HEIDEGGER, COHEN, AND THE NEO-KANTIAN READING OF KANT

by

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In his series of lectures on Kant in the winter term of 1927-1928, Heidegger begins his discussion of the Transcendental Aesthetic with the following comment: "The phenomenological interpretation of Kant is fundamentally opposed to that of the Marburg School, but we cannot get into a debate with them here; what is now important is to lay a solid basis for the phenomenological interpretation itself. We should stress, however, that the radical one-sidedness of the Marburg School has done more to further the interpretation of Kant than have all the more moderate approaches that never even considered it necessary to deal with the central problematic of the 'Critique'." The confrontation with the neo-Kantianism of the Marburg School that Heidegger here postpones to a later date was never to take place. Strange as it may seem, Heidegger nowhere enters into a detailed discussion of the Marburg School's, or at least not of Cohen and Natorp's, interpretation of Kant. The text of the Davos debate between Heidegger and Cassirer takes the form of minutes of a free discussion and deals only indirectly with Cohen, whom Heidegger places in the dock alongside the other suspects: Windelband, Rickert, Erdmann and Riehl. And while his interlocutor, Cassirer, may have been the titular heir of the Marburg School, his own philosophy of symbolic forms gives an original bent to the movement which originally centred on the theory of knowledge.

Yet if any of the neo-Kantians deserved Heidegger's attention, Cohen and Natorp did. Were they not, as he himself said, "shrewd researchers" (sachliche Forscher) who produced "the most profound and significant interpretation of Kant in the nineteenth century"? While he did not hesitate to emphasize the one-sidedness of their approach, he appreciated their radicalism. And while he noted in passing the "violence" (Gewaltsamkeit) of their reading of Kant, to anyone familiar with the hermeneutical precepts at work in Kant and the Problem
of Metaphysics, this need not be seen as a rebuke. On the contrary, Heidegger could not but have discovered his affinity with these neo-Kantians who, like him, claimed to understand Kant better than he had understood himself. Cohen and Natorp tried no less than to bridge the yawning gap that separates sensibility from understanding in The Critique of Pure Reason. The mere fact of inquiring into a common ground for the Transcendental Aesthetic and Transcendental Logic in order to demonstrate their unity is the sign of an "authentic philosophical motivation". However different the results of this motivation, it was certainly something that Heidegger had to recognize that he shared with them.

Nonetheless, Heidegger time and again attacks the results of the neo-Kantian reading, and his many allusions to the Marburg School are generally negative. They are only allusions, though, and while they may furnish clues to the clash of ideas, they should be supplemented by a rigorous comparison of the two sides. Heidegger's polemical comments tend to reduce the question to one of the opposition between ontology and epistemology or, in other words, to the difference between a ground-laying project in metaphysics and a project for a philosophy in the service of modern science. Now, this question obscures a number of others, upon which it might prove useful to cast some light. It is, of course, impossible here to present an exhaustive reconstruction of the debate that might have taken place between Heidegger and the Marburg neo-Kantians. So our study will be restricted to interpretations of the Critique of Pure Reason by Heidegger and Hermann Cohen and focus on the two areas of comparison that seem to us most likely to indicate what a full-fledged Auseinandersetzung might have looked like.

The first is the now-famous theme of the "common root" of sensibility and understanding. Even though, unlike Heidegger, Cohen does not use the unfathomable common root to orient his reading of Kant, we can use it to delineate clearly the two approaches and establish certain parallels between them. We shall accordingly examine Cohen's epistemological reading and Heidegger's phenomenological interpretation by reviewing their respective positions on psychologism, the status of the a priori and the "fact of science".

The second area of comparison revolves around the two authors' approach to
Transcendental Deduction. Understandably we can only try to clarify their line of attack and cannot deal here with the details of their reconstruction of this chapter of the *Critique*. To this end we shall study more specifically one of the themes that sums up the issues and results of deduction, the "Supreme Principle of all Synthetic Judgments".

At the end of our survey we shall be in a position to discern a measure of convergence between the two readings, a convergence that Heidegger's criticisms of Cohen tend to obscure. We shall thus come to share Cassirer's opinion; in his review of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* he deplores Heidegger's failure to do justice to the interpretation of his teacher, Cohen. In the final analysis Cohen and Heidegger agree in that they emphasize the "transcendental" dimension of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. As a result of our undertaking we shall be better able to understand why the reevaluation of transcendentalism had to take a different form in the two cases. It is, after all, commonly acknowledged that for Cohen the interpretation of the *Critique* is based on the Analytic of Principles, and particularly on the principle of intensive magnitudes as the principle of the production of reality. On the other hand, in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger sees the heart of the *Critique* in Transcendental Schematism as the generator of ontological knowledge.

1 - THE COMMON ROOT

A-Hermann Cohen

Heidegger adopts as his own Kant's metaphor of the common root of sensibility and understanding because it indicates to him the route to follow in order to refashion the unity of the *Critique*. Now, it is noteworthy that Cohen in *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung* makes an explicit and extremely significant reference to this same metaphor. While he does not use it as a direct guideline for his own work, he considers it very suggestive in that it allows one to point, in contrast, to another route, to the one that he intends to follow. In the following passage, drawn from a discussion of Locke's empiricism, Cohen is concerned that an
approach founded solely on the faculties of the soul might divert philosophy into the realm of psychology.

For those who in Kant's psychology see the various faculties of the soul as necessary principles, it must be evident that even the broadest of the generic concepts among these faculties, namely sensibility and understanding "stem perhaps from a common root unknown to us" (KrV B 29). In the soul such a root could easily have become accessible to knowing. But Kant founds the link he seeks on scientific knowledge. No analysis focused on the "genesis" of experience rather than on "content" is transcendental, but is on the contrary "subjective".

While Cohen thus does not deny that Kant's analyses include a psychological dimension, he insists on the fact that Kant does not use psychology to resolve fundamental issues, even though he might "easily" have resorted to the subterfuge of an inherent faculty. The unity he seeks is not to be found on the level of faculties but rather in what they make possible, in the "scientific knowledge" that is a clear indicator of the combination of cognitive faculties with a common task in view. Sensibility and understanding must be considered as distinct faculties before one can be in a position to determine with any precision what their role in knowing may be. "The distinction between sensibility and thought [must be] determined on the basis of the difference in their respective contributions to science and truth, and not, for example, on the basis of their psychological origin in the human soul." Clearly, unity here comes in the shape of a synthesis which can be apprehended in the finished product, mathematical physics. Science thus becomes the route par excellence to the primary and irreducible elements of knowledge. The refusal to resort to the theme of the "common root" of sensibility and understanding is very revealing of Cohen's project, but should not lead one, in reaction, to label Heidegger's interpretation, which we shall return to later, as "psychologism". Yet Cohen's stand against the primacy of the psychological in the theory of knowledge is symptomatic of the context in which the Marburg interpretation developed; it was a matter of dismissing any approach which, like psychologism, gave more prominence to the concrete genesis (Entstehung) of knowledge over its content (Bestand), and this content is accessible, at least in terms of its a priori, only through scientific discourse.
1. The Spectre of Psychologism

Cohen wrote *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung* in reaction to the psychologism which dominated Kantian interpretation at the time. When the work first appeared in 1871, Trendelenburg, Herbart, Fries, Bona Meyer and Steinthal held centre stage. They maintained that any valid lessons the *Critique of Pure Reason* might still hold would have to be recast in psychological terms. In these circumstances, Cohen was not so much calling for a return to Kant -- for this was already well underway -- but rather for a return to the text of the *Critique*, a text which revealed to anyone who knew how to read something quite different from what others were trying to make it say. Kantian argumentation certainly often slides into the realm of psychology, but if one understands the spirit of the argument one sees that it is far from advocating that philosophy become a subset of some positive science or other. Thus Cohen applied himself to restoring Kant’s specificity: the *Critique* is a transcendental discourse, irreducible to an empirical discipline.

It should be noted that when Cohen criticizes psychologism he knows exactly what he is talking about; he was himself a student of Trendelenburg and Steinthal and over the course of his education followed this fashion of approaching all human productions, even the most sublime, from the point of view of psychology. Thus in 1867 he published in the *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft* a paper with the suggestive title "The Platonic Theory of Ideas Developed from a Psychological Standpoint". There he maintained that however great and noble they may be, the productions of the mind comprise a psychological dimension whose mechanism can be revealed by positive science through the application of rigorous laws: "if we had more than an aesthetic appreciation of all the creations of genius, all the productions of art in the broad sense in which the thinker and the poet are at one, if we understood the process of productions of the mind, we could see clearly that a common psychological law comprises all the mind produces, whether great or small." In this context nothing can be excluded from genetic explication, not even the theories of Plato.
Now, it is against this attitude that *Kants Theorie der Erkunft* rebels. It sought to separate philosophy from the ambient positivism and restore it to prominence and, in order to accomplish this task, to develop a new approach to the *a priori*.

2-The Doctrine of the *A Priori*

*Kants Theorie der Erkunft* presents itself first as a theory of the *a priori*. Indeed any philosopher must operate on the level that Cohen, following Kant, calls "metaphysical" if he wishes to avoid empirical explanations of the generation of representations of consciousness and to define the *Bestand*, the component of consciousness which raises in it a claim to necessity and universality. The point is not to deny the psychological moment but to demonstrate its limits.

In analysing facts of consciousness that produce knowledge there must, however, be an internal differentiation of the methodical attitude. Because of this differentiation, Kant characterizes the preliminary process of the transcendental method by using the accepted term, "metaphysics". And this metaphysical precondition at the same time corrects the psychological bias. One must first bring the psychologist to take note of the fact that there are limits to his analysis, limits that he must recognize—thus demonstrating his critical maturity—and which critical interest requires be established. 

While Cohen affirms that the metaphysical viewpoint can counter the psychological bias, he takes care to point out here that this viewpoint is merely provisional. It is only a "precondition". Why is this so? Because despite this act of discriminating among the facts of consciousness, thanks to which the *a priori* may be distinguished from the *a posteriori*, critical analysis remains confined to the sphere of subjectivity. The metaphysical *a priori* is still only a "subjective" *a priori*. Thus for example the metaphysical deduction of pure concepts of understanding may bring out a set of concepts from the forms of judgment. Kant designates these concepts *notiones* and they are *given* concepts in the knowing subject and independent of all empirical experience. This deduction then constitutes a "preliminary"
process" which aims at distinguishing metaphysical \textit{a priori} from all other concepts of empirical origin. But these \textit{a priori} only achieve true legitimacy when one resorts to their transcendental deduction. Then and only then do the necessity and universality of these \textit{a priori} find the sphere in which they can be applied. In accordance with Kant's well-known definition, the term "transcendental" refers not so much to objects as to our manner of knowing objects, so far as this may be possible \textit{a priori}. The critical process, in its transcendental aspect, does not transform subjective \textit{a priori} into objects; it simply shows, according to Cohen, to what extent they are a part of all knowledge of objects. One should note here that thanks to Cohen's redefinition of the concept of "experience" there is nothing empirical about the knowledge in question. Strictly speaking, for Cohen experience means "mathematical physics" as \textit{pure} science. It is only on this condition that the "transcendental method" can claim to find its mooring in "experience".

3-The Fact of Science

We have seen that Cohen would not direct his interpretation of the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} towards a search for the "common root" and contended that this option would simply lead philosophy back down the trail into psychologism. But the mere development of metaphysical \textit{a priori} cannot by itself constitute a satisfactory solution. This interpretation, like psychologism before it, tends to give greater importance to the sphere of subjective immanence, and favouring the subject in this manner leads one to run the risk of falling once more into the rut of Fichte's "subjective idealism".

Now, what is fundamentally at stake in the interpretation of the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} is not only the proper appreciation of historic Kantianism, or as Heidegger would say, the proper apprehension of \textit{Kant an sich}; it is rather a matter of knowing whether Kant had any actuality for nineteenth century philosophy which, in the wake of the rapid development of the positive sciences, was left in search of a domain specific to itself. The question is therefore the following: To which field should philosophy be linked? What should be its point of departure? Cohen's answer is unequivocal: "The fact of science is the fundamental
supposition from which philosophy stems and without which it cannot begin.¹⁶ It is worth taking a closer look at this thesis which may well serve to justify the label of "theory of knowledge" that Heidegger attached to Cohen's project.

We know that the "science" in question is modern science, which Cohen immediately identifies with the Kantian concept of "experience."¹⁷ Now, the universality and necessity characteristic of the a priori are most clearly expressed in the laws of Newtonian physics (conceived as physica pura). So much so, that for Cohen mathematical physics, because it provides favoured access to the a priori of knowledge, must serve as the point of departure for the philosophical endeavour. In this Cohen meant to remain faithful to Kant, and he even went so far as to maintain that Kant proceeded no differently when he built his own system. According to Cohen, the Critique of Pure Reason gives only a partial picture of the real work of philosophical analysis: the a priori constituents of experience which the Transcendental Doctrine of Elements presents progressively and in succession were really elicited by a regressive analysis of the science of nature. The process adopted in the Prolegomena is thus preferable to that in the Critique because the former gets right to the question: "How is a pure science of nature possible?" One can thus advance to an explicit analysis of the various a priori constituents of science. The process adopted in the Critique on the other hand, because it is synthetic and progressive, forces one to move in abstracto to a metaphysical exposition of pure space and time and to a metaphysical deduction of concepts of understanding. Only then can it illustrate their contribution to transcendental synthesis. One must therefore read the Critique of Pure Reason in the light of the Prolegomena in order to understand the provisional status of those elements of consciousness, the metaphysical a priori. Applying the "transcendental method" to the Critique, Cohen shows that the metaphysical level of consciousness can be true only on the transcendental plane.

Only the transcendental method can achieve a confirmation whose principle and norm consist simply in the following idea: certain elements of knowledge are elements of cognitive consciousness which are necessary and sufficient to founding and ensuring the fact of science.¹⁸

This citation sheds light on the status that Cohen assigns to the "fact of science": it needs to
be founded on and consolidated by the transcendental method. Thus while the fact of science must be the point of departure for philosophical discourse, it does not for all that provide it with a firm foundation. For the purely factual character of science is the hallmark of its contingency. Cohen has not forgotten Kant's allusion to the fact that experience is "something quite contingent". This contingency calls for research into causes or, more accurately, conditions of possibility. The task of philosophy is thus henceforth to draw out from scientific discourse the pure elements which serve as its foundation;¹⁹ the scientist lacks adequate theoretical tools and cannot himself accomplish this task. It is thus made clear that the fact of science cannot be "dogmatically accepted" by the philosopher without further ado but rather constitutes a "methodological presupposition". On the one hand it is in no wise an empirical fact; on the other, the simply factual character of the necessity and universality of scientific law compels one to attribute to it nothing more than a claim to validity (erhobener Wertanspruch)²⁰ which needs to be justified.

B - Martin Heidegger

1 - Psychologism: an ancient victory

When, in 1914, Heidegger presented his doctoral dissertation entitled The Theory of Judgment in Psychologism, the struggle against psychologism was already being conducted on a number of fronts and was no longer so significant an issue as when Kant's Theorie der Erfahrung was published. Indeed Heidegger, in joining the chorus of critics of psychologism, highlighted right in his Introduction Cohen's role in the battle between the "psychological and transcendental methods". As far as the interpretation of Kant is concerned, the outcome of the debate had been "well and truly settled".²¹ Cohen's "logico-transcendental conception" had gotten the upper hand. Heidegger's conclusion, after his examination of psychologically-oriented logical theories, was thus predictable. "Psychologism is not only a false manner of posing the question regarding the object of logic, it knows absolutely nothing about logical 'reality' (Wirklichkeit)."²² However, in contrast to
Windelband and Husserl, who are also mentioned in the Introduction, Heidegger did not cast his critique of psychologism in the form of a self-criticism.21 Since he intervened in the debate late enough to draw the lessons of his predecessors, he hardly had to.

In certain respects, this doctoral thesis foreshadows some elements of Heidegger's later work. Thus there arises the famous Frage nach dem "Sinn des Seins".24 Naturally, the question here is that of the being of judgment, and Heidegger's answer is far from original. Like Cohen, Windelband and Husserl before him, Heidegger turned for a solution to Lotze who characterized the ideal being of judgment as validity (Geltung).25 The response to psychologism is therefore the following: beyond the concrete (psychic and physical) act of enunciation, each judgment has a never-changing propositional content which eludes the empirical reality of the conditions of enunciation and whose ontological status is designated Geltung. But young Doktorand Heidegger was already pondering the hypostasis of this ideal being of the true proposition as well as its relation to empirical reality. "How is one to characterize the relation between psychic reality and the content of valid judgment? Will we ever be able to arrive at a more profound solution of this problem? The question remains open."26

In point of fact, Heidegger would quickly show his dissatisfaction in the face of the flight from time and history that the ideal being of the proposition represents. During his early years as a lecturer at Freiburg and Marburg, he would be very cutting in his criticisms of Lotze, Windelband and Rickert in this regard.27 There was no question of reverting to a dogmatic Platonism in the form, for example, of a philosophy of values. Not that Heidegger condemns all forms of ideality. Sein und Zeit too would stress that a "phenomenologically-based" variant of it exists. On the other hand, returning to the question he had shelved in his dissertation, Heidegger in his masterwork challenged the separation of the ideal and the real for not being "ontologically clarified". At least in certain respects he would even make common cause with psychologism. "Is not psychologism correct in holding out against this separation, even if it neither clarifies ontologically the kind of Being which belongs to the thinking of that which is thought, nor is even so much as acquainted with it as a problem?"28

This question illustrates the extent to which Heidegger was primarily preoccupied with the
problem of the participation of reality in the idea, with the problem of *methexis*.

2 - The *A Priori* and the Metaphysics of Presence

Heidegger devoted his *Kantbuch* to the "problem of metaphysics" not because he wanted to have done with metaphysics on the grounds that he thought it had become outmoded or had been superseded; his use of Kant as the main theme in his work is on the contrary an attempt to rehabilitate metaphysics so that one could once again take up the question of the *a priori*, that is, in the final analysis, the question of being. In fact, the entire enterprise of *Being and Time* draws its inspiration from apriorism, the only level of theory suitable to the task of philosophy. If Heidegger proposes, in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, to surpass Kant, he intends to do so by taking him deeper. He wants to isolate those elements in the *Critique* that would provide a foundation for metaphysics. Indeed he claims to have bridged the gap that prevented Kant from following up on his project of theoretical foundation, namely the lack of specific research on the subjectivity of the subject and its entanglement in time. The basic ontology of *Being and Time* had already supplied the outline for a critique of Cartesian subjectivity by examining the *sum* of the subject, which tends to conceive of itself along the same lines as its vis-à-vis, the mundane object, the *res*. If metaphysics as the science of the *a priori* poses a problem for Kant, it is precisely to the extent that the *a priori* finds its foundation in a subject whose ontological status has not been elucidated.

The truth is that for Heidegger, the Kantian conception of the *a priori*, by resorting to Cartesian subjectivity, only serves to sanction the domination of the metaphysics of presence. It is not only the subject as thinking thing, but the *a priori* that belongs to it, that assumes the guise of a permanent object (*res*).

*Apriori*: *that which belongs to the subject*, that which is in the mind, that which can be met in the mind before going out towards objects. *Apriori*: that which can be met with from the outset in the pure sphere of the subject. *Now Kant extends this fundamental question of the a priori to pure concepts of*
understanding: they belong to actions of the subject, they are so to speak at hand (vorhanden) in the subject and only in the subject. 30

In stressing the isolation of the a priori in the sphere of the subject, what Heidegger deplores is the absence, at least at the outset, of any relation with the object. The a priori is first conceived in its massive presence within a subjectivity turned in upon itself and cut off from any relation with the world. We know that Being and Time challenges this isolation by at once setting up Dasein as a Being-in-the-world. In Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, Heidegger tried, with the theoretical means supplied by Kant, to isolate the a priori at its origin, at the moment that the transcendental imagination produces its synthesis. He tried to show that the a priori arises only when it is brought into play in ontological knowledge. The a priori is a modality of the transcendence of Dasein which opens itself up to entities through transcendental schematism.

One might well ask whether Cohen's transcendental method, even though it resorts to a different strategy, does not draw its motivation from a similar critique of Kant. In fact, like Heidegger, Cohen gives only provisional status to the metaphysical deduction of categories insofar as these categories are only a priori, "given" independently of their intervention in knowing. How would he have reacted to Heidegger's critiques of Kant with relation to the "a priori as resting (liegenden) in the isolated subject... prior to any relation to the object"? 31 We might perhaps find the answer to this question in a passage of Kant's Begründung der Ethik which presents certain striking analogies with Heidegger's position on the formulation of the problem and even on the outline of a solution.

It is not as forms of human intuition and of our human synthesis that these permanent human factors are endowed with the value of a priori, but on the contrary because they condition the real actuality of our scientific knowledge, because Mathematics and the pure science of nature may thus be considered as themselves resting in our mind. -- It is only by virtue of this transposition that one can say, according to the strict sense of the transcendental a priori: the a priori rests (liege) in our mind, it is the shape of the mind. 32

As one might have expected, Cohen looked for a solution to the problem of metaphysical a
priori in actual scientific knowledge rather than in productive imagination. For him, the a priori's transcendental status is confirmed when its necessary contribution to the finished product of mathematical physics is recognized. For Heidegger, the a priori is revealed in transcendental schematism as an instance indispensable to meeting with entities. In both cases, however, it is the operative and productive dimension of the a priori that is advanced to the detriment of its metaphysical essence. Thus it is that both Cohen and Heidegger place the emphasis on transcendentalism.

3-The Facticity of Dasein

From the beginning of his Kantbuch, Heidegger takes great care to point up his differences with neo-Kantianism in all its forms, and most especially with the "fact of science" that was characteristic of Cohen's transcendental method.

Nothing can be presupposed on behalf of the problematic of the possibility for original, ontological truth, least of all the factum of the truth of the positive sciences. On the contrary, the ground-laying must pursue the a priori synthesis exclusively in itself. Heidegger continues by citing the passage from Kant's Prolegomena which states that philosophy cannot rely on any fact but only on reason itself. In this sense, the course on Kant in the winter of 1927-1928 sought only to go deeper, beyond the letter of Kantianism, into the subjectivity of the subject through an "a priori phenomenology of the transcendental constitution of the subject". Heidegger makes it clear that if one has to start from a fact in order to carry such an enterprise through to a successful conclusion, this fact can only be Dasein itself. It is a "fact in the sense of the essential ontological core of Dasein, of the transcendental constitution of the subject." In bringing the subject back to Dasein, Heidegger indicates clearly the direction in which he wants to take this enterprise. It is here out of the question to reach the "idealized absolute subject" that Being and Time points to. On the contrary, the referral back to the facticity of Dasein is a reminder that what is involved is contingency at its most radical. The Being-in-the-world is a thrown being,
thrown into existence. There is nothing absolute in Dasein, apart from the "absolute" (unbezüglich) character of death as an ontological sign of finitude.36 This then is the only fact admissible at the starting point of philosophical discourse.

Heidegger is, however, on the wrong track in his condemnation of Cohen's Faktum der Wissenschaft in that, as Geert Edel points out in his excellent commentary on Cohen's critique of knowledge,37 his understanding of the import of that fact underestimates the task assigned to the transcendent method. We did not comment earlier on the tendentious manner in which, in the extract cited above, Heidegger views the point upon which Cohen begins his analysis. Heidegger interprets it here as the fact of the "truth" of science and elsewhere as the fact of its "validity".38 Now, this is a total misunderstanding of the transcendent method. This method seeks precisely to examine and justify the validity of the pure science of nature, insofar as it is for the time being only considered to be a claim resting on still-latent foundations, at least with regard to the a priori that need to be revealed. It is, therefore, necessary to see this "fact" as a "problem"39 that stimulates the philosopher rather than as a secure point of departure. Before the intervention of the transcendent method, the value of science could only be assumed (angenommen).40

Up to this point in our discussion, the contrast of Cohen's epistemological reading and Heidegger's phenomenological interpretation has allowed us to conclude that Cohen opposes psychologism in order to safeguard the autonomy of philosophical discourse in the face of the onslaught of the empirical sciences. Heidegger, for all that he shares this preoccupation, is, on the other hand, principally concerned with avoiding the hypostasis of metaphysical a priori in a subjectivity turned in upon itself. Heidegger rejects a priori that are transcendent with respect to the world. To this end he redefines transcendence on the basis of his existential analytic: transcendence is henceforth viewed as the fact of Dasein, which is thus clearly open to the world. Solipsistic Cartesian subjectivity, from which Kant cannot dissociate himself completely, is thus corrected thanks to the conception of Dasein as Being-in-the-world. On the other hand, Cohen, who is also wary of these immanent metaphysical a priori of consciousness, tries to locate them in the crystallization point that is modern science. That being the case, however, as we have just seen, philosophical analysis is not confined to
extracting the *a priori* from scientific discourse; it sees itself as a *Geltungsanalyse*\textsuperscript{41} in that it examines the validity of the claims of science to universality and necessity.

It is perhaps the classification presented by Fichte in his *First Introduction to the Doctrine of Science* which best enables us to characterize these two attitudes towards transcendental philosophy. Fichte distinguishes two diametrically opposed ways of developing critical idealism. The philosopher either elicits the "fundamental laws of intellect" while confining himself to this intellect itself and nothing more, or he "may conceive these laws as already and immediately applied to objects".\textsuperscript{42} In the latter case he must abstract the *a priori* from "experience" or even from "logic". Fichte indicates that, for his part, he opts for the first approach. Kant, on the other hand, would opt for the second, as we can see from the allusion to the metaphysical deduction of categories on the basis of the (logical) table of judgments. It is evident that Cohen, for whom the reference to scientific knowledge is essential, also belongs to the second group. As for Heidegger, he lines up on Fichte's side, at least in terms of the general outline of the process he undertakes. Does he not also try, through a more profound subjectivity, to recover the "unfathomable root" abandoned by Kant?\textsuperscript{43} Evidently Heidegger rejects out of hand "absolute subjectivity" conceived as pure autoactivity and opts instead for a radically finite *Dasein* which sees itself ontologically as pure temporalization. It is nonetheless true that the classification Fichte introduced is a good reflection of the later fundamental divergence in attitude that we have discerned between Heidegger and Cohen. However, the astonishing part of all this is that, as we shall see, this divergence of approach in no way precludes a degree of convergence with regard to the interpretation of transcendental deduction, despite the case Heidegger raises against Cohen's transcendental method.
II-TRANSCENDENTAL DEDUCTION

A - Martin Heidegger

Heidegger's dissatisfaction with the transcendental deduction of pure concepts of understanding is made evident from the start: he prefers schematism, which allows ontological knowledge to appear very clearly as it is engendered. Indeed, he considers the section on transcendental deduction the most "fatal" passage (das fatalste Lehrstück) in the Critique. Neo-Kantianism, on the other hand, as Heidegger stresses, has made this topic its hobby-horse even though it might divert attention completely from real problems. In the pages of Phänomenologische Interpretation that deal with deduction, Heidegger laces into the neo-Kantians who referred to the section on transcendental deduction with such "incredible naïvete" that they came up with the "crudest misinterpretations" of it. We shall here try to see whether this is true in Cohen's case.

Heidegger is prepared to recognize that Kant himself is somewhat to blame for the misinterpretations in that two problematics overlap in his discussion. The quest to lay the groundwork for ontological knowledge is in fact coupled with a polemic against dogmatic metaphysics. The confusion of these two motivations in the text on deduction renders the latter, as Heidegger puts it, "almost totally untenable." In fact, the formulation of the problem in terms of legal deduction and of the quaestio juris is dictated by the polemical dimension of the enterprise to the detriment of what is principally at stake: laying the foundation for metaphysics. Now quid juris has absolutely nothing to do with this project. One changes the emphasis of the problem by formulating it in legal terms and asking: how can non-empirical concepts claim to refer to an object? The critical force of such a question (by what right?) is clearly aimed at metaphysics, whose transcendent discourse, constructed with the aid of a priori concepts, is not immediately concerned with conditions of objectivity. What is at stake is the reality of this discourse, the possibility of it entering into relation to an object and of attaining truth. Posing the problem in these terms, however, reveals an
incoherence in the very process Kant is engaged in: there is, Heidegger says, something absurd in wanting, on the one hand, to build a bridge between subjective, metaphysical a priori and an object that confers reality on them and, on the other, to prove that any object is in itself possible thanks only to the intervention of these same a priori in the shape of categories. To avoid a paradox only this latter aspect should have been the object of deduction.

And that means that it is absurd to begin by setting out categories and then inquiring as to their valid application to objects. For this application "to objects", this objective relation as such, is in fact constituted by these categories. Their objective reality consists precisely in their generally constituting the objectivity that is the presupposition required for empirical determinations to relate to an object. The categories are not concepts about the essence of which we should decide only afterwards by establishing what pertains to the bases of making possible an experience in general... 45

Heidegger clearly has it in for this "afterward" character of the proof which stems from the architectonics of the Critique. Metaphysical deduction is what led to this inadequate formulation of the task of transcendental deduction: when one has discovered in the mind concepts whose origin is not empirical, one must ponder the area in which they are used and the conditions of their "objective reality". There is thus good reason for the Heideggerian critique of Kant’s approach to revolve around this concept of "objective reality"; as we shall see, Heidegger will himself have to try to reduce the semantic field of this concept.

In Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, when Heidegger begins his discussion of the transcendental deduction he comes up against the expression "possible experience" which is crucial to deduction. To define the phrase he refers to a passage from the following section of the Critique, a section entitled "Of the Supreme Principle of all Synthetic Judgments." Here Kant established the link between the ultimate criterion for synthetic judgments, namely the "possibility of experience", on the one hand, and the concept of "objective reality", on the other. "The possibility of experience is, then, what gives objective reality to all our a priori modes of knowledge." 46
This sentence, which Heidegger quotes in full, focuses the question on our knowledge a priori and indicates that such knowledge has objective reality only in relation to possible experience. But what does the "possibility of experience" mean in this context? Here, as in the Phänomenologische Interpretation, Heidegger considers that it must be understood in the sense of "making possible", so that the categories, for example, have objective reality only insofar as they contribute to "making possible" (ermöglichen) experience.

Now, this reading is a deliberately restrictive one on Heidegger's part. In fact, the question of objective reality (which Kant calls "objective validity" too quite indifferently) is a little more complex that it appears at first blush. First (1), there is the sense the expression assumes when applied to simple empirical phenomena which, in order to attain objectivity, objective reality, must submit to the conditions of an a priori possibility of experience. Moreover (2), the expression "objective reality" may also apply to a priori knowledge. This second usage is the one referred to by Heidegger who, as we have seen, reduces the relation between a priori concepts and possible experience to that of "making possible" (2a) experience through pure concepts. In other words, it is the capacity of pure concepts to make experience possible which endows them with objective reality. However, the Kantian concept of objective reality, applied to the a priori of knowledge, conceals another motivation directly linked to the polemical dimension of the deduction: to avoid lapsing into dogmatism, the Critique must ensure that its pure concepts do indeed relate to real objects that are—at least potentially—accessible in a possible experience. In short, it is necessary that an empirical object might be given to a pure concept, for only the former can guarantee the objective reality of the latter. In this case (2b), possible experience signifies something other than "making possible"; it refers to the fact that an object can be given, whether actually or virtually. Pure concepts must be able to make contact with "phenomena" which provide them with empirical matter (Stoff) and thus ensure their reality. If this contact cannot be made, metaphysics is condemned to having to do with nothing but "fancies" (Hirngespinst). For Kant, reality can be guaranteed only by "sensation".

Heidegger is fully aware of the facts when he dismisses this second reading (2b) of the concept of objective reality in the case of the a priori elements of knowledge. He drops the
requirement of reality that falls upon all *a priori* knowledge, retaining only the first reading of the expression "objective reality", that is, the contribution of the *a priori* to the constitution of "objectivity" (2a). In his view, the second reading, as an interpretation of objective reality which subordinates pure knowledge to the empirical giving of the object in a possible experience, can only be due to a slavish reading of the legal problematic of the deduction, a reading he attributes to the neo-Kantians and which consists in the belief that proof of the reality of an *a priori* concept is the same as relating it to an existing object (*Wirklichkeit*).⁵⁰ We shall now turn to see what Cohen, who along with Natorp is most often taken to task by Heidegger, actually thinks about this subject.

**B. Hermann Cohen**

Let us consider the fate that Cohen reserves for the "Supreme Principle of All Synthetic Judgments." Many commentators have stressed that at the outset Cohen interprets "objective reality", against all expectations, in the first sense (1) indicated above.⁵¹ It is not primarily pure concepts of understanding which lack objective reality, but rather phenomena, those "half-ripe objects", which are in such great need of attaining objectivity. Phenomena, indeterminate objects of empirical intuition, must therefore attain experience in order to participate in the necessity and universality of objective knowledge. This interpretation stands out clearly from the following passage in *Kants Begründung der Ethik*.

In accordance with the meaning of the word "transcendental", the supreme principle of all synthetic judgments is the principle of transcendental apperception. Phenomena must, if they wish to claim the value of objective reality or even of objective validity, be seen in relation to laws, must express laws as special cases. This is the meaning of transcendental apperception, of the unity of consciousness as supreme transcendental principle.⁵² Thus it is pure elements of knowledge, synthesized as laws, which ensure the reality of phenomena. In fact, *a priori* knowledge is so much the "guarantee" of the objective validity of empirical objects that Cohen does not really bother to ask about the "objective reality" of
such knowledge itself.

This is very revealing, most especially of his reading of the transcendental deduction. It goes without saying that in his sustained commentary on the Transcendental Analytic, Cohen is forced to mention Kant's own formulation of what is at stake in deduction, namely the demonstration of the "objective validity of categories".53 But then Cohen also adopts a course of conduct not unlike Heidegger's and even uses the same term as Heidegger to restrict the domain of the expression "possible experience": the a priori is related to possible experience only insofar as it contains the conditions of its possibility. In short, the a priori "makes possible" (ermöglichend)(2a)! For Cohen, it is out of the question to require that the a priori of knowledge be confronted with the empirical givens in a possible experience in order to ensure their reality (2b). Never can transcendental a priori be measured against the empirical. The accusation Heidegger levels at the neo-Kantians thus certainly does not apply to Cohen; the latter tends to say nothing at all about the Kantian requirement of demonstrating the objective reality of a priori and is sometimes even tempted in his reconstruction of the Critique to change the meaning of the texts. Here, for example, is how, immediately after quoting the "Supreme Principle of all Synthetic Judgments," he explains its content.

Kant thus formulates his supreme principle in the following manner: "The conditions of the possibility of experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and thus have objective validity in a synthetic judgment a priori."
The Copernican conception of the transcendental thus achieves its definitive and appropriate expression.

First: objects are possible only through the possibility of experience.

Second: objects, made possible by experience, have an objective reality.54

It should be noted that the last words of the citation ("have an objective reality"), quite obviously drawn from Kant's own formulation, are, clearly through misinterpretation, assigned to the "objects". While for Kant it is the "conditions of the possibility of experience" which "thus" have an objective reality, for Cohen, it is suddenly the objects that
acquire this reality by virtue of the supreme principle. As with Heidegger, it seems here that
a priori, conceived from the outset in their constitutive dimension, that is understood as
transcendental a priori, are in no way bound to refer "afterwards" to an object which they
engendered in the first place, at least in terms of its objectivity. It is thus out of the question
for a priori knowledge to be assigned to phenomena, those still indeterminate objects of
empirical intuition, in order to have conferred upon them an objective "reality". Cohen
seems no more able than Heidegger to consider that the a priori concept or intuition might
gain anything from contact with the empirical given, which is, however, in Kant's view the
only thing likely to procure reality for them.

Let us sum up the results of our investigation. We have come to realize that
Heidegger and Cohen both agree to get rid of the "subjective" character of the a priori in
Kant, and that they have a similar conception of the "objective reality" of the a priori insofar
as with their help experience is first "made possible". But Heidegger does not seem
interested in stressing these common concerns. As we have seen, in his allusions to Cohen
he is busy emphasizing the incompatibility of their respective project, and in this regard his
charge against the "fact of science" and the neo-Kantian interpretation of "objective reality"
appeared to be misled. It looks as though Heidegger wanted to downplay what is typically
"transcendental" in Cohen's transcendental method in order to draw attention to his own
concept of transcendence. This negative attitude toward Cohen may well serve rhetorical
purposes, but one thing is certain: had Heidegger developed a systematic confrontation with
Cohen's interpretation of Kant, he would have had to admit that their common attempt to fill
the gap between sensibility and understanding rests, notwithstanding the profound differences,
on a radicalization of Kant's transcendentalism.

In fact, neither Cohen nor Heidegger focus primarily on the deduction for the
exposition of the constitutive dimension of a priori for experience, that specifically
transcendental moment of the Kantian critique. For Cohen, the paradigmatic manifestation of
the role of a priori in knowledge is found in the Analytic of Transcendental Principles. For
Heidegger, the constitutive dimension of the a priori as a condition of possibility of
encountering entities becomes evident in transcendental schematism. For both of them it is only at these later stages of the critical process that these heterogeneous *a priori*, instanced by the metaphysical exposition of space and time and by the metaphysical deduction of categories, are combined and thus attain their truth. But then if, for Kant, the "transcendental" is by definition opposed to the "empirical", does the overstated transcendentalism of both Cohen and Heidegger entail a devaluation of the empirical dimension, or of what Kant calls the material conditions of experience? Put differently: What happens of the second requirement for "objective reality" (2b)? Does it mean that the empirical dimension of knowledge has to be reinterpreted?

In Cohen's case this is indeed so. The strategy he adopts to overcome Kant's dichotomy of intuition and thought consists in integrating the whole intuitive dimension of knowledge into thought. This assimilation is carried out in two steps. It is first necessary to reappropriate intuition in order, as much as possible, to marginalize sensation, the material condition of existence. Thus, to start with, since pure space and time are the conditions of possibility of geometry and arithmetic, their true basis in the critical system can only be the table of principles, more particularly the Axioms of Intuition. Aesthetics is thus absorbed by logic. Next this means that one can redefine the role of sensation even if it means once more running counter to the strict letter of Kantianism. The preface to the second edition of *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung* does in effect draw the reader's attention to the two principles of the table which constitute the centre of gravity of the new interpretation Cohen is proposing. And these two principles, one should not be surprised to learn, deal explicitly with "sensation": the Anticipations of Perception and the Second Postulate of Empirical Thought.9 We know how important the Principle of Intensive Magnitudes is to Cohen: it does not simply serve to demonstrate the engendering of the magnitude of sensation but rather the engendering of reality as such (*realitas*). Similarly, the Postulate of Existence no longer relies first, as it does with Kant, on sensation, but rather on the relation that must be established between an object and the totality of experience on the basis of universal laws. Under these conditions sensation, as a psychological moment, is to all intents and purposes, separated from experience; at best it represents the "opportunity" for setting in motion the process of engendering the objectivity of the object in science. That is why for Cohen, as we
have seen, it is the phenomenon that must first attain objective reality.

As we know, the situation is quite different for Heidegger. His rereading of the *Critique of Pure Reason* can be described as a negation of Cohen's and seems to want to take the opposing view. Indeed is it not now intuition that is highlighted to the detriment of thought? Is not knowledge henceforth first of all an act of intuition (*Erkennen ist primär Anschauung*)? Prudence is nonetheless in order here; Heidegger's position is not the symmetrical opposite of Cohen's. There is no one-sided reliance on intuition here; Heidegger in point of fact so radicalizes the spontaneous dimension of receptivity that he claims to reach the nodal point of intuition and thought. The stress on schematism and productive imagination eventually allows him to overcome that dualism at its roots. On this very point, Heidegger's approach is similar to Cohen's: both of them aim to get beyond Kantian dualism by stressing the transcendental dimension of the *Critique* as a process of production. While, however, the principle of intensive magnitudes represents for Cohen the "triumph of thought", the discovery of the fundamentally temporal essence of Kantian subjectivity leads Heidegger to the observation of a radical finitude.

In accentuating the transcendental moment in Kant in this way, Heidegger still does not show us the full magnitude of the critical problem. We have seen how he limits the objective reality of categories to possible experience, in the sense of "making possible", leaving aside the role of empirical conditions of experience. Now, such empirical conditions, sensation in this case, pose for Kant a problem of contingency whose full impact must be considered. In the final sections of *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung* Cohen manages to neutralize the contingency of physical phenomena and natural forms by subsuming them in the concept of unconditioned necessity, as embodied in Kant's "transcendental idea". Heidegger, however, rejects this amalgam of elements drawn from the first and third *Critiques*. He does not try to overcome the problem of contingency, but he so highlights the facticity of *Dasein* that it casts into shadow every other form of contingency, like the contingency of the existence of phenomena or even of the concrete configuration of entities; just so many questions that elude transcendental schematism. From this standpoint Cassirer is no doubt right to deplore the fact that Heidegger does not refer to the *Critique of Judgment* in
his reading of Kant, for this third Critique provides the ground most conducive to the discussion of questions of contingency. Kant, with the concept of formal purposiveness (i.e. the problem of beauty and art: subjective purposiveness, and of natural teleology: objective purposiveness), raises issues which do not fit into the theoretical structure of Being and Time. So it is hardly surprising that in the 1930s Heidegger should begin to display a marked interest in Hölderlin. This interest is characterized by the fact that he no longer touches on poetry, as he had for example in §34 of Being and Time, simply in order to illustrate an existential situation of Dasein. He now would use it to demonstrate the poet’s function of inaugurating an historic era. Nor is it surprising that at the same time Heidegger should consider art, as it depicts the battle engaged in by the earth and the world, as one of the ways that truth comes to us. Finally, it is perhaps no coincidence that, during this same period of the 1930s, he should tackle the Greek concept of nature (physis) in order to draw from it an original form of potesis. Can this mean that Heidegger, while following in Kant’s footsteps and delving deeper into transcendentalism, as he had already begun to do in Being and Time, might have been led to see the limits of the enterprise and to take a new turning towards the truth of being? [English translation by Gregory Byng]
ENDNOTES


10. Ibid., p.19.


13. Ibid., p.178.


19. Cohen, *KTE*, p.637, cf., p.628: "The transcendental method first assumes a given experience, considers it as science, that is as comprising the value of necessity, and seeks to reconstruct it according to its possibility."


22. Ibid., p.103.

23. For psychological motifs in the work of the young Windelband, see *Über die Gewissheit der Erkenntnis* (Leipzig, 1873). On Windelband’s shift to idealism, one might profitably consult the study by Klaus-Christian Köhnke, *Entstehung und Aufstieg des Neukantianismus* (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1986), pp. 404-431. The work that earned Husserl Frege’s rebuke for psychologism is, as we know, *Philosophie der Arithmetik* [1891], *Husserliana*, XII (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1970).

24. Heidegger, *Die Lehre vom Urteil im Psychologismus*, p.120.


31. Ibid., p.315.

32. Cohen, *KBE*, p. 34.


38. Cf.. Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretation...*, p.44. See also, *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie*, p.84.


41. We have borrowed this expression from Geert Edel, op. cit., p.105.


44. Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretation...*, pp.309, 303, 305.

45. Ibid., p.400.

46. *Kant, Kritik der reinen Vernunft* A 156/B 195 (Eng. trans. by Kemp Smith).

48. Kant, Kritik der reinen Vernunft A 155-156/B 194-195: "If knowledge is to have objective reality, that is, to relate to an object, and is to acquire meaning and significance in respect to it, the object must be capable of being in some manner given. Otherwise the concepts are empty; through them we have indeed thought, but in this thinking we have really known nothing; we have merely played with representations. That an object be given (if this expression be taken, not referring to some merely mediate process, but as signifying immediate presentation in intuition), means simply that the representation through which the object is thought relates to actual or possible experience."

49. Cf.. Kant, Kritik der reinen Vernunft A 157/B 196, A 223/B 270: "[these] are concepts the possibility of which is altogether groundless, as they cannot be based on experience and its known laws; and without such confirmation they are arbitrary combinations of thoughts, which, although indeed free from contradiction, can make no claim to objective reality, and none, therefore, as to the possibility of an object such as we here profess to think. As regards reality, we obviously cannot think it in concreto, without calling experience to our aid. For reality is bound up with sensation, the matter of experience, not with that form of relation in regard to which we can, if we so choose, resort to a playful inventiveness."

50. Heidegger, Phänomenologische Interpretation..., p.156: "The neo-Kantian interpretation of the 'Critique' as a theory of knowledge has totally missed the meaning of reality, which it has assimilated to 'objective reality', that is with the objectively real.[...] Kantian 'objective reality' was then interpreted in the following manner: Kant had in mind the constitution of objective knowledge as an internal process of thought, a process that would cause to appear, so to speak, knowledge that is objectively valid, in the sense of effective [vom Wirklichen], for the real entity. Which is nothing but pure phantasmagoria. " Cf.. Sein und Zeit §33. p.156; Eng. trans., p.198.


52. Cohen, KBE, pp.58, 29, 31: "In the area of method, there is no other way to objectify [objektivieren] than by deducing from the conditions of the scientific experiment. Proving objective reality means deducing it from the concept of the possibility of experience, from the conditions upon which the possibility of experience rests. It is the possibility of experience upon which the possibility of the objects of experience is founded; and which guarantees them. That is the strict meaning of the 'supreme principle of all synthetic judgments' or of all synthetic principles." Cf.. KTE, p.386.

54. Ibid., pp.190-191.


56. This is still valid for Die Frage nach dem Ding (Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1975), pp.114-115.


58. In a marginal note in his copy of the Kantbuch, Heidegger points out the limits of his enterprise: "ganz rückfällig in die transzendentale Fragestellung". Quoted in H.-G. Gadamer, "Der Weg in die Kehre," Heideggers Wege (Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, 1983), p.111. Evidently this remark could be made only from the point of view of the turning. However, as early as the summer of 1928, that is at the precise point in the course in which the theme of the Kehre first appears, Heidegger ponders the limited scope of a fundamental ontology conducted in a transcendental manner, and he feels the need to supplement it with a metontology directed towards beings in their totality: "In other words, the possibility that being might become a theme for understanding presupposes the factual [faktisch] existence of Dasein, and this, in its turn, the factual [faktisch] presence of nature. It is precisely in the perspective of the radially-posed problem of being that it becomes evident that all this can become visible and be understood only when the possible totality of beings is already there." Martin Heidegger, Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik, Gesamtausgabe, XXVI, p.199 (emphasis ours). This concern with entities as such certainly constitutes a "new questioning" for Heidegger, but the problem of the status of beings, although not thematic, was already showing through the surface in Being and Time, when for example he discusses the truth of Newton's laws of physics: "Through Newton the laws became true; and with them, entities became accessible in themselves to Dasein. Once entities have been uncovered, they show themselves precisely as entities which beforehand already were." Sein und Zeit, §44c, p.227; Eng. trans., p.269 (our emphasis). These few references suffice to prove the extent to which the problem of the contingency of beings gradually emerged for Heidegger so that he was forced to recast the question of being. I would like here to express my gratitude to Claudius Strube and Theodore Kisiel for their valuable pointers in this direction.