

Camilla Serck-Hanssen

Rediscovering the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a Propaedeutic to Metaphysics: What Heidegger Saw and McDowell Missed

1 Introduction

In 1994, John McDowell's Locke lectures appeared in *Mind and World*. The book was to become highly influential. It both set the agenda for a number of philosophical debates within contemporary philosophy and framed the reception of the philosophers that McDowell chose as his interlocutors. In our context his take on Kant is particularly interesting because of its distinctively Hegelian twist.¹ Indeed, I think it is safe to say that *Mind and World* is one of the central contributions to our understanding of German Idealism today.

In this paper I shall argue that although McDowell brings out some of the systematic philosophical potential in a reading of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (*KrV*), his criticism of Kant's so-called transcendental story² shows that he misses important aspects of the *KrV* – aspects that would indeed be congenial to the way he attempts to draw on Kant in his own philosophical project.

Before I present to you what I take to be the crucial shortcomings of McDowell's Kant reading, a caveat is, however, in order. My point is not that McDowell fails to engage in a sufficiently careful exegesis of the first Critique. Such a criticism would not do justice to the way in which McDowell philosophizes. Indeed, his errand is not to interpret Kant, but to bring out, often in metaphorical lan-

1 This much is recognized by McDowell himself, cf. (McDowell 1994, p. 44, p. 83).

2 In *Having the World in View*, McDowell regrets his way of portraying the “transcendental story” as necessarily being from an external or sideways on perspective. He admits having equated “transcendental” with “transcendent” (cf. p. 18, n. 26) and also admits having imported an unwarranted two-worlds picture of what Kant is up to (p. 42, n 30). Nevertheless, also in the later work, McDowell argues that Kant's theory ultimately fails to establish robust empirical realism, mainly because of the faults of the *Transcendental Aesthetic* (cf. pp.76–80), which he still believes commits Kant to some notion of a transcendental or transcendent Given matter (cf. p. 81, p. 83). He also, however, fails to give any alternative account of the transcendental level. Hence, despite his regrets in *Having the World in View*, the fact is that McDowell not only continues to worry about the Given, but also finds no proper place for its correlate viz. the transcendental subject and its operations. As such, a criticism of his earlier claims (in *Mind and World*) of the “transcendental story” is still warranted.

guage, some rather deep ideas about the aims and pitfalls of philosophy. To succeed in presenting an interesting criticism of McDowell's Kant reception, one must therefore confront him with a reading that in a broad sense shares the aims of McDowell's own approach, while at the same time challenging it.

My aim in this paper is to show that Heidegger's reading of the *KrV* can take on such a role. I shall argue that this reading provides a perspective that is congenial to the way McDowell attempts to draw positive insights from Kant's position, and also that it avoids the pitfalls that McDowell believes accrues to it. In short, I shall suggest that McDowell's philosophical agenda would have been strengthened had he taken not only the Kant of German Idealism, but also that of Heidegger seriously.³

To set the stage for this alternative route, let me begin by reminding you of how McDowell reads his Kant, and where he takes him to fail.

2 McDowell's Kant

In *Mind and World*, McDowell's aim is twofold. He seeks to disclose how a powerful myth, the Myth of the Given,⁴ has haunted and bewildered the minds of even some of his dearest philosophers, namely Davidson, Evans and Kant. McDowell also attempts to offer an alternative picture, which while responding to the philosophical worries and questions that gave rise to the Myth in the first place, does not itself fall prey to it.

In McDowell's view, the Myth of the Given is not just any old philosophical misconception. It is an idea that follows naturally from the Kantian insight that "rationality operates freely in its own sphere".⁵ For if that is the correct understanding of reason, i.e. our ability to think and judge, one must indeed ask

³ In *Mind and World* Heidegger is not mentioned at all. In the more recent collection of essays, *Having the World in View*, Heidegger is only mentioned as the one who claimed that the *KrV* is not at all a theory of knowledge, which is a view McDowell finds excessive, but in some sense correct. In addition to offering a take on Kant that would be congenial and fruitful for McDowell's project, I also think that a study of Heidegger along the lines presented in this paper would provide McDowell with strong arguments against the way Dreyfus attempts to use Heidegger against him. I will not, however, develop this point here.

⁴ Here I will follow McDowell's notation in *Having the World in View* and write Given with a capital G when it is the given in the sense of the Myth, and given when it is not. Cf. e.g. (McDowell 2013, p. 264 f.).

⁵ For this particular way of putting it, see (McDowell 1994, p. 85). Other places in *Mind and World* McDowell writes about the spontaneity of understanding being *sui generis*, e.g. p. 67. For more about spontaneity, see e.g. p. 5, pp. 7–13 and pp.29–34.

how we can ever successfully know anything outside this sphere. How can our thought adequately respond to the world and its objects? According to McDowell, this worry is not just that of (shallow) skepticism, which is why he does not rest content with Davidson's answer, i.e. that most of the time most of our thoughts are true (McDowell 1994, p. 17). The deeper question is how, if reason is spontaneous and operates freely, our thinking can be about the world and its objects at all (McDowell 1994, p. 17). In short, why isn't our rational activity a mere "spinning in the void" (McDowell 1994, p. 50)?

According to McDowell, this question expresses a legitimate worry because it follows from the insight, the Kantian insight as it were, into how reason ought to be conceived. Hence, the worry about a mere empty spinning cannot be seen as the conclusion of *a reductio*. In that case, the worry could be relieved simply by rejecting the autonomy of reason and opting for a strict or bald naturalism instead (McDowell 1994, p. 72ff, p. 85, p.108). What then is the alternative?

McDowell once again refers to Kant's first Critique and argues that an appropriate answer can at least partly be found here. In addition to the insight that reason is spontaneous, Kant realized that without a relation to intuitions, or to use McDowell's preferred locution: "bits of experiential intake", thoughts are not merely empty, but not thoughts at all. Moreover, and more importantly, McDowell also takes Kant to have realized (albeit not fully, which we shall return to below) that such intuitions cannot be devoid of conceptual structures. For if they were, they could not constrain thinking and judging in the required way. Once we realize that thinking might be a mere spinning in the void, intuitions or experiential intakes are called upon to function as justificatory grounds for our beliefs. And mere intuitive Givens can never justify anything. At best they can offer exculpation, but what we want and need is justification (McDowell 1994, p. 8). In other words, the Kantian insight, according to McDowell, is that we can only get the appropriate kind of friction for our spontaneity if the intuitions themselves are through and through conceptual (McDowell 1994, p. 66, p. 67). That is, intuitions must be placed within the space of rationality without thereby losing track of their intrinsically receptive or passive nature. Kantian intuitions are therefore experiential intakes not "as a bare getting of extra-conceptual Given, but as a kind of occurrence or state that already has conceptual content" (McDowell 1994, p. 9, see also p. 46). This means that somehow rationality must be operative already in receptivity or sensibility.

Despite his admiration and praise for Kant, McDowell argues that there are at least two shortcomings in Kant's way of thinking. First, Kant lacks the appropriate resources for fleshing out the idea that rationality must also be operative in sensibility. What Kant has to offer instead is a rather dubious story about the activity of certain so-called transcendental faculties. What he should have done

is to recapture the Aristotelian idea of second nature (McDowell 1994, p. 99). That way we can supposedly understand how humans, *qua* rational animals, can even have our sensible nature permeated by rationality. Second, although Kant does resist the Myth of the Given at the empirical level of his theory since he understands intuitions as being permeated by concepts, he nevertheless falls prey to the Myth of the Given at the transcendental level. For from the transcendental perspective, “receptivity figures as a susceptibility to the impact of a supersensible reality, a reality that is supposed to be independent of our conceptual activity in a stronger sense than any that fits the ordinary empirical world.” (McDowell 1994, p. 41) And “[o]nce the supersensible is in the picture, its radical independence of our thinking tends to present itself as no more than the independence any genuine reality must have. The empirical world’s claim to independence comes to seem fraudulent by comparison.” (McDowell 1994, p. 42). Hence, “[i]t is as though Kant were saying that although an exculpation cannot do duty for a justification, and although, empirically speaking, we can have justifications for empirical judgments, still the best we can have for empirical judgments, transcendently speaking, is exculpations. This is a profoundly unsatisfactory aspect of Kant’s philosophy” (McDowell 1994, p. 43).

As we have just seen, McDowell argues that when operating from the transcendental perspective Kant is still victim to this persistent Myth. The problem is allegedly that Kant’s understanding of the possibility of representational content has as its foundation a transcendental story where the Given pops up again; this time in the guise of the impact of supersensible reality on our sensibility (McDowell 1994, p. 41). Moreover, because of this transcendental story, he fails to see that rational powers should be assigned to real human beings and not to transcendental minds and their operations. But is this really Kant’s transcendental perspective or story?

As already announced, I will address this question, but not by diving into the scholarly debate as to whether the thing in itself should be understood in, e.g., epistemological, perspectival or ontological terms. Indeed, I think that at least some of those alternatives deserve to be included in the Myth of the Given, but I will not substantiate that view here. Instead I shall call your attention to the radically different reading of Kant’s transcendental story provided by Heidegger.

3 Heidegger’s Kant

Whereas McDowell’s Kant begins with spontaneity and autonomy and the problem of justification, Heidegger’s Kant begins with the problem of metaphysics.

That Heidegger downplays spontaneity and autonomy does not imply, however, that he takes Kant to be a “bald” naturalist.⁶ Rather, for Heidegger, Kant’s crucial insight is (i) the fundamental aim of philosophy is metaphysics and (ii) the quest for metaphysics comes hand in hand with a natural propensity to pursue metaphysics from God’s point of view.

This implies that the role of the given is also quite different from that which McDowell assigns to it. As Heidegger reads it, the role of the given, on the transcendental level, is just a corollary to our finitude.⁷ The point is simply that our spontaneity is not of a kind that can literally create the being of its own objects. What this rather trivial point is supposed to tell us is that the quest for metaphysics must be pursued while keeping our finitude in mind. Indeed, to lose track of this feature of our rationality in our philosophizing is to attempt to do metaphysics “from the view from nowhere” or from “sideways on”, to borrow a phrase from McDowell (McDowell 1994, p. 34–5, p. 82).

Kant’s reference to some kind of transcendental givenness or transcendental receptivity thus satisfies two quite different tasks in the two readings. Whereas according to McDowell’s reading the *given* (*qua* Given) is invoked to function as a kind of deep level justificatory friction (and fails to do so) (McDowell 1994, p.41), on Heidegger’s reading it is supposed to, and indeed succeeds in, giving us the only model or perspective within which the project of metaphysics can be carried out successfully. Secondly, what the *transcendental* level contributes, according to Heidegger, is not an extra story that is supposed to “suspend and tie” the empirical perspective from above and below, like a kind of rampant Platonism (McDowell 1994, pp. 77–78, pp. 83–85, pp. 92–93). It is not a duplication of the empirical mind and world story, as it were. Instead the transcendental level, or more correctly, the level of the critique (McDowell unfortunately equates the two) is the level where the very possibility of metaphysics (*qua* ontology) is inquired into in a quite special manner. The recognition of the finitude of our spontaneity, together with the question about being, is only the starting point for this project, a project that in a piecemeal manner sets the stage for metaphysics proper.

To see how, I shall focus my attention on three interrelated themes that I take to be particularly germane to my criticism of McDowell’s Kant reception, namely: (i) Heidegger’s understanding of the method of *KrV*; (ii) his reading of the tran-

⁶ For the issue of bald naturalism see (McDowell 1994, 72ff and 108).

⁷ In (McDowell 2013, p. 85 and p. 102), McDowell also calls the attention to this finitude and applauds it. Nevertheless, he does not utilize this point the way Heidegger does.

scendental aesthetic; and (iii) his reading of the Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories or the Guiding Thread.

4 Kant's method: The meaning of the Copernican Revolution

According to Kant, no investigation can have the hope to advance to the level of a science unless it has an idea of its own method. Not only has no metaphysics in the scientific sense ever existed, even its idea has been lacking. For human reason, albeit naturally disposed to metaphysics, has failed to see where to begin and how to proceed. Kant's own answer to this problem is well known: it is the Copernican Revolution. It is equally well known that the *Critique of Pure Reason* is the work of this revolution, but in what sense?

According to the traditional reading, the conclusions of the *KrV* count as conclusions of *metaphysica generalis* or ontology as long as one realizes that its domain consists not of things in themselves, but appearances. And appearances are objects that are somehow constituted by our a priori means of knowing them. This reading of Kant's transcendental turn can be seen as kind of an anti-realistic salvation of metaphysics. It can, however, also be seen as an act of euthanasia. For if metaphysics concerns mind dependent, subjective objects, it is not much of a metaphysics!

On Heidegger's reading of the *KrV*, both these responses to the transcendental turn are, however, based on a misunderstanding of Kant's project. The aim of the *KrV* is not to bring forth a set of necessary truths about objects even when understood as appearances. For the *KrV* is not an *organon*, but a *canon*. This means that the *KrV* guards us against metaphysical miscarriage, but it does not by itself give us any substantive metaphysical insights. More specifically the work is first and foremost a contribution to the question of *method*, i.e. it tells us how *to do* philosophy.⁸

The view that the *KrV* is a work that centers on the question of philosophical method is not unique to Heidegger.⁹ Nevertheless, his understanding of the level to which this method applies and how it applies surely is. According to Heideg-

⁸ Notice that Heidegger rejects the view that the *KrV* is "a doctrine concerning the technique for proceeding" (KPM, p. 11). But this does not imply that he dismisses its importance as a piece of methodology where the method is one that shows itself rather than being the object of a doctrine. For the same understanding of the *KrV*, cf. also (Heidegger 1997, p. 45).

⁹ Cf. e.g. Giorgio Tonelli (in particular Tonelli 1995), according to whom the *KrV* is a work on the method of metaphysics, and Henry Allison (in particular Allison 2005), who argues for a methodological reading where the *KrV* is understood as a contribution to meta-epistemology.

ger's reading, the *KrV* must be read as a methodological instruction to philosophy not *qua* metaphysics, but *qua* propaedeutic to *metaphysica generalis* or ontology.¹⁰ In short, the *KrV* is a work in meta-metaphysics. Moreover, the *KrV* is not so much a work *on* method as a work *of* a certain method. That is, it is supposed to *show* us rather than *tell* us how to proceed in the philosophical pursuit that precedes and eventually grounds ontology. Or in Heidegger's own words: "The task [is to show] how this development of the possibility of ontology from its seeds is to be carried out" (KPM, p. 12).

In this way, Heidegger's reading also gives new meaning to the metaphor of the Copernican Revolution. The *KrV* is the work in which the revolution which needs to proceed metaphysics is carried out. It puts before our eyes – to use an expression from Kant – where to begin and how to proceed in order to arrive at the place where the questions of ontology can finally be addressed properly.¹¹

5 Where to begin

Recall that for McDowell, Kant's philosophical project springs from the insight that reason is spontaneous and autonomous. Alas this insight also pushes Kant towards fraternizing with the Given – a pressure he only partially deals with in a successful manner. I believe, however, that Heidegger's understanding of Kant's philosophical starting point is closer to home.

According to Heidegger, Kant's starting point is to ask how "knowledge which unveils the being itself" is possible (KPM, p. 9). At first this might seem to go against Kant's claim in the introduction to the *KrV* where he sets the agenda for the *Critique* by asking his famous question about the possibility of the synthetic a priori. But in fact what Kant tells us there is that: "The real problem of pure reason is now *contained* in the key question: How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?"¹² What I want to draw attention to is precisely the point that, for Kant, the "real problem" and indeed the mystery¹³ of (theoretical) philosophy is not identical to that of the synthetic a priori, but somehow contained in it. The "real problem" I surmise is rather what Kant draws our attention to in the transcendental deduction, viz. that the lack of attention to the question about the function and ground of the copula has given rise to many troublesome consequences in metaphysics (*KrV*, B 140–42). If so, Kant's real question can be

¹⁰ Cf. e.g. KPM pp. 28–29.

¹¹ Cf. also KPM p. 29 about the meaning of "Analytic".

¹² *KrV* B 19, my emphasis. Cf. also *KrV* A 10.

¹³ Cf. *KrV* A 10, last paragraph where Kant uses the term 'mystery' or better 'secret' (*Geheimnis*).

rephrased as follows: “How is it possible to judge that something is something at all?” And this is just another way of asking Heidegger’s question how “knowledge which unveils the being itself” is possible.

If this reading is correct, the next question is why Kant would let the real problem of metaphysics be presented as a secret “contained in” another question? I believe that the answer is partly that the secret, i.e. the fundamental question of philosophy, is typically concealed because we simply take for granted that we do have access to the being of things. That logicians in a narrow sense typically overlook the significance of the question of being is acceptable for Kant. After all, analysis of mere logical relations (i.e. relations between concepts) does not bring in the domain of being at all. But the problem is that in the history of metaphysics the logical tools have been used surreptitiously over and over again to draw illusory metaphysical conclusions (*KrV*, B 141, footnote). This, I suggest, is why the fundamental question of being must be made visible to us through a question of a less familiar kind. And this certainly holds for that of the synthetic a priori. Never before has the challenge of metaphysics been posed like this!

This accords well with Heidegger’s reading of the *KrV*. As he sees it, it is a work that provides a cure against the “forgetfulness of being” in two senses. Firstly, it manages to set up the real question of metaphysics in a way that does not immediately lend itself to surreptitious metaphysical reasoning. For the demand that the a priori feature of our judgments must be answerable to justification guards us against naïve empiricism, while the demand concerning the synthetic feature guards us against logicism. Secondly, the *KrV* guides us towards the place where the question of being can first be addressed properly. The Critique of Pure Reason is as such “laying the ground for metaphysics as unveiling the essence of ontology” (KPM, p. 10). To see more precisely how and in what sense the *KrV* serves as a such a special kind of propaedeutic to metaphysics, I will first turn to Heidegger’s reading of the transcendental aesthetic. Here we shall find a very original reply to McDowell’s worry that the Given is an unavoidable corollary of the transcendental aesthetic (McDowell 2013, pp. 76–81).

6 The Transcendental Aesthetic: We sense because we are finite

The first part of the *KrV* is the Transcendental Aesthetic. It concerns the receptive element in human cognition and its transcendental conditions, namely space and time. A common way to read the Transcendental Aesthetic is to see it as the first step in the attempt at restricting the proper domain of metaphysics to

that of appearances. Nevertheless many or even most interpreters object that Kant's arguments do not suffice to rule out that mind independent "things in themselves" exist, and as such ought to be the objects of metaphysics proper. Indeed it seems that Kant himself admits this much since he talks about a transcendental kind of affection where the thing in itself appears to be posited as a kind of transcendental and yet material condition of the content of our sensibility. As we have already seen, this way of understanding Kant also causes McDowell a great deal of concern, for "[o]nce the supersensible is in the picture, its radical independence of our thinking tends to present itself as no more than the independence any genuine reality must have. The empirical world's claim to independence comes to seem fraudulent by comparison" (McDowell 1994, p. 42).

Heidegger's reading of the Transcendental Aesthetic is, however, quite different and offers an interesting reply to McDowell's worry. For Heidegger the Transcendental Aesthetic is the result of a starting point of outmost importance, a starting point Kant himself was only brought to through the whole process of the "most original self-knowing of Reason", i.e. the Critique (KPM, p. 13). I have already anticipated that this starting point is the perspective that we are finite intellects. But we can now see why this starting point is of "outmost importance" to metaphysics. Kant's crucial insight, according to Heidegger, is that only finite beings are confronted with being as a problem and hence only finite beings can engage in the question of being as well as in the question of how this question is to be answerable (KPM, pp. 15–18).

If we assume, or could assume, the standpoint of the infinite intellect, the problem of being would not in fact appear to us at all. The hallmark of the infinite intellect is its creativeness. That means that for the infinite intellect its representation of the object and the being of the object come down to the same thing. And where there is no gap between the representation and the object, the question of how the object can be available in its being cannot arise.

Kant's first important insight is therefore to place the problem of metaphysics firmly within the horizon of the finite intellect. His next insight, according to Heidegger, is to question what this starting point discloses. What it unveils is a new question, to wit: "How must the finite being that we call "human being" be according to its innermost nature so that in general it can be open to being that is already there independently of its own creation, and which therefore must be able to show itself from itself?" (KPM p. 30) The transcendental aesthetic is the preliminary or provisional answer to that question.

Notice that this way of reconstructing Kant's path towards the inquiry into the nature of space and time is quite different from the reading which causes McDowell's worry and discontent. To recall, that reading assumes that the tran-

scendental aesthetic comes hand in hand with an assumption about the necessity of positing a transcendental level of the Given. And if this were the only way to read Kant, I do think McDowell's objection would be appropriate. It does indeed seem as if "[o]nce the supersensible is in the picture, its radical independence of our thinking tends to present itself as no more than the independence any genuine reality must have. The empirical world's claim to independence comes to seem fraudulent by comparison" (McDowell 1994, p. 42).

On Heidegger's reading, however, this problem does not arise. For the premise that we are finite intellects is not tantamount to a causal or quasi claim about transcendental affection.¹⁴ Instead it follows from the arguably non-controversial and merely negative assumption that we are not creative intellects.¹⁵ And this starting point, as we shall see, gives quite a different perspective on our sensibility than any causal readings supply.

The Kantian conception of sensibility is neither psychological nor neurological, and nor is it any dubious transcendental analogue of such empirical conceptions. As Heidegger says, Kant is the first philosopher who properly grasped the ontological concept of sensibility rather than the sensualistic one. On his account our sensible faculties are the result of our metaphysical status as finite intellects, rather than the other way around (KPM, p. 19). This must of course not be taken as a competing hypothesis to evolution, as far as the *causal origin* of sensible faculties go. The point is rather that the insight that we are finite intellects discloses that when having metaphysics as one's aim, sensibility must be investigated from a certain perspective.¹⁶ This perspective is to be guided by the question of how, through the senses, a finite being "can be open to a being that it itself is not and that therefore must be able to show itself from itself" (KPM, p. 30).

Recall that since this is a problem belonging to a Critique, or in Heideggerian terminology, a fundamental ontology, this question must be situated within a framework that does not already presuppose a reified model of subjects, objects and their interaction. This restriction clearly gives quite a particular kind of perspective on our sense organs. They are not to be conceived as pre-given objects open to empirical investigation. Instead they are to be seen as functions that are analyzed from the point of view of their role as enabling the *transcendence of sensibility*, i.e. of letting that other being show itself from itself. And it is from

¹⁴ For the opposed view cf. (McDowell 1994, p.95).

¹⁵ Cf. also KPM pp. 50–51.

¹⁶ Notice the close affinity to McDowell, who argues that naturalism of the bald kind actually opts out of philosophy altogether. Cf. (McDowell 1994, p. 77 ff.) and particularly his criticism of primitive metaphysics (McDowell 1994, p. 82).

this perspective that the peculiar status of space and time is first brought to light. For space and time are the sensible principles or horizons through which particulars are able to stand forth as fully saturated particulars. Space and time also constitute the framework within which the subject finds himself as being always already there with the particulars. Moreover, space and time are *pure a priori* intuitions in the sense of being *ways* of intuiting, i.e. as ways of taking in particulars directly in their wholeness. As finite beings we are open to being in its particularity by sensing temporally and spatially. This is what the Transcendental Aesthetic discloses, and arguably this insight does not depend on a transcendental framework, which “slight[s] the independence of the reality to which our senses give us access” (McDowell 1994, p. 44).

7 Transcendental logic and transcendence

As I have already shown, Heidegger reads the *KrV* as a propaedeutic to general metaphysics or ontology. He also understands this propaedeutic in a special methodological manner according to which each of the different parts of the *KrV* unveil how the previous conclusions were just provisional and require new steps so as to approach the question of being in the appropriate way. In this sense we can call the *KrV* a work in methodological meta-metaphysics. We have also seen how this reading yields a very different understanding from McDowell’s of the role of the transcendently given. For McDowell, it can only be read as the transcendently Given, which deflates Kant’s empirical realism and turns it into an unfortunate kind of idealism (McDowell 1994, p. 44).¹⁷ For Heidegger, the given is instead the corollary of our finitude. And it is the recognition of this finitude that enables Kant to approach the question of being in the appropriate way, i.e. a way that eventually will also allow us to see how empirical realism is possible.¹⁸

As we just saw, one of the insights that followed from this starting point is that philosophy must address sensibility not in a sensualistic or quasi-sensualistic manner, but rather ontologically. And by assuming this perspective on sensibility, one in effect avoids precisely what McDowell believes belongs to the transcendental framework, namely the lofty idea of transcendental affection. What, then, about the transcendental logic? Does that part of the *KrV* require

¹⁷ For a somewhat subtler exposition, see (McDowell 2013, pp. 78–80).

¹⁸ I will not attempt to show how Heidegger understands empirical realism or how he takes it to be possible.

a transcendental framework of the kind that McDowell objects to? Does it imply “operations of an off-stage transcendental mind” (McDowell 1994, p. 159)? Heidegger’s answer is once again negative. To see why, we need to turn to his understanding of the transcendental logic.

The understanding of space and time as manners through which being can announce itself in its particularity and wholeness is, for Heidegger, only a partial and indeed provisional answer to the problem of being or transcendence. For arguably the knowing of being is not made out by intuition alone. To know something is always to know it as such or such, which requires thinking and concepts (KPM, p. 36).

From the point of view of a Critique (or a fundamental ontology), the question that must be raised with respect to thinking at this point is therefore how thought must be like in order to enable a grasp of being. How can thought, as it were, reach out beyond itself and let that being, which it itself is not, be known in itself?¹⁹ For Heidegger this is not simply an additional question alongside that of the nature of our sensibility. It is not as if Kant starts out with the premise that the human mind has two basic kinds of representational faculties: thought and sensibility that need to be analyzed. In accordance with Heidegger’s special methodological reading of the *KrV*, the idea is instead the following: While the insight that we are finite intellects led us to investigate the function of sensibility from the point of view of its possibility *qua* transcendence, that manner of investigating also unveils to us how thinking must be approached. It is not as if we have thinking somehow in addition to intuition – that we both think and intuit. It is rather that Kant’s question about being leads him to the insight that discursive thinking itself is the mark of finitude because this kind of thinking so to speak springs out of intuition: “Thinking is in the service only of that particular object or of the being itself in its immediacy, and it is [a necessary means for making the being itself] accessible to everyone” (KPM p. 16, for the points inserted in brackets cf. p. 19).

In other words, although knowledge of being is primarily and originally intuition, and intuition “always remains bound to specifically intuited particulars” (KPM, p. 19), a being is only known in the full sense if it is known as something at all times for everyone (KPM, p. 19). It is indeed this independence from the particular knower and situation that signifies genuine knowledge. Somewhat ironically, this character of knowledge also easily leads one towards the view

¹⁹ Cf. KPM, pp. 23–24. The locution “in itself” should not in this context be identified with “the thing in itself”. The point is rather that of McDowell’s project, i.e. to inquire into the possibility of realism

that the question of the being of objects, i. e. ontology, must be treated absolutely independently of any considerations about the knowing subject.

However, for Kant as well as for Heidegger, such an absolute separation of epistemology and ontology is a misguided starting point. The problem is precisely to understand how an object can stand against us at all, and how we as finite *cognizers* must be like in order to let it stand against us (KPM, p. 50). This is the horizon within which the problem of being must be placed and it leads to the part of Kant's critical investigation known as the transcendental logic. To believe that ontological questions must be treated in absolute separation from questions about knowing subjects is indeed to forget that ontology or metaphysics is a project only for finite intellects; it is to assume that philosophy can be based on a Theo-centric model; it is to attempt to do "philosophy from sideways on" (McDowell 1994, p. 34–5, p. 82).

As we have just seen, so far there is no appeal to an "off stage transcendental mind" in Heidegger's reading of Kant's transcendental logic. Just as in the Transcendental Aesthetic, the function of the reference to the subject is to keep the quest for metaphysics on the right track. It serves to remind us that metaphysics must be pursued within the constraints of the finite intellect and that the analysis of thinking must be grounded in intuition. But let us go into the transcendental logic in some more detail to see if McDowell's worry about Kant's transcendental story can be met a bit more precisely.

8 The Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories

The logic that Kant presents in his table of judgment has been met with suspicion. The reception of his move from this table to that of the categories in what is commonly referred to as the "metaphysical deduction of the categories" is, in general, even less charitable. Here Kant in some way or another infers the table of categories from the table of judgment. According to Kant, this "deduction" can take place because:

The same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of understanding. (*KrV*, A 79/B 104 f .)

For most readers, this argument, if indeed it can be called an argument at all, is extremely cryptic. McDowell has, however, been surprisingly positive. To him these passages contain the essence of the insight that intuitions must be permeated by conceptual structures; that rationality must be operative in sensible na-

ture as well as in thought.²⁰ McDowell's worry is, however, partly that Kant has no resources for explaining how this can be the case and partly that according to the transcendental story, the categories are representations that belong to a transcendental mind with its dubious transcendental operations.

Again, I believe Heidegger's reading provides valuable points against McDowell's reading. Heidegger too rejects the idea that these passages are obscure. But this does not mean that positive solutions or conclusions can be found in them the way McDowell suggests. Instead, Heidegger sees these passages as an expression of a certain phase in the metaphysical project in which the "laying of the ground for metaphysics comes to the point where the matter itself is deeply veiled" (KPM p. 46). Hence Kant's claim that the same function is involved in judgment, and intuition "cannot be the conclusion, but must instead be the correct *beginning* of the laying of the ground for ontological knowledge" (KPM, p. 46).

For Heidegger, Kant's idea about the same function in thought and sensibility can be rephrased like this: Since the question of being has revealed to us that thought must be in the service of intuition,²¹ but must still transcend what is given immediately *from* intuition, the possibility of ontological knowledge would require that there is a way of comporting oneself towards being in its givenness, which at the same time enables reflective conceptualization to spring forth.

At this point in our meta-metaphysical inquiry, we have therefore reached a new insight. We have discovered a task, namely to look for something that can carry the weight of serving as one and the same function that is operative in sensibility and thought. As such the metaphysical deduction of the categories leads us towards a better grasp of our problem of being. For the question now reads: How can intuition and judgment spring forth in such a way that being itself can become available to us in its being through ontological predicates, i.e. categories? Nevertheless, this "deduction" is preliminary and conditional and only points us in the direction of where to look. In fact Kant's own title for the section suggests this much. Its official title is not "metaphysical deduction" (which suggests an attempt to disclose the *origin* of the categories), but a *Leitfaden*, i.e. a guiding thread that leads us towards the proper ontological approach (KPM p. 40).

²⁰ Cf. (McDowell 1994, bottom of page 46 and top of page 47). See also (McDowell 2013, pp. 30–35, p. 70, pp. 94–97, p. 260).

²¹ See above, and KPM p. 40.

Heidegger's reading of the passages from *Leitfaden* helps us see the shortcomings of McDowell's. Because he suffers from a lack of awareness of the propaedeutical and methodological character of the Critique, McDowell takes the passages to attempt to offer conclusions of a kind they do not (yet) aim to deliver. In short, his first fault is that he looks for the answer in the wrong place. Hence, his objection that Kant fails to give the full answer falls to the ground. Although I will not expand on that point here, on Heidegger's reading Kant's answer as to how that same function must be conceived is first found in the *Transcendental Schematism* – a part of the *KrV* that McDowell does not refer to at all.

The second fault of McDowell's is that he believes that instead of drawing on the real and embodied human being, Kant invents a transcendental mind where the functions (of synthesis) mysteriously take place. On Heidegger's reading, however, no transcendental mind of the kind McDowell alludes to is needed. For just as sensibility in the Transcendental Aesthetic is not a curious kind of transcendental faculty but a particular understanding of human sensibility that springs forth from the question of being, the transcendental mind referred to in the Transcendental Logic is simply the human mind examined and disclosed from the ontological standpoint. Indeed, rather than drawing us away from the real human being, on Heidegger's view Kant's approach will eventually bring us to a proper understanding of it.²²

9 Conclusion

I began this paper by reminding you of McDowell's objections to Kant. According to McDowell, despite Kant's philosophical ingenuity²³ he fell prey to the Myth of the Given, albeit only in his so called transcendental story. But this story is not innocent, for it seriously deflates the reality of the empirical world and displaces the mind or self. I have attempted to show how Heidegger's reading of the same Kantian text, i.e. the *Critique of Pure Reason*, conveys a quite different understanding of the transcendental story. My main concern has been to show firstly how for Heidegger Kant's concept of the transcendently given is not a myth but a corollary to the concept of the infinite intellect. Moreover, what McDowell takes to be an indefensible "transcendental story" is, on Heidegger's reading, a crucial insight into the requirement of a methodological propaedeutic to metaphysics

²² Just how Heidegger takes this to unfold in the Schematism of the *KrV* falls beyond the scope of this paper.

²³ For McDowell's praise of Kant, see e.g. (McDowell 1994, p. 98).

proper. Accordingly, for Heidegger's *Critique* there simply is no need to posit the level of reality that McDowell finds so troubling – be it the transcendentially Given or the “off stage self”. Finally, although I cannot develop that point here, on Heidegger's reading Kant also provides a place for that “second nature” that McDowell scorns him for having overlooked. For by seeing the Critique as a propaedeutic to metaphysics, one is brought to the insight that eventually it is only by placing the subject in the world and analyzing it in light of its agency that the question of being can be addressed properly.

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