



# A READING OF HEIDEGGER'S READING OF IMMANUEL KANT'S *CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON*

**BEN CARLO N. ATIM**

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES-BAGUIO

bencarloatim@gmail.com

*This paper intends to argue over these subsequent ideas: first, that Heidegger's employment of 'retrieval', 'repetition', or 'thinking dialogue' in his interpretation of Kant's first Critique is, following Macann, quite hazardous and destructive but only on the surface. Heidegger's hermeneutical privilege to employ a specific interpretive frame in reading Kant seems to violate hermeneutics' fundamental maxim. This hermeneutic maxim is the inevitability of multiple interpretations. This can be seen in how Heidegger treated Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, where he announces that he "understand him (Kant) better than he (Kant) understood himself." At first glance, his declaration exudes a kind of intellectual arrogance. However, I will show this is not so. Secondly, I will argue, based on the question of Heidegger's appropriation of Kant's ideas in his philosophical project, that he partly appropriated Kant but in a violent manner. As evident in his interpretation of the Critique of Pure Reason, Heidegger goes beyond Kant and forces the latter to speak through his text on the issues Heidegger thought to be in Kant. This raises the question of whether Heidegger properly situated and appropriated Kant in his text or not.*

Keywords: Thinking dialogue, reason, phenomenology, hermeneutics.

#### Copyright:

Online: Asean Citation Index, DOAJ.  
This work is licensed under the Creative  
Common Attribution License © 2021.  
Print: Philippine Copyright © March  
2021 San Beda University

#### How to cite this article:

Atim, Ben Carlo N., "A Reading of  
Heidegger's Reading of Immanuel Kant's  
*Critique Of Pure Reason*", *Scientia* Vol 10  
no. 1. (2020), p. 1-10.

#### Dates:

Submission: August 14, 2020  
Accepted: February 26, 2021  
Published(Online): March 31, 2021

#### Read online



Scan this QR  
code with your  
smart phone or  
mobile device to  
read online





## INTRODUCTION

This paper argues that Heidegger's reading of Kant, though unorthodox and engaging yet quite problematic, contradicts received wisdom. As Weatherston explains, Heidegger's interpretation is "far from mainstream, and this unusualness had led to harsh criticism."<sup>1</sup> What Heidegger failed to exercise and embody, following the reasoning of Christopher Macann,<sup>2</sup> is the valuable legacy of the hermeneutical tradition that he, together with others, has developed. This valuable legacy is the basic principle of hermeneutics, which every interpreter must adhere to, that is, the inevitability of multiple meanings and interpretations.

The way Heidegger read Kant becomes more like a dogmatic reading and authoritarian to the extent of imposing an absolute interpretation. As Macann observes, "despite the hermeneutical revolution for which he was himself in large part responsible, he *still* tends to depict his interpretation as the real, the underlying, the conclusive truth of the *Critique*."<sup>3</sup> This can be shown in the tone of the text whereby Heidegger himself is aware of. Heidegger argues that understanding Kant properly means "to understand him better than he understood himself."<sup>4</sup> Such a statement, as Macann argues, implies that "Kant's basic intention had *never before* been recognized as such, since never before had a critic attempted anything like an ontological interpretation of the *Critique*."<sup>5</sup> This hermeneutic maxim at face value seems to show a kind of conceitedness, if not arrogance,

on the part of Heidegger. However, this should not be the case. Heidegger qualifies the maxim with utter clearness and radicality. Heidegger wants to engage himself in a conversation that produces a more meaningful and fruitful end with the text and its author. Heidegger calls this 'thinking dialogue.'<sup>6</sup> It means we should not merely try to repeat whatever an author implies in the text, but one should attempt to uncover the very grounds by which his philosophical thoughts are hidden. It is what Heidegger means by understanding the text or understanding the intentions of the author correctly. In the case of Kant, it is to "*concentrate on what Kant wanted to say – that is, not to stop at his descriptions, but to go back to the foundations of what he meant.*"<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the question is, how do we proceed to successfully able to find the fertile ground where more essential insights are found?

## HEIDEGGER AND THE TASK OF 'RETRIEVAL' OR 'THINKING DIALOGUE' IN READING KANT'S *CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON*

Macann describes how Heidegger places and interprets Kant within his ontological project of being. He identifies three significant movements: forward, back, and circular.

By forward movement, according to Macann, Heidegger employs an expository treatment of Kant's texts. This movement is seen as how Heidegger arranges or structures his presentation and interpretation of Kant, at least in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

The second movement is backward. Here Heidegger goes more profoundly into the text to grip with the primordial and fundamental

<sup>1</sup> Martin Weatherston, *Heidegger's Interpretation of Kant* (Macmillan: Palgrave, 2002), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Macann, "Heidegger's Kant Interpretation," in *Critical Heidegger* ed. Christopher Macann (London/New York: Routledge, 1996), 97-120.

<sup>3</sup> Macann, "Heidegger's Kant Interpretation," 109.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 2. Hereafter *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*

<sup>5</sup> Macann, "Heidegger's Kant Interpretation," 103.

<sup>6</sup> See Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 2.





insights that even the author himself would not have thought of. Hence Heidegger employs the so-called hermeneutic ‘retrieval’ or negatively speaking ‘violence.’ As Macann explains, “the ‘violence’ that Heidegger does to the text tends to increase with each succeeding section as his interpretation comes ever closer to that conception of metaphysics, which is his own rather than Kant’s.”<sup>8</sup> A similar observation is shared by Marjorie Grene when she said: “For despite his [Heidegger] genuine insight into the structure of Kant’s greatest work, it must be admitted that the ‘time’ and the ‘creative imagination’ of Heidegger finds in the *Critique of Pure Reason* are in large part grafts from his own thought.”<sup>9</sup>

The third movement is circular, which reproduces the directives of the hermeneutical circle itself. Heidegger proposes that doing interpretive violence to the text is not to destroy the author’s authorial character nor to surpass the author. Instead, it is to affirm the work’s worth and recovering what has been lost but valuable to the text that might have been covered or concealed by layers of multiple meanings. Within this context, Heidegger might have been correct in his posture of doing a ‘violence’ to the text. This ‘violence’ may not be harmful rather constructive and necessary in the retrieval or ‘repetition’ of the essential insights fossilized beneath the text. Charles Sherover points out the function of this ‘repetition’ or retrieval in understanding Heidegger’s position in a hermeneutic reading of the text. He argues that “the task of a retrieval is not to chronicle the past but to wrest out of it a deeper comprehension of our present situation and the possibilities for development it yet offers.”<sup>10</sup> It is not impossible, not only because

of the inherent ambiguity and polysemy of language in usage, but also because of the text’s temporality, or if you may, the text’s peregrination. Heidegger impresses the importance of doing such hermeneutic violence “in order to wring from what the words say, what it is they want to say, every interpretation (*Interpretation*) must necessarily use violence. Such violence, however, cannot be roving arbitrariness. The power of an idea that shines forth must drive and guide the laying-out (*Auslegung*).”<sup>11</sup>

Heidegger goes on to say in his interpretation of Kant’s first *Critique*: “A philosophy truly has ‘validity’ when its own power is released and the possibility is provided for it to deliver a *shock* and to make a *difference*.”<sup>12</sup> Moreover, it implies greater demand and requirement for the interpreter to rise above and overcome a mere reading of the text without doing any positive or meaningful harm to it. As he continues, “merely narrating and describing what is in a text does not guarantee anything like a philosophical understanding.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, Heidegger sets a bar higher when doing philosophy through hermeneutics. I will not pursue this issue here since this is beyond the paper’s scope to be examined. The first issue, therefore, being raised here is on Heidegger’s hermeneutical privilege to employ a specific interpretive frame in reading Kant that seems to violate the fundamental maxim of hermeneutics. Nevertheless, we also see that our understanding of hermeneutical violence attributed to him is not as destructive and damaging as it implies, though somehow hyperbolic. Charles B. Guignon’s general observation might be instructive here with Heidegger’s doing ‘violence’ to the text. Guignon says, “Heidegger’s lofty ambition was to rejuvenate philosophy (and, at the same time, Western culture) by clearing away the conceptual

<sup>8</sup> Macann, “Heidegger’s Kant Interpretation,” 104.

<sup>9</sup> Marjorie Grene, *Martin Heidegger* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1957), 66.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Sherover, *Heidegger, Kant, and Time* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), 12.

<sup>11</sup> Heidegger, *Kant, and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 141.

<sup>12</sup> Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*





rubbish that has collected over our history to recover a clearer, richer understanding of what things are all about.”<sup>14</sup>

In connection with my claim, it seems as well right that aside from hermeneutic fault he committed to reading Kant, Heidegger showed a total hostility if not antagonism to other possible interpretations of Kant, most especially in the reading of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The connection of my second point to the first is that Heidegger’s reading of the *Critique of Pure Reason* dismisses any form of intellectual negotiation as to the possibility of interpreting the first *Critique* as not just laying the foundation for metaphysics or ontology but also epistemology. Recent scholars and interpreters of Kant are leaning toward this direction. It is clear from Heidegger’s *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant* that the reason why Kant produced such powerful philosophical work is to “examine the *fundamental* problem of the possibility of a science of beings and *not* a so-called epistemology of the mathematical natural sciences.”<sup>15</sup> For Heidegger, the “*Critique* lays the foundation for the basic discipline of metaphysics, transcendental philosophy or ontology, the science of the ontological constitution of beings in general, of nature in the formal sense.”<sup>16</sup> The failure of interpretation of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* as laying the foundation of epistemology or theory of knowledge according to Heidegger is due to the following: first, the *Critique* is concerned with ontology; and second, it fails to see that “the *Critique* is not to establish the legitimacy of natural science or the ontology of material nature but somewhat of something supersensible.”<sup>17</sup> In this case, he tries to undermine the collegial assertion of the neo-Kantians like Natorp and

Cohen, and in general, the whole of the Marburg School. Here, Heidegger wants to show that they were mistaken in their appropriation and interpretation of Kant. With this attitude towards the other schools, Heidegger is courting and provoking dialogue with them. As such, it resulted in the famous meeting between Heidegger and Cassirer in Davos, Switzerland.

In Cassirer’s review of Heidegger’s *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Cassirer emphasizes the standpoint of Neo-Kantians, trying to clarify that their interpretation of Kant cannot be deemed mistaken. Cassirer says: “For all prominent representatives of Neo-Kantianism were agreed about at least one point: that the emphasis of Kant’s system is to be sought at least in its epistemology, that the ‘fact of science’ and its ‘possibility’ constituted the beginning and the goal of Kant’s problem.”<sup>18</sup> In this sense, can we say that Heidegger is acquitted of committing a transgression against the hermeneutical principle? The answer to this could probably be no.

If Heidegger’s hermeneutical method in reading Kant is not really to establish a dogmatic claim of Kant’s claim in the first *Critique*, this could have relaxed Heidegger’s transgression. But if his pursuit of interpreting Kant’s first *Critique* is to be thought as the interpretation, thus, renders such interpretation dogmatically, imposing on the text what he thought to be what the text meant, he could therefore have absolute control of its meaning and assume a dictatorial stance for the text. On the contrary, Martin Weatherston, trying to justify Heidegger’s hermeneutical position, says, “Heidegger aims to go beyond a mere commentary on Kant to produce, with Kant’s help, an *original treatment* of the basic philosophical issues with which Kant is

<sup>14</sup> Charles B. Guignon, “Introduction,” *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 2.

<sup>15</sup> Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 30.

<sup>16</sup> Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 45.

<sup>17</sup> Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 46.

<sup>18</sup> Ernst Cassirer, “Remarks on Martin Heidegger’s Interpretation of Kant,” 132.





concerned.”<sup>19</sup> This statement amounts to show that any result from such a form of interpretation is considered tentative rather than final and absolute. Given this kind of Heideggerian posture on the proper positioning of Kant’s first *Critique*, we can infer that what Heidegger is trying to do is legislate a dogmatic claim as to how the *Critique* must be understood. In this sense, we can say that his hermeneutic attitude toward the text is inimical to the hospitality and preservation of the basic hermeneutical principle.

The next issue concerning Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant’s first *Critique* is no longer on his hermeneutic reading but on the issue of appropriating Kantian ideas to Heidegger’s phenomenological project of what we call fundamental ontology. Therefore, this paper tries to show in the following section that Heidegger might have partly appropriated Kant properly and, in certain respects, failed to appropriate Kant’s ideas correctly. This means then that we need to reexamine Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*.

#### HEIDEGGER AND *THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF KANT’S CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON*

Heidegger’s treatment of Kant, as well as his attraction to Kant’s powerful thoughts, made him be considered one of the prominent ‘Continental philosophers’ who, according to Dahlstrom, the only one who “offers an interpretation of the entire *Critique of Pure Reason*.”<sup>20</sup> His *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* tries to supply explanations resulting from *Being and Time*’s misinterpretations. It is here where Heidegger

announces Kant as “an advocate for the question of being.”<sup>21</sup>

In the beginning pages of Heidegger’s text, he argues that the *only* method proper for interpreting Kant’s first *Critique* is phenomenology. The reason, according to Heidegger, is quite apparent: “In its basic posture, the *method* of the *Critique* is what we, since Husserl, understand, carry out, and learn to ground more radically as a *phenomenological method*. That is why a phenomenological interpretation of the *Critique* is the only interpretation that fits Kant’s own intentions, even if these intentions are not clearly spelled out by him.”<sup>22</sup> Kant’s text supports this view. In Kant’s letter to Marcus Herz, he said there: “I have planned to have it [*Critique Pure of Reason*] consist of two parts, a theoretical and a practical. The first part would have two sections, (1) a general *phenomenology* and (2) metaphysics, but this is only about its nature and method.”<sup>23</sup> Kant’s target is to unravel the illusions or pretensions and limits of pure reason, and in doing so, he has to deal with the human phenomenon. In this case, he is adapting a properly fit method to what he intended to do. It is then clear why Heidegger adopted the term *phenomenological* in the title of his work. Nevertheless, what is more important in this discussion is how Heidegger presents and interprets some salient Kantian concepts and assimilates them into his philosophical project.

At least in this particular text, Heidegger faithfully follows Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*’s structure. Originally, in a lecture course he delivered at the University of Marburg during the winter semester of 1927-1928, Heidegger attempts to present a new ‘seeing or reading’

<sup>19</sup> Martin Weatherston, *Heidegger’s Interpretation of Kant: Categories, Imagination, and Temporality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 8. Italics added.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel Dahlstrom, “The *Critique of Pure Reason* and Continental Philosophy,” in *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, ed., Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 382.

<sup>21</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, xvi.

<sup>22</sup> Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 49.

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Paul Guyer’s “Introduction,” *The Cambridge Companion to Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3.







at Kant's magnum opus, the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This new 'seeing' at the *Critique* brings a kind of relief to Kantian studies during that time. Cassirer recognizes Heidegger's brilliance and ingenuity in his interpretation of Kant, saying that "he has carried out this part of his task with extraordinary power and with the greatest sharpness and clarity"<sup>24</sup> while Richard Taft considers Heidegger's reading of Kant as a "highly original interpretation of Kant."<sup>25</sup>

The opening statement of the text gives us right away what to expect, "The intention of this course is to achieve a philosophical understanding of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and that means to learn how to do philosophy."<sup>26</sup> In other words, Heidegger wants to offer his reader a more appropriate reading of the text and by showing how to do philosophy. His statement assumes certain principles of doing philosophy. To learn how to philosophize, Heidegger sets the following requirements: a) "we must know what it means to understand a philosophy that has been handed down to us; b) we need a provisional knowledge of the ways and means of achieving such an understanding."<sup>27</sup> It means that in doing philosophy, in particular, in understanding a text philosophically, one must already be equipped with enough philosophical background and understanding of the issue at hand. This is because in trying to understand a philosophical text, we do not aim to provide useful instruments in resolving issues of various human endeavors; instead, "philosophy is an attempt at developing and clarifying the same few problems."<sup>28</sup> A philosopher's task is to clarify the same old problems rather than to manufacture a quantum

of information to be utilized and applied. Quite related to Heidegger's view is Anthony Kenny's insight concerning progress in philosophy and how philosophy's progress differs from modern science. He argues that "Philosophy is not a science, because progress in philosophy is not a matter of expanding knowledge, of acquiring new truths about the world. It is a matter of understanding, that is to say of organizing, what is known."<sup>29</sup> Kenny's point is that progress in philosophy must be understood in terms of understanding rather than "making regular additions to a quantum of information."<sup>30</sup>

Following Heidegger's statement above, he proceeded by stating his general claim that the *Critique of Pure Reason* is "nothing but *laying the foundation for metaphysics as science and thus laying the foundation for 'pure philosophy' as such*."<sup>31</sup> Heidegger explains Kant's view of metaphysics based on the latter's definition of it in the *CPR*. Kant defines metaphysics as "a wholly isolated speculative cognition of reason that elevates itself entirely above all instruction from experience, and that through mere concepts... where reason thus is supposed to be its own pupil."<sup>32</sup> Then Heidegger, seeing the need to expound the view of what it means by 'laying the foundation of metaphysics as science,' devotes some pages to articulate some essential concepts such as metaphysics and science. He then explains that "laying the foundation of a science of beings means founding and developing the ontology which underlies this science. Kant's

<sup>24</sup> Cassirer, "Remarks on Martin Heidegger's Interpretation of Kant," 139.

<sup>25</sup> Richard Taft, "Translator's Introduction to the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition," in Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, enlarged, translated by Richard Taft (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), xii.

<sup>26</sup> Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Anthony Kenny, "The Philosopher's History and the History of Philosophy," in *Analytic Philosophy and History of Philosophy*, edited by Tom Sorell and G.A.J. Rogers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 16.

<sup>30</sup> Kenny, "The Philosopher's History and the History of Philosophy," 19. See also Daniel Stoljar, *Philosophical Progress: In Defence of a Reasonable Optimism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), where he advances a view called 'reasonable optimism' which he defines as "the thesis that there is progress on *reasonably many* of the big questions of philosophy" (14). Stoljar explains that progress is a philosophy that can be understood in terms of a tripartite distinction of questions: topic questions, big questions, and small questions.

<sup>31</sup> Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Bxiv.





laying of the foundation of metaphysics as science deals with reason.”<sup>33</sup> We see Heidegger’s initial move to understand the *Critique of Pure Reason* toward ontology directly from this same statement. This interpretation runs contrary to what contemporary scholars understand Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. For instance, Paul Guyer explains that the *Critique of Pure Reason* “hints at two different aspects of such a ‘critique’ – that is, it will have to *establish* that there is such a thing as *a priori* knowledge, and on the other hand, it will have to determine the *limits* of such knowledge, and thus establish once and for all the boundary between true reason (*Vernunft*) and mere sophistry (*Vernunftlei*).”<sup>34</sup> In other words, Heidegger does not only find Kant’s first *Critique* as simply salvaging metaphysics from its futility and demise by providing a strong foundation for it to be a science. Instead, Heidegger now is moving toward broadening the main task of the *Critique* to not just metaphysics but ontology in general.

Heidegger’s move becomes apparent in the following pages of his text, where he tries to explain the meaning of the title itself. By ‘critique,’ according to Heidegger, “is a transcendental investigation laying the foundation of transcendental philosophy or ontology; it is the *transcendental founding of ontology as such*.”<sup>35</sup> This being said, Heidegger situates the *CPR* within the ontology of being. He does try to exert within the text the problem or one of the most fundamental questions in the ontology of being, that is, the question of what being is. Therefore, it is far from what Kant is trying to do in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. As Eric S. Nelson puts it: “Kant’s transcendental philosophy becomes in Heidegger’s reading a general ontology: nothing less than the ontological determination of the

region of all beings.”<sup>36</sup> In this context, Heidegger tries to examine and interpret Kant’s text through his ontological goal of appropriating or situating it side by side with his quest for the meaning of being. Considering this context, what Heidegger is trying to inquire in Kant’s text is whether within the range of Kantian metaphysics, the question of the meaning of being and the “conditions of possibility of the understanding of being”<sup>37</sup> are evident. Here, Heidegger forces Kant to respond through his text.

The inquiry of Heidegger points to the possibility of the understanding of being. Here, Heidegger brings into Kantian text the centrality of time and temporality as the condition by which the possibility of understanding it is made possible. As Heidegger argues, it is only through and in a temporality that transcendence occurs, and such occurrence gives the being its possibility of understanding itself as being. In the case of Kant’s *CPR*, this issue of time, according to Heidegger, “did not even become a problem.”<sup>38</sup> In speaking about time and temporality within his *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, we find that Heidegger insisted, however, controversial yet quite a creative interpretation of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. It is not only sensibility and understanding that are thought of as necessary conditions for the possibility of synthetic judgments but also imagination. Though imagination cannot be categorized as a faculty similar to that of sensibility and understanding, Heidegger finds this faculty crucial in synthesizing the manifold of intuition. Beatrice Longuenesse affirms this. She says that Heidegger “interpreted Kant’s doctrine of transcendental imagination as an analytic of

<sup>33</sup> Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 27.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Guyer, “Introduction,” in *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 40.

<sup>36</sup> Eric S. Nelson, “Heidegger’s Failure to Overcome Transcendental Philosophy,” in *Transcendental Inquiry* eds. Halla Kim & Steven Hoeltzel (MacMillan: Palgrave, 2016), 169.

<sup>37</sup> Alberto Moreiras, “Heidegger, Kant, and the Problem of Transcendence,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, vol. xxiv, no. 1 (1986): 81-93.

<sup>38</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (New York/London: Harper & Row, 2008), 45.





finitude,” which follows his rejection of “the idea that the categories might originate in the logical functions of judgment.”<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, what is more to Heidegger’s resultant interpretation of Kant is his view that the unity between two distinct faculties is made possible by the faculty of imagination. However, more than this fact is that these faculties can be traced to a single root, which is “nothing other than *time*.”<sup>40</sup> Such radicality invites critical reactions from both Kantian and Heideggerian scholars. The question, therefore, is: Is this view plausible? It is plausible within the phenomenological method. Nevertheless, as to how such a process occurs, Heidegger introduced transcendence as a key that is quite different from Kant’s conception of it.

Transcendence, for Kant, is the self-relating of the subject to objects in the synthetic unity of apperception. While this is the case for Kant, Heidegger with the Dasein whose original determination of the mode of being is being-in-the-world enables him to move beyond Kant by arguing that the Dasein who is situated in the world and as such beyond itself, world and self are not two distinct beings but “belong together in the single entity, the Dasein.”<sup>41</sup> Here we see Heidegger’s indebtedness to Kant but at the same time, just like his teacher Husserl, made to move forward beyond the Kantian horizon expressed in his analysis of Dasein. This overcoming of the Kantian position is made explicit in Heidegger when he says that “transcendence is the presupposition for the Dasein’s having the character of a self. The *selfhood* of the Dasein is *founded on its transcendence*, and the Dasein is not first an ego-self which then oversteps something or other. The ‘toward-itself’

and the ‘out-from-itself’ are implicit in the concept of selfhood. What exists as a self cannot do so only as a transcendent being.”<sup>42</sup> What is this discovery amounts to for Heidegger is that the inseparability of self and world only proves that humans do not construct the world, rather “humans *and* things are constituted by the totality of what Heidegger in his earliest writings called the ‘worlding of the world.’”<sup>43</sup>

Heidegger’s position is quite evident in the *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant* when he pointed out Kant’s failure to realize this character of being of Dasein. Heidegger argues that “Kant failed to see the fundamental constitution of Dasein, i.e., transcendence. Hence the notion of the transcendental and of the transcendental method – and thereby the notion of transcendental philosophy and transcendental ontology – remains in confusion.”<sup>44</sup> This failure, according to Heidegger, is due to Kant’s deficient account of the problem of categories that led him to “failing to see transcendence as an original and essential determination of the ontological constitution of Dasein.”<sup>45</sup> The deficiency that Heidegger ascribed to Kant is based on the idea that for Heidegger, “Kant still does not show what these categories are concerning beings or objects, what their complete and actual content is, which resides in beings themselves – that is, their objective reality.”<sup>46</sup> In other words, Heidegger wants to see how categories should be thought of with beings or objects such that whether these categories are subject to temporality and not just simply has logical functions. As Longuenesse points out, for Heidegger, the origin of the categories can be found “rather in the synthesis of imagination as the relation of the human being (Dasein) to time.”<sup>47</sup> Here, Heidegger tries to

<sup>39</sup> Béatrice Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* trans. Charles T. Wolfe (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1998), 4.

<sup>40</sup> Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 64.

<sup>41</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982), 297.

<sup>42</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 302.

<sup>43</sup> Charles B. Guignon, “Introduction,” 13.

<sup>44</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 216.

<sup>45</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 213.

<sup>46</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 207.

<sup>47</sup> Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 4.







show that “categories *cannot* be taken as isolated concepts of understanding; they are essentially related to time. More precisely, categories belong essentially to the original whole of the pure-related imaginative synthesis.”<sup>48</sup> But Longuenesse disagrees. She says, “Heidegger is closer to the truth when he assesses that at that point of *Transcendental Analytic*, it is too early for the categories to be derived from the logical function of judgment...I disagree with him, however, when he goes so far as to claim that the origin of the categories is not in the logical functions of judgment at all.”<sup>49</sup> For Longuenesse, this is not the case for Kant because “the metaphysical deduction announces, with the parallelism of the two tables, an original identity of the categories and the logical functions, for which the transcendental deduction must provide the proof and completed explanation.”<sup>50</sup> If Longuenesse is correct, then Heidegger might have missed something essential insights from Kant’s text.

Nevertheless, Heidegger presses further the issue into Kant when the former accuses Kant of not attending to the fundamental issue of transcendence by “never attempted to offer a fundamental ontology of *Dasein* and did not realize the tasks and methodical peculiarity of such an ontology.”<sup>51</sup> This attribution of failure to examine the ontology that Heidegger raises against Kant is beyond Kant himself. After all, Heidegger’s glossal interpretation of Kant’s first *Critique* tries to assimilate the Kantian insights into his thinking. This further moves Heidegger beyond Kant’s horizon. Hence, Heidegger’s critical standpoint against Kant indicates a kind of dissatisfaction that Heidegger has with Kant insofar as the issue of *Dasein* is concerned. That is, for Heidegger, Kant “had not questioned the

basis of traditional ontology rigorously enough” such that “Kant left the main feature of an ancient ontology intact: the centrality of substance, the *thinghood* of the thing, remained uncontested. That is to say, for Kant, the independent substance that persists through time remains the fundamental building block of all reality.”<sup>52</sup>

What are being presented so far are some salient points raised by Heidegger in his interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which somehow runs contrary to many Kantian scholars’ interpretations. However, this does not make Heidegger less a Kantian just because his interpretation runs against or quite remote from the Kantian text. It only means to say instead that Heidegger’s understanding of Kant, though unorthodox, signifies the success of his hermeneutical goal to understand Kant more than he understood himself. On the contrary, this also left a deep imprint on Kant’s scholarship that many Kantians today would not be interested in exploring. Despite this fact, the problem remains whether Heidegger properly appropriated Kant in the sense of assimilating the Kantian insights to his philosophical project without destruction. As such, I think it is quite impossible given the nature of the hermeneutic character of repetition or retrieval. It then leads us to realize that the hermeneutic method cannot be detached or separated from our tendency of appropriating the text to our form of thinking. In this sense, Heidegger is correct in interpretation, which only occurs because we can understand that the subject’s disposition cannot be set aside. In other words, what is continuously operative in interpretation is the subject’s presupposition imposed upon the text. In the case of Heidegger, as argued by Macann, he failed to uphold the basic tenet of a hermeneutical task,

<sup>48</sup> Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 291.

<sup>49</sup> See footnote in Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, 29.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant*, 214.

<sup>52</sup> Dorothea Frede, “The question of being Heidegger’s project,” in *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* ed., Charles B. Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 61.





i.e., the inevitability of multiplicity of interpretations. Here, we may say that Heidegger transgresses.

## CONCLUSION

This paper presented two claims. First, Heidegger's employment of hermeneutical reading to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* runs contrary to the basic interpretation principle. This is primarily due to the inherent character of what Heidegger calls 'retrieval' or 'thinking dialogue.' However, whether it follows the said method, the interpreter's dogmatic position, after the reading of the text or not, may still be contested. In Heidegger's case, his standpoint to his interpretation of the text is dogmatic and authoritarian. Secondly, it has also shown that Heidegger may partly appropriate Kant's ideas to his thinking and project. In other words, Heidegger, in his insistence of trying to force Kant to admit something that he had not committed, makes such inappropriate and dictatorial move. It leads Heidegger to commit an inappropriate elucidation of Kant's ideas to his ontology.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Dahlstrom, Daniel. "The Critique of Pure Reason and Continental Philosophy." In *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. Edited by Paul Guyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Frede, Dorothea. "The question of being Heidegger's project." In *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*. Edited by Charles B. Guignon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Grene, Marjorie. *Martin Heidegger*. London: Bowes & Bowes, 1957.
- Guignon, Charles B. "Introduction." In *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*. Edited by Charles B. Guignon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Translated by Richard Taft. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Kenny, Anthony. "The Philosopher's History and the History of Philosophy." In *Analytic Philosophy and History of Philosophy*. Edited by Tom Sorell and G.A.J. Rogers. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.
- Longuenesse, Béatrice. *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*. Translated by Charles T. Wolfe. Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1998.
- Macann, Christopher. "Heidegger's Kant Interpretation." In *Critical Heidegger*. Edited by Christopher Macann. London/New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Moreiras, Alberto. "Heidegger, Kant, and the Problem of Transcendence." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* vol. xxiv, no. 1 (1986): 81-93.
- Nelson, Eric S. "Heidegger's Failure to Overcome Transcendental Philosophy." In *Transcendental Inquiry*. Edited by Halla Kim & Steven Hoeltzel. MacMillan: Palgrave, 2016.
- Sherover, Charles. *Heidegger, Kant and Time*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971.
- Stoljar, Daniel. *Philosophical Progress: In Defence of a Reasonable Optimism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Taft, Richard. "Translator's Introduction to the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition." In Martin Heidegger. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition enlarged. Translated by Richard Taft Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Weatherston, Martin. *Heidegger's Interpretation of Kant: Categories, Imagination and Temporality*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

