object-use.<sup>10</sup> Due to its misusability, then, the ready-to-hand object is the useful



object that it is prior to circumspective Dasein's comprehension of its usefulness, prior to circumspective Dasein's act of useful-object constitution. As thus pre-determined, the ready-to-hand is what it is without circumspective Dasein, and to this extent it is independent of circumspective Dasein.

Heidegger uses his analysis of the immediate, everyday *intentio/intentum* relation as the basis from which to derive the ontological structure of this relation and its components. And the ontological structure manifested in the relation between circumspective Dasein and the ready-to-hand is that relation's being such that the *intentum* is neither completely dependent upon, nor completely independent of, the *intentio*, but rather is ambiguous in this regard. That is, Heidegger takes the ambiguity that is intrinsic to the immediate, everyday *intentio/intentum* relation as the fundamental, defining aspect of that relation. Therefore, just as for something to be useful is for it to stand in an ambiguous relation to the user-subject, so for something to be at all is for it to stand in this same ambiguous relation to subjectivity *per se*. In other words, for something to be is for it to be ambiguous in its relation to subjectivity.

With regard to the ontological structure of the *intentio*, of subjectivity—the ontological structure that Heidegger refers to as “Dasein”—to be the sort of thing whose way of being is Dasein is to be such that the beings that it makes possible are thereby dependent upon it, but are nevertheless independent of it. More precisely, it is to be the sort of subject that constitutes entities, insofar as those entities exist as correlates of that subject and so exist for it, although it finds those same entities to be already constituted, and so to exist without it. That is, just as to be circumspective Dasein is to be that which constitutes ready-to-hand entities, although the usefulness that defines them, i.e., their readiness-to-hand, is already determined; so to be Dasein, *per se*, is to be that which constitutes beings although their being is already determined. Therefore, to be Dasein is to be the sort of subject that is correlated with objects that it constitutes, and so are dependent upon it, although those objects are already constituted, and so are independent of it.<sup>11</sup>

We can now see why *Being and Time*'s pursuit of an “ontology of the Dasein” reveals the inadequacy of the traditional ontology of the present-at-hand. Since the traditional ontology interprets all beings as essentially self-enclosed, it cannot account for Dasein, and so is unable to account for intentionality, for the possibility of being directed toward objects. It cannot account for Dasein since an *intentum* that is neither dependent upon nor independent of its correlative *intentio*, but is ambiguous in this regard, can only be correlated with an *intentio* that has neither an inside nor an outside, an intentional subject to whom the internal/external distinction does not apply (See Heidegger 2010, 62; Heidegger 1982, 66). For an *intentio* to whom this distinction applies would be a subject whose objects are either internal to it, and so are dependent upon it, or are external to it, and so are independent of it. Thus, the ontological structure of the intentional subject—Dasein—is such that it cannot be understood as self-enclosed, as admitting of an unambiguous, determinate border demarcating it from the world to which it relates. Hence, Heidegger describes Dasein as “beyond itself” (Heidegger 2010, 185). Only in this way, can the ambiguity that is intrinsic to the intentional relation be understood.

Notice how Heidegger's analysis of the Kantian definition of being, in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, follows the interpretive pattern described previously, and exemplified in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. First of all, Kant's thesis encounters the limits of the ontology of the present-at-hand, in the form of the subjective/objective ambiguity that is intrinsic to intentionality, as this ambiguity cannot be comprehended by that ontology. The ambiguity of intentionality, then, is the abyss, the darkness, that is incomprehensible to, and thus lies beyond the scope of, the traditional ontology. So, with his recognition of the intentional ambiguity, Kant confronts the abyss, but his allegiance to the ontology of the present-at-hand prevents him from pursuing a further analysis of the ambiguity. For to do so would be tantamount to acknowledging the ultimate inadequacy of the traditional ontology. Thus, Kant's commitment to this ontology does not allow him to fully address the implications of his thesis regarding being. Instead, he retreats from the radical implications of his own thought; as in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, he shrinks back from the abyss.

After noting the above moment of retreat in Kant's analysis of being, Heidegger's interpretation, in the 1927 lecture course, takes the further step of pursuing the path, opened up by Kant's thesis. This move beyond the traditional ontology consists of the lecture course's explication of the structure of intentionality and the ambiguity endemic to this structure. With this analysis, Heidegger enters the abyss from which Kant retreated, and whose full explication, Heidegger tells us, occurs in *Being and Time*'s ontology of Dasein. In this way, Heidegger's own philosophical position, as articulated in *Being and Time*, can be seen as resulting from his pursuit of the radical, but unexplored, implications of Kantian thought.

## ENDNOTES

1. It is this insistence on the traditional ontology, Heidegger claims, that underlies Kant's revision of the Transcendental Deduction in the B edition of the first *Critique*, in which the imagination cedes its priority to the understanding "in order to preserve the mastery of reason" (Heidegger 1997a, 119). As William Richardson makes the point, Heidegger recognized that if Kant were to allow the imagination to maintain priority over reason, then "the traditional primacy of reason and logic in man would be made subordinate to a power (the pure imagination) which always had been considered inferior to reason" (Richardson 1963, 146–147; see also Sherover 1971, 176–177; Carr 2007, 33).
2. Heidegger makes this last move in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, by devoting the final sections of the book to the transition from Kant's notion of subjectivity to his own conception of Dasein in *Being and Time* (See Heidegger 1997a, 150ff.). For characterizations of Heidegger's approach to Kant that coincide with our characterization, see Sherover 1971, 10, 178, and 245; Dahlstrom 1994, 297; Blattner 2007, 169; Schalow 1992, xi.
3. Heidegger explicitly endorses this way of approaching his own thought, in a well-known statement from the 1927–1928 lecture course, entitled *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. There, he maintains that "[w]hen 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" (Heidegger 1997b, 292). This approach

is particularly valuable for those whose philosophical interests are rooted in the problems of modern epistemology and metaphysics, along with Kant's attempts to resolve these problems. For such readers, the Kantian approach to Heidegger can be used to clarify the Heideggerian project, thereby expanding Heidegger's audience considerably. As Sherover makes the point, "approaching Heidegger from a Kantian pathway makes him more readily accessible" (Sherover 1971, 6), since doing so "proceeds out of a more traditional discussion" (Sherover 1971, 8).

Several commentators have used Heidegger's treatment of Kant as such a point of access, by elucidating some difficult Heideggerian notions in Kantian terms. For example, Daniel Dahlstrom connects Kant's practical philosophy with Heidegger's conceptions of conscience and care (Dahlstrom 1994, 294). He also draws a connection between the Heideggerian understanding of being and the Kantian a priori synthetic judgment (Dahlstrom 1994, 297; see also Lafont 2007; Tanzer 2006). Other examples of using the Kantian point of access to Heidegger include Mark Okrent's reading of the Heideggerian for-the-sake-of-which in terms of the Kantian 'I think' (Okrent 2007); David Carr's interpreting Heidegger's claim that the human subject is "outside of itself" by showing how this follows from Heidegger's reading of Kant's transcendental deduction (Carr 2007, 32–34); and William Blattner's interpretation of Heideggerian temporality in terms of the Kantian problem concerning conceptualization and the unity of experience (Blattner 2007, 18–21).

Here, it should be noted that not all commentators believe that using Kant as a point of access to Heidegger is a felicitous approach thereto. Most notably, John van Buren acknowledges that Heidegger goes through a Kantian phase, but argues that this phase is an unfortunate "aberration" in the trajectory of Heidegger's thought (see van Buren 1994, 362–367).

4. Heidegger not only agrees with the negative aspect of Kant's thesis, but he equates it with his own fundamental claim that being is not *a* being (see Heidegger 1982, 43 and 55).

5. Kant 1965, 243, cited by Heidegger at Heidegger 1982, 46. See also Kant 1965, 252, cited by Heidegger at Heidegger 1982, 40.

6. Heidegger 1982, 57. Position, too, is a directedness-toward, and so Heidegger's analysis of the ambiguity intrinsic to the nature of perception applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the nature of position.

7. See Heidegger 1982, 28 and 315. See also Dahlstrom 1994, 308; Carr 2007, 31 and 39; Taminioux 1991, 71.

8. See Heidegger 2010, 66–67. Here, Stambaugh translates Heidegger's technical term for the useful object—*das Zuhanden*—as the "handy." In what follows, I will use John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson's rendering of this term, i.e., the "ready-to-hand," from their translation of *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1962).

9. Heidegger expresses this by characterizing circumspective Dasein as the "for-the-sake-of-which" (Heidegger 2010, 83) of the ready-to-hand, i.e., as that for whom the useful thing is the useful thing that it is.

10. For Heidegger's discussion of the ready-to-hand's "unusability," see Heidegger 2010, 72–73. For the implication that circumspective Dasein is thereby in a state of "dependency upon" its world, see Heidegger 2010, 85–86. For the connection between such dependence and the resistance of objects, see Heidegger 2010, 133–134.

11. Heidegger articulates this structure by emphasizing the extent to which it implies that Dasein necessarily fails to achieve itself as object-constituting agency. Thus, he refers to Dasein as "potentiality of being," or "being-possible" (Heidegger 2010, 139). In a similar vein, he characterizes Dasein as "*ahead* of itself" (Heidegger 2010, 185), insofar as its

unachievability implies that it is always attempting to become itself, and in this sense catch up with itself.

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