6 Heidegger in America or how transcendental philosophy becomes pragmatic

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The topic of this chapter is simple. I have long held that the early Heidegger was a specific kind of philosophical animal, a transcendental pragmatist. But there seem to be powerful reasons to think that it is simply incoherent to be both a pragmatist and a transcendental philosopher. If this conjunction of positions is indeed incoherent, and if we read Heidegger charitably, as we must, then there are also good reasons to think that Heidegger could not have been a transcendental pragmatist. In this chapter I first briefly lay out my reasons for thinking that Heidegger was both a transcendental philosopher and a pragmatist, and then show how it is indeed possible to coherently be both.

In this context, the *locus classicus* for the term 'transcendental' is, of course, Kant. And, for once, Kant is reasonably clear concerning what he means by this term. In a passage from the Introduction which appears in both editions of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant defines 'transcendental knowledge' as follows: 'I call all cognition *transcendental* that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*.'[1] And in the Discipline of Pure Reason Kant specifies that a certain class of propositions counts as 'transcendental': 'Synthetic propositions that pertain to things in general, the intuition of which cannot be given *a priori*, are transcendental ... They contain merely the rule in accordance with which a certain synthetic unity of that which cannot be intuitively represented *a priori* (of perceptions) should be sought empirically.'[2]

For Kant, transcendental knowledge is distinguished by its distinctive subject matter, by that with which it is 'occupied'. Instead of being concerned, as most of our knowledge is, with ordinary objects, the tables, quarks, beasts of the field, and human beings, of our ordinary acquaintance, transcendental knowledge is knowledge about our *a priori* knowledge of these ordinary objects. As the bulk of the *Critique* makes clear, there are two sides to this transcendental 'occupation' with *a priori* knowledge. On the one hand, Kant raises the transcendental question regarding our *a priori* knowledge of ordinary objects concerning just how it is possible for us to have such knowledge. So any answer to this question, any claim concerning how it is possible to have *a priori* knowledge of objects, if known to be true, would count as transcendental knowledge. On the other hand, as the second quote makes clear, Kant also speaks of our *a priori* knowledge of

ordinary objects as itself transcendental, if that knowledge is derived from and grounded in transcendental knowledge in the first sense, that is, if it is grounded in knowledge of how it is possible to have *a priori* knowledge of objects. For Kant, when we come to have transcendental knowledge in the sense of coming to know how it is possible for us to have *a priori* knowledge of objects, we also come to have transcendental knowledge in a second sense, *a priori* knowledge of what pertains to the ordinary objects of knowledge themselves as such.

So, in the canonical sense of the expression as it is used in Kant, there are two kinds of transcendental knowledge. When we know that some propositions concerning how it is possible for us to have synthetic *a priori* knowledge of ordinary entities are true, that knowledge is transcendental. For example, when in the Transcendental Aesthetic Kant answers the question 'how can an outer intuition inhabit the mind that precedes the objects themselves, and in which the concept of the latter can be determined *a priori*?' with the response '... not otherwise than insofar as it has its seat merely in the subject, as its formal constitution for being affected by objects and thereby acquiring immediate representation, i.e. intuition, of them ...',[3] that response, if known to be true, would constitute an example of transcendental knowledge in the first sense. Similarly, when we know *a priori* the truth of some proposition concerning ordinary objects, and this knowledge is supported by transcendental knowledge in the first sense, that knowledge is also transcendental. The Second Analogy, the principle that 'All alterations take place in accordance with the law of the connection of cause and effect'[4], is an example of transcendental knowledge in this second sense.

For Kant, *a priori* knowledge about objects is synthetic, rather than analytic, so transcendental knowledge in the first sense is knowledge concerning how it is possible to have synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects. Kant uses 'possible' here in a distinctive way. One might think that there could be several sets of conditions which if met would make synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects possible. But as the remainder of the first *Critique* makes abundantly clear, Kant thinks that there is a unique set of such enabling conditions. Given this fact, the unique set of conditions which render it possible for us to have synthetic *a priori* knowledge are seen by Kant as *necessary* conditions on this kind of knowledge. And, since for Kant these unique enabling conditions of synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects also ground and justify that knowledge of objects, these same conditions also specify what it is possible to know *a priori* concerning the necessary features of these ordinary objects. This is the highest principle of all synthetic judgements: 'The conditions of the possibility of experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and on this account have objective validity in a synthetic judgement *a priori*.'[5]

In Kant and his transcendental successors, knowledge of how synthetic *a priori* knowledge is possible supports *a priori* knowledge of objects themselves in a distinctive way. For Kant, synthetic *a priori* knowledge of a kind of object is uniquely made possible by the fact that any intention which is directed towards that sort of object must embody certain necessary features without which those intentions would not intend that sort of object. For example, when one knows

how it is possible to know the truth of the Second Analogy *a priori*, *what* one knows is that to intend one event as the cause of another is to intend the two events as related according to a rule of temporal order, and to know that unless one intends something as having some such predecessor, one is not intending that entity as an *event*, that is, an alteration in an object, at all. So even though the *concept* of an event does not imply that all events have a cause, what it is to intend an event as an event implies that intending anything as an event involves intending it as having some cause or other. Our synthetic *a priori* knowledge that every event has a cause is possible only because what it is to intend something as an event requires that we intend it as having some cause, and this fact justifies the assertion that every event we can intend as such has a cause. For Kant and his transcendental successors, synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects that is supported and elucidated in this fashion by our knowledge of how synthetic *a priori* knowledge is possible also counts as transcendental.

Now, given the meaning of the expression 'transcendental knowledge', the meaning of the expression 'transcendental philosopher' also becomes apparent. Any philosopher who attempts to understand how it is possible to have *a priori* knowledge, or attempts to determine what we know *a priori* by first attempting to determine how it is possible for us to have such knowledge, counts as a transcendental philosopher. And, let me hasten to add, the early Heidegger so counts.

My claim that the early Heidegger counts as a transcendental philosopher according to the Kantian conception might at first seem somewhat surprising. For, after all, as Kant defines it, 'transcendental' has to do primarily with knowledge, and it is well known that the early Heidegger is not primarily interested in epistemology. Rather, his primary interest has to do with *being*, or what 'being' means. But if for Heidegger philosophy in general, and his own philosophy in particular, concerns being, and transcendental philosophy primarily concerns the conditions under which we can know *a priori*, then in what sense can Heidegger be a transcendental philosopher? The answer to this question goes by way of Heidegger's distinctive understanding of the '*a priori*'.

In Kant, of course, the adjective '*a priori*' primarily qualifies 'knowledge'. The early Heidegger suggests that Kant's focus on *a priori* knowledge blinded him to a deeper sense of 'the' *a priori*. This deeper *a priori* is conceived by Heidegger to have two sides. First, for Heidegger there is a sense in which being is prior to, '*a priori*' in relation to, everything that is: 'In early antiquity it was already seen that being and its attributes in a certain way underlie beings and precede them and so are a proteron, an earlier. The term denoting this character by which being precedes beings is the expression a priori, *apriority*, being earlier or prior. As a priori, being is earlier than beings.'[6] This priority of being in relation to beings is associated with a second priority, the priority of *intentions* directed towards being in relation to intentions directed towards beings. For the early Heidegger, unless it were possible to intend what it means for an entity to be, it would be impossible to intend any entities themselves, so the intention directed towards being itself is *a priori* in relation to intentions directed towards things that are. *A priori* knowledge in Kant's sense, which is necessary for the possibility of any specific

knowledge of any particular entity, is only a special case of the more general principle that it is possible to *intend* entities as entities that are only if it is already possible to intend what it is for them to be. 'The positive positing of any being includes within itself an a priori knowledge and a priori understanding of the being's being, although the positive experience of such a being knows nothing of this understanding and is incapable of bringing what is understood by it into the form of a concept.'[7]

It is thus obvious that the early Heidegger accepts his own version of the highest principle of synthetic judgement. For Heidegger, there are conditions which must be met by any intention that intends something as something that is. These conditions at once amount to an understanding by the intender of what it is for any entity to be and conditions which determine *a priori*, or prior to any specific experience of the entity, some of the character of any particular entity that can be intended as something that is. So for early Heidegger the philosopher's articulation of our *a priori* understanding of being, or what it is for an entity to be, allows us to see how such an understanding underlies and grounds the character of any intentions directed towards things that are.

And, finally, for Heidegger, this prior, *a priori* being, and intending of being, are only accessible to philosophy as the science of being, a science which itself makes use of an *a priori* mode of cognition, that is, a kind of intending that is independent of all intentions directed towards things that are. Heidegger's name for this *a priori* method of the science of being is 'phenomenology', and phenomenology itself is the description of the *a priori* structures of intentionality that allow for the possibility of intending being and thereby allow for the possibility of intending entities that are. 'The a priori character of being and of all the structures of being accordingly calls for a specific kind of approach and way of apprehending being – *a priori cognition*. The basic components of a priori cognition constitute what we call *phenomenology*. Phenomenology is the name for the method of ontology, that is, of scientific philosophy.'[8] 'Phenomenology is the analytic description of intentionality in its a priori.'[9] I will return to this Heideggerian version of transcendental method at the end of this chapter.

While Heidegger's understanding of the *a priori* is thus rooted in the Kantian conception, he understands himself as deviating from the Kantian usage in three related respects. First, while Kant's suggestion that we have *a priori* knowledge of objects 'in general' certainly implies that our cognition intends *a priori* what it is for such entities to be, Heidegger makes this implication explicit. Second, Heidegger generalizes a qualification that Kant applies to knowledge to apply to all intentions. Heidegger claims that it is a necessary condition on *intending* any particular entity that one be capable of intending the being of that entity, and intending what it is for that entity to be is in that sense *a priori* in relation to intending that entity. Third, under the influence of Husserl, Heidegger suggests that the appropriate way of investigating 'intentionality in its a priori' is descriptive and intuitive rather than inferential and discursive. So Heidegger understands himself to be offering transcendental-phenomenological descriptions rather than transcendental arguments.

Now whatever one thinks of these modifications of Kant, it should be clear that they in no way imply that Heidegger is any other than a transcendental philosopher in the straightforward Kantian sense. To be a transcendental philosopher in that sense is to attempt to come to have explicit knowledge about what can be known *a priori* about entities themselves by first determining how it is possible to *know* entities *a priori*. Heidegger's project is just a slight modification and development of this attempt. That Heideggerian project involves the attempt to determine what it is for any entity to be by first determining how it is possible, prior to any experience of objects, to intend or understand any entity as something that is. That is, Heidegger turns Aristotle's science of being into a transcendental science of being by raising the question that Kant designates the transcendental question *par excellence*, which Heidegger thinks is prior to the question that Aristotle raises in Book Zeta of the *Metaphysics*: 'If philosophy is the science of being, then the first, and last and basic problem of philosophy must be, What does being signify? Whence can something like being in general be understood? How is understanding of being at all possible?'[10] To answer the first question, 'What does being signify?', by first asking and answering the last question, 'How is understanding of being at all possible?', is to be a transcendental philosopher. So Heidegger is a transcendental philosopher.

But is Heidegger also a pragmatist? The answer to this question of course turns on what is meant by the term 'pragmatism'. Pragmatism is a recognizable philosophical movement which, in a general way, is characterized by a cluster of features that together serve to pick out a group of positions which share a family resemblance in virtue of which they deserve to be called pragmatic. I would include four such features in any characterization of pragmatism. These features include characteristic views regarding meaning, regarding truth, regarding belief and knowledge, and regarding the priority of acting over thinking in any attempt to specify what is distinctive about human being. As opposed to the other three features which are characteristic of pragmatic positions, this last feature has not as yet been articulated in a simple slogan, but of these it seems to me that the pragmatic tendency to understand thinking in terms of acting is the most characteristic pragmatic view and the one that best accounts for the others. I will briefly discuss each of these tendencies of the pragmatic movement, ending with the last, and from my perspective, most important.

First, in general pragmatists tend to be verificationists regarding meaning. Indeed, Peirce's claim that 'the meaning of a sentence turns on what could count as evidence for its truth' could serve both as definitory of verificationism and as partially criterial for pragmatic theories of meaning. This slogan is only partially criterial for pragmatic theories of meaning, however, because pragmatists associate verificationism with a distinctive operationalism concerning what counts as evidence. As opposed to the logical empiricists who were active at the same time as the second generation of pragmatists, pragmatists tended to think of evidence as the result of discrete overt activities rather than as embodied in simple sensation. That is, for pragmatists the meaning of a sentence turns on what would count as evidence for its truth, and in general what would count as evidence for

the truth of some sentence is that some active intervention has some specific result. So, the meaning of a sentence is specified by a set of subjunctive conditionals, the antecedents of which are some specific overt operation or class of operations, and the consequents of which are some specified results. For example, to say that 'a is harder than b' is to say that were 'a' and 'b' dragged along each other, the result would be that 'b', and not 'a', would be scratched. Now, of course, as stated this view of meaning is far too crude to ever count as an acceptable theory, but all later, more sophisticated, pragmatist views of meaning can be seen as developments of this core intuition.

Second, pragmatists tend to accept a theory of what it is for a sentence to be true that meshes nicely with the pragmatist view of meaning. If the meaning of a sentence turns solely on what would count as evidence for its truth, then, reciprocally, for a sentence to be true is for a speaker, given the meaning of the sentence, to be warranted by the evidence to assert it. Tying the meaning of a sentence to evidence implicitly ties that meaning to the conditions under which some speaker would be warranted in asserting that sentence, because the word 'evidence' is just a shorthand way of referring to the conditions which would justify the assertion of or belief in some sentence. But since what one asserts when one asserts some sentence, or what one believes when one believes it, is that the sentence is true, the truth of the sentence comes to be associated with warranted assertibility. To say that a sentence is true, then, is to say that the evidence that is specified by the meaning of the sentence is in principle available, so a speaker would be warranted in asserting that sentence. That is, a sentence is true just in case were the operation specified in the antecedent of the conditional which gives the meaning of that proposition carried out, the result specified in the consequent of that conditional would actually occur. If when 'a' and 'b' are dragged along one another, 'a' scratches 'b' rather than the reverse, then one is warranted in asserting that 'a' is harder than 'b', and the sentence is true. Once again, this view of truth is, of course, unacceptable as stated. Nevertheless, this view can be seen to lie at the basis of all later pragmatist accounts of truth.

The pragmatist association of truth and warranted assertibility, combined with the pragmatist insistence that evidence, or warrants for assertions, primarily involve the results of operations, yield the characteristic pragmatic positions regarding belief and knowledge. Beliefs are states of agents. Given a pragmatic theory of meaning, what one says when one says that Jane believes that 'a' is harder than 'b' must be specified in terms of the evidence that warrants asserting that Jane believes that it is true that 'a' is harder than 'b'. When one believes that some sentence is true, what one believes is that one is warranted in asserting that sentence, and since what the assertion of the sentence says is specified by a subjunctive conditional, what one believes when one believes that one is warranted in asserting it is that were one to perform the operation specified by that conditional, one would obtain the result specified by that same conditional. So there are two sorts of evidence that warrant one in saying that Jane believes that 'a is harder than b'. Jane can simply assert the sentence, which if she is not lying gives us evidence that she believes she is warranted in asserting it, or alternatively and

more basically she can *act* on the belief. That is, if when Jane wants to scratch 'b' she runs 'a' along it, then we have evidence that Jane believes that 'a' is harder than 'b'. And since for a pragmatist what it is for it to be true that Jane believes that 'a' is harder than 'b' is fixed by the evidence that supports the claim that she does so believe, then for Jane to hold that belief is for her to be in a state such that she would act on it were she attempting to scratch 'b'. For a pragmatist, beliefs are *essentially* action guiding. But if this is what belief is, then knowledge, as justified true belief, is just as surely tied to action. Jane knows that her belief is true only if the action guided by her belief is really warranted by the evidence, and it is really warranted by the evidence only if action guided by the belief would be successful. That is, truth is what is good in the way of belief, and knowledge is the ability to act so as to accomplish what one is out to accomplish. Jane knows that 'a' is harder than 'b' when she knows how to use 'a' to scratch 'b'. Knowing how is the basis for knowing that.[11]

This last characteristically pragmatic doctrine, that knowing that something is the case is founded on knowing how to do something, is thus directly tied to the pragmatist insistence that belief is essentially action guiding, which in turn is associated with the pragmatist position that the meaning of a sentence is rooted in a specification of a set of possible results of a set of concrete overt operations. But this nest of pragmatic doctrines regarding the semantic properties of meaning, truth, knowledge and belief is itself based upon a still more fundamental pragmatist belief. In each instance, pragmatism takes a semantic property which has been traditionally associated with the private thought of an individual conscious agent and reinterprets it in terms of overt action. What it is for an agent to believe 'p' is reinterpreted in terms of that agent acting in accordance with 'p'; what it is for a sentence to have a meaning is reinterpreted in terms of a set of overt operations and their potential results; what it is for an agent to know that some sentence is true is reinterpreted as that agent knowing how to accomplish some end; and, perhaps most distinctively, what it is for a sentence to be true is reinterpreted in terms of an agent being warranted in engaging in a type of overt *action*, the action of asserting that sentence.

Now all of these semantic characteristics, an agent believing 'p', or knowing 'p', or the meaning of sentence 's', or the truth of sentence 's', involve an *intentional* dimension, and in all of these cases the pragmatists root that intentional dimension in the concrete overt activity of real agents who act so as to achieve ends. So for a pragmatist, the intentionality of thought must be understood in terms of the goal-directed activity of agents, as what it is for an agent or entity to have or be in one of those intentional states, the *being* of those intentional states, can only be understood in terms of the overt activity of agents who act so as to achieve concrete ends. To coin a slogan, the fundamental pragmatist position from which all the other characteristic pragmatic doctrines flow, is that the intentionality of thought is 'founded on' the teleology of action.

More than a decade ago I argued at length in a book that the early Heidegger's characteristic doctrines regarding meaning, truth, knowledge, and what it is for an agent to have intentional states are all pragmatic in the sense

that they satisfy the first three criteria outlined above for counting as pragmatist.[12] I have nothing to add to or subtract from those arguments and I do not intend to waste your time by repeating them here. Anyone interested in those arguments can look at the first half of my book. What I will do here is to briefly point to some evidence that supports my view that the early Heidegger also accepts what I have just claimed is the core pragmatist position, that the intentionality of thought is founded on the teleology of action.

It is perhaps the early Heidegger's most characteristic doctrine that, as he puts it in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Dasein's being-in-the-world is the '*foundation of intentionality*'. For Heidegger, there is no intentionality without being-in-the-world, being-in-the-world is a necessary condition on intentionality. Dasein is 'in' the world in the sense of inhabiting it, or dwelling in it. But what is it for Dasein to be-in the world in that sense? Well, here are some possible 'modes' of 'being-in': 'working on something with something, producing something, cultivating and caring for something, putting something to use, employing something for something'.[13] All of these modes of being-in are kinds of overt, goal-directed activity. But 'a' is a mode or modification of 'b' only if an entity 'S' having or being 'a' implies that that entity also has or is 'b'; e.g. for Descartes, believing is a mode of thinking. So for Heidegger to say as he does that all of these types of overt goal-directed practical activity are modes of being-in is to say that any entity that engages in these activities *thereby and in virtue of that fact* also counts as being-in-the-world. Now Heidegger finds that all of these overt activities imply that the agent cares about things and takes them into her care, and it is in virtue of this fact that these count as modes of being-in. But this care is in each of these cases essentially embodied in activity which works towards the realization of some *telos*. That is, it is the teleology of action that is essential to care and thus to being-in. But being-in is, for early Heidegger, the foundation for intentionality, and being-in essentially involves the teleology of action, so the teleology of action is a necessary condition on intentionality. So the early Heidegger is a pragmatist. But this is a *transcendental* claim, in the very straightforward sense that it is a claim regarding how intentionality as such and in general, including the *a priori* intention directed towards being, is possible. So the early Heidegger is a pragmatist, and a transcendental one to boot. QED.

Unfortunately for me, however, things are not quite so simple and straightforward. There are powerful reasons that one might think that pragmatism is inconsistent with transcendental philosophy, so that anyone who was both, including Heidegger, could only be both if he were inconsistent. Since Heidegger was surely not inconsistent, it would follow from this conclusion that he could not have been both a pragmatist and a transcendental philosopher.

But what reason is there to believe that pragmatism *is* inconsistent with transcendental philosophy? Here is one that derives from the pragmatic notions of meaning and knowledge. Transcendental knowledge is knowledge that concerns how it is possible to know objects in the world *a priori*, or which, on the basis of knowing how it is possible to know objects in the world *a priori*, actually asserts some such *a priori* knowledge. But it is part of the core of pragmatism that the

meaning of any sentence is fixed by a set of subjunctive conditionals concerning what would occur were some overt operation actually carried out. So if Jane believes that 'a' is harder than 'b', then she believes that if 'a' and 'b' were dragged along one another, 'b' would be scratched. And it is further part of that pragmatic core that for some agent to know that some such sentence is true involves that agent knowing how to be successful at action that is guided by the belief that that sentence is true. For example, Jane's knowledge that 'a' is harder than 'b' involves Jane knowing how to use 'a' to scratch 'b' should the occasion arise. But, it can be fairly argued, that some operation will have some result is a paradigm case of an *a posteriori* sentence: one can only know that some operation will have some result by carrying out the actual experiment. Hence the pragmatic emphasis on the role of experiment and trial and error. But if the meaning of *all* sentences is fixed by some such conditional, then there are no sentences that can be known to be true *a priori*. And if there is no knowledge *a priori*, there can be no transcendental knowledge. So it follows that pragmatism and transcendentalism are inconsistent, and Heidegger could not have been both unless he were also inconsistent. But surely he was not, so it must be Okrent who is confused.

I must admit that at first blush this argument to the conclusion that transcendental philosophy is inconsistent with pragmatism seems pretty tight. There is no question that pragmatists are, in general, opposed to most varieties of essentialism and predisposed to doubt any claims to *a priori* knowledge, and that these tendencies are rooted in the core belief that action has priority over thought. Nevertheless, there are certain confusions hidden in the above line of argument. To uncover those confusions let us look at some sentence that Kant suggests is properly seen as a case of transcendental knowledge of the second sort, that is, a case of *a priori* knowledge concerning objects that is justified by knowledge concerning how synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects is possible. My example will, once again, be the Second Analogy, 'All alterations take place in conformity with the law of the connection of cause and effect'.

Intuitively, a proposition counts as synthetic *a priori* if, and only if, it says something about objects and one is justified in believing that the proposition is true, even though one lacks the experiential evidence of those objects which would seem to be required for warranting such a belief. In order for the proposition to be synthetic, it must say something about objects. To say that it is known *a priori* requires that the proposition can be known to be true independently of experience of the objects it is about. Kant fleshes out this intuitive sense of what is involved in a synthetic *a priori* proposition by proposing two criteria we can use to determine that a synthetic sentence is knowable only *a priori*. These criteria are universality and necessity.

For Kant, existential generalizations and singular synthetic propositions can only be known to be true in light of our experiences of the objects they are about. But, following Hume, Kant holds that universal propositions about objects can never be warranted in that way. There is no finite set of experiences which could ever justify a universal judgement. So if some such proposition is nevertheless justified, it must be so justified by something other than the appeal

to experience. But, Kant claims, there are some universal propositions about objects which *are* justified. That they are is shown by the fact that some such propositions are 'necessary'.

What can Kant mean when he says that some universal synthetic judgements, the ones that are synthetic *a priori*, are necessary? He cannot mean that they are logically necessary, as if they were they would be analytic and not synthetic and it would not be possible to distinguish Kant's transcendentalism from Leibniz's rationalism. Nor can he mean that it is simply impossible for us to believe that such a sentence is false. If that was all that were involved in Kant's sense of necessity, it would not be possible to distinguish his transcendentalism from Hume's naturalism. Rather, when Kant says these claims are 'necessary' he means something like that they are practically or *normatively* necessary, that the action of coming to believe them is justified or that we *ought* to believe that they are true. To borrow a bit of terminology from Christine Korsgaard, we can say that synthetic *a priori* propositions are *rationally* necessary in the sense that if we are rational then we ought to believe that they are true.[14] But this amounts to the suggestion that there are *reasons* we ought to believe in the truth of synthetic *a priori* judgements, that we are justified in believing them true, even though, and in the face of the fact that, we *lack* and must lack the evidence we would ordinarily need to justify having that belief, given the meaning of the sentence we believe to be true. No wonder Kant thinks that there is a special problem concerning how we could ever have synthetic *a priori* knowledge.

In the example of the Second Analogy we can see how this is all supposed to work. On its face, the Analogy is a universal synthetic proposition. It asserts that something is true of every possible instance of a certain class of particulars, namely alterations in persisting objects. As such, it could never be justified by appeal to experience of actual alterations. Nevertheless, Kant claims that this proposition is *necessary*, that is, that we ought to accept it as true of every event even though we have no reason to think it true of some event, and even if we have reason to believe that it is *not* true of that event. That is, Kant holds that we ought to believe that we are justified in believing that every event has some cause come what evidence may.

How could a pragmatist deal with this kind of Kantian example? It is notoriously difficult for anyone to provide an acceptable analysis of causal judgements, but perhaps a pragmatist might try something like this. She might attempt some sort of pragmatic interpretation of a singular causal judgement, using appropriate subjunctive conditionals, perhaps something like: 'An event of type b would not occur unless an event of type a were to occur'. This is the sort of thing that a pragmatist might be able to test operationally for any supposed cause 'a', by varying initial conditions and seeing whether an event of type 'b' occurs. She could then go on to interpret the 'all' literally. The result would be something like: 'For every event b there is some a such that b would not occur unless a were to occur'.

As I have unpacked what is involved in being a pragmatist, pragmatists are committed to an operationalism regarding verifiability conditions. But there is no

finite set of operations the results of which could ever justify a universal judgement, so it is difficult for a pragmatist to understand how a universal synthetic judgement could ever be verified by the range of evidence that seems relevant to its truth. So it seems that a pragmatist must conclude that the evidence does not warrant belief in the Second Analogy.

But it is crucial to note that in this respect a pragmatist is no different from Kant or any other transcendental philosopher. Transcendental philosophers only think that there is a puzzle about the possibility of knowledge of the truth of universal synthetic judgements *because* such judgements can never be justified by the unique range of evidence that is directly relevant to their truth. What makes such assertions problematic is that they nevertheless seem to be *necessary* in Kant's sense; that is, it appears that we ought to believe that each event has a cause even when the evidence seems to suggest that some event does not. So it does not follow from the fact that a pragmatist cannot see how a synthetic *a priori* claim could be supported by the directly relevant evidence that a pragmatist cannot be a transcendental philosopher. If it did, Kant could not be one either.

In fact, pragmatism is uniquely well suited to understand how it possibly could be the case that we rationally ought to believe that every event has a cause even in the face of apparent counter-examples, that we ought rationally to act as if the Second Analogy is true, even when we lack direct evidence for its truth. For a pragmatist, beliefs are, ultimately, guides to action. And one is justified in holding a belief if holding that belief is a guide to *successful* action. So, for a pragmatist, if we are rational we stand under the meta-norm that we ought to hold true whichever beliefs we have good reason to think lead to successful action, *regardless of whether or not* those beliefs appear to be justified by the local evidence that seems relevant to their truth. And, for a *pragmatist*, there can be good reasons to accept this normative counsel which are less than perfect reasons. For a pragmatist, the reason to believe that it is true that one ought to believe that every event has a cause, come what experience may, is our *experience* that agents that act according to that universal principle are successful agents, and those that do not are not. As it happens, the principle that every genuine alteration in a genuine persisting entity has a cause is so tightly connected with the way in which we understand what it is to be an alteration and what it is to be a persisting entity that it would be very hard to speak any human language, or operate successfully in any sophisticated human community, or intervene successfully in the physical world, if one did not accept this principle. So a pragmatist can have experiential evidence that supports the claim that one should accept the universal principle that every event has a cause even though one lacks the evidence to support this universalization itself.

In effect, a pragmatist justifies a belief in something such as the Second Analogy by pointing out that any agent that holds a *system* of beliefs that includes the principle that every event has a cause is likely to cope with the world more successfully than an agent whose system of beliefs does not include this principle. For the pragmatist, for an agent to hold this belief is for the agent to be disposed to act in accordance with this belief. And for an agent to be disposed to act in accordance with the Second Analogy is for that agent to be disposed to attempt to 'get a handle' on any new and initially puzzling phenomenon. But, the pragmatist can plausibly argue, we have ample evidence that agents that act in this way are more likely to succeed, are more likely to arrive at greater 'know-how', than those who passively accept new types of events as unaccountable. And, since knowing-how is at the origin of knowing-that, any agent who believes this principle is likely to come to have greater knowledge of her world than any agent who does not accept the Second Analogy. This in turn justifies a belief in the principle that every event has a cause.

One needs to be careful with the logic here. A proposition counts as a bit of synthetic *a priori* knowledge if, and only if, it meets a set of four conditions. First, the claim must be true, otherwise it would not count as a bit of knowledge. Second, it must be about objects, otherwise the claim would not count as synthetic. Third, the judgement must be justified, otherwise it would not be known. And fourth, it must be universal and 'necessary' in Kant's sense. That is, it must be a universal proposition which could not be justified by the relevant direct evidence concerning its truth, which nevertheless we rationally ought to believe is true even in the face of this lack of evidence. The Second Analogy meets all of these conditions, for a pragmatist as well as for Kant. For a pragmatist, the empirical evidence that is relevant to the truth of the Second Analogy has directly to do with whether for every event it would not have occurred unless some other event occurred. And, for a pragmatist, the evidence of this type that we could have could never be sufficient to warrant the assertion of the Second Analogy. Nevertheless, the pragmatist can argue that we do have evidence that it is rational for an agent to *believe* that every event has a cause, that one *ought* to believe that every event has a cause, come what direct evidence may. This evidence is supplied by the role that this principle plays in the cognitive economy of successful rational agents. And since *what* an agent ought to believe when she ought to believe this principle is *that* every event has a cause, and she ought to believe this regardless of the lack of direct evidence in favour of this belief, she ought to believe this claim to be true come what direct evidence may. So there is no reason that a pragmatist cannot consistently believe in the possibility of Kant's second type of transcendental knowledge. There is no incoherence in a pragmatist holding that there are true synthetic *a priori* judgements that we are justified in believing true, regardless of a lack of direct empirical evidence in favour of these judgements.

What is *not* relevant to the issue of whether some proposition is knowable synthetic *a priori* or not is what, in fact, *does* justify us in following the norm that we ought to believe that and act as if such principles are true. As long as we are so justified, and that justification does not come from our experience of the instances that fall under the principle, the principle that we follow has the status of synthetic *a priori* knowledge.

What is unique about the pragmatist is the status of her answer to Kant's guiding transcendental question concerning how synthetic *a priori* knowledge is *possible*. That is, the pragmatist differs from other transcendental philosophers

regarding the *status* of her answer to the question of what it is that does justify our synthetic *a priori* knowledge. The pragmatic understanding of the status of this knowledge is unique in two respects. As we have seen, for the pragmatist, it is only our experience of the success of agents who act on certain universal principles concerning objects which explains to us the apparent 'necessity' of those principles, why it is that we should hold those principles true even in the face of apparent counter-evidence. So, for the pragmatist, our transcendental knowledge of how it is possible for us to have synthetic *a priori* knowledge is not, ultimately, *itself a priori*. Rather, it is based on experience and thus *a posteriori*. This difference in status implies a second difference. Because, for a pragmatist, our reasons for believing that we ought to believe, for example, that every event has a cause have to do with our experience of the utility of this belief, our knowledge that that belief is true is itself less than apodictic. That is, what we believe when we believe the Second Analogy to be true is that it is universally the case that events have causes. Because it is rational to hold this belief, we are justified in believing in any given case that an event has a cause, even though we have no information regarding that cause. But, since for the pragmatist we have less than apodictic *a priori* grounds for our belief in the truth of the Second Analogy, that belief is itself fallible: we might be wrong. So, for the pragmatist, the fact that it is possible to know the truth of the Second Analogy *a priori* does *not* imply that this knowledge itself is infallible. But this fact does not imply that there is anything incoherent in a pragmatist holding that there is indeed transcendental knowledge of Kant's second sort, e.g. synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects.

So it is not inconsistent to be a pragmatist and to hold that there is transcendental, that is, synthetic *a priori*, knowledge concerning ordinary objects. The trick is to hold that there are good, though less than apodictic *a priori*, reasons to hold that we ought to believe some universal propositions even in the face of a failure of direct evidence. Because for the pragmatist there is a distinction between the claim that every event has a cause and the claim that an agent ought to believe that every event has a cause, we can have good reasons to believe the latter even when we lack deciding reasons to believe the former. But because of the character of the claim that one ought to believe that every event has a cause, if one has reason to believe *it* one also has reason to believe that every event has a cause. The fact that the reasons for believing that one ought to believe that every event has a cause come what may are themselves reasons which might be undercut by further evidence in no way alters the fact that *what* such considerations give us reason to believe is *that* every event has a cause, come what may. That is, for a pragmatist, the evidence which might undercut the Second Analogy does not have to do with our experience of the causes of events, but rather has to do with the utility of our beliefs regarding the causes of events.

But what of transcendental knowledge of Kant's first sort, knowledge concerning how synthetic *a priori* knowledge of ordinary objects is possible? Well, the facile thing for a pragmatist to say in response to this question is just that if one *is* a pragmatist who believes that there *is* transcendental, that is, synthetic *a priori*, knowledge concerning ordinary objects, then there is no reason not to ask

Kant's question of how that knowledge is possible, and thus obtain transcendental knowledge of the first sort. Indeed, that is just what I have been doing here.[15] After all, Kant does not *say* that, to count as transcendental, answers to his question must themselves count as being known synthetic *a priori*. So the fact that pragmatic claims regarding how synthetic knowledge is possible are not thought to be *a priori* does not disqualify such claims as transcendental.

But one must admit that there *is* something facile about this response. Traditionally, transcendental questions concerning how it is possible to have *a priori* knowledge of ordinary objects have been answered by appeals to structural features of the intentions that are directed towards those entities. The necessary conditions on the possibility of intending ordinary entities are structural features of intentions directed towards those entities without which the intentions would not be the intentions they are. As I mentioned above, in Kant, when one knows how it is possible to know the truth of the Second Analogy *a priori*, *what* one knows is that to intend one event as the cause of another is to intend the two events as related according to a rule of temporal order, and to know that unless one intends something as having some such predecessor, one is not intending that entity as an *event*, that is, an alteration in an object, at all. But since these structural features are taken to be necessary to the intentions in question, it is natural to think that such features of intentions can only be grasped through some kind of non-empirical means. In Kant, these means are something akin to conceptual analysis of what it is to intend entities of various sorts, while in Husserl's phenomenology such analysis is replaced with an *a priori* analytic description of the intentions themselves. But, in both of the traditional cases, the *grounds* on which we are to answer the first sort of transcendental question, the question concerning how it is possible to know *a priori*, are themselves taken to be *a priori*.

Transcendental philosophy, then, involves the attempt to ground synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects on synthetic *a priori* knowledge of the necessary features of intentions directed towards those objects. Pragmatism, on the other hand, insists that we have less than *a priori* knowledge of how our synthetic *a priori* knowledge is possible. Does this difference not show that it is inconsistent to be both a pragmatist and a transcendental philosopher after all?

Not really. Transcendental knowledge of the first sort, that is, knowledge of how it is possible to have *a priori* knowledge of objects, is, according to Kant and his successors, *itself* an instance of synthetic *a priori* knowledge. The object of this knowledge is intentionality itself, and what one knows if one has this sort of transcendental knowledge is that it is necessary for an intention to be the intention it is that it have some feature or other. But a pragmatist has available for her use a perfectly good pragmatic way of understanding *that* sort of claim. To say that one has synthetic *a priori* knowledge that all intentions of some class 'O' have feature 'F' is, for a pragmatist, to say that, rationally, one always ought to believe that intentions of class 'O' have feature 'F', come what direct evidence may. That is, the pragmatist can hold that such propositions concerning intentionality are 'necessary' in just the same sense that, say, the Second Analogy is necessary.

There are reasons, independent of our experience of intentions, that we should hold that certain universal propositions concerning intentions are true, even in the face of apparent evidence to the contrary. How such transcendental knowledge of intentionality is itself possible is, of course, a different matter.

There is no reason a pragmatist cannot coherently assert that our knowledge of the structure of intentionality is itself synthetic *a priori*, or even assert that our knowledge of how it is possible for there to be synthetic *a priori* knowledge of objects is itself based on this synthetic *a priori* knowledge of intentions. All she needs to do is to repeat the same move she made before, except this time apply it to our knowledge of the structure of intentions. Our knowledge of the structure of intentions is embodied in universal judgements which are not supported by our experience of intentions, but these judgements are nevertheless necessary, that is, rationally justified. Just as long as the pragmatist *ultimately* appeals to the meta-norm that it is rational to believe those propositions that lead to successful action, and our *a posteriori* experience that following some principle does lead to success, in explaining how knowledge of such principles is possible, there is no reason that she cannot coherently maintain the existence at each level of synthetic *a priori* knowledge.

But what less than apodictic *a priori* grounds could support some synthetic *a priori* principle concerning intentionality? Here is an example. One might maintain that nothing could count as an agent that has beliefs unless most of that agent's beliefs were true. This, I take it, would be a synthetic *a priori* claim regarding a class of intentions, beliefs. Now for a pragmatist, one is entitled to say that some agent has beliefs only if one could recognize that agent as acting for some purposes or other. And there might be good but less than apodictic *a priori* grounds for holding that nothing could be recognized as acting for purposes unless most of that agent's beliefs were true. If this were the case, one would have supplied a pragmatic, less than *a priori* answer to the question of how it would be possible to have knowledge of a synthetic *a priori* claim regarding intentionality, in this case, the principle of charity. So, after all, it is possible for a transcendental philosopher to be a pragmatist even in regard to transcendental knowledge having to do with how it is possible to have *a priori* knowledge of objects, knowledge of the necessary conditions for intending entities.

What does all this have to do with Heidegger? If what I have been saying is right, then it is possible for a pragmatist to also be a transcendental philosopher. One of the many reasons Heidegger could not be a pragmatist cannot be because he is a transcendental philosopher. One *can* be both, and so Heidegger can be both. In the interests of fairness, however, I must now admit that there is a closely related claim to the one we have been examining which is true about what is inconsistent, and which is relevant to Heidegger. I mentioned earlier that I would return to a certain characteristic doctrine of the early Heidegger that I illustrated with a quote from *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. It is time to return to that doctrine and that quotation. 'The a priori character of being and of all the structures of being accordingly calls for a specific kind of approach and way of apprehending being – *a priori cognition*. The basic components of a priori cognition constitute what we call *phenomenology*. Phenomenology is the name for the method of ontology, that is, of scientific philosophy.'[16] This quote enunciates, as clearly as possible, the early Heidegger's understanding of and adherence to a certain philosophical method of justification that he calls 'phenomenology'. According to that method, it is possible to have *a priori cognitions* concerning categorial structures, including the structures of being. That is, phenomenology, as Heidegger understands it, involves the ability to have intuitions of the structure and nature of categorial intuitions which themselves yield *a priori* reasons to believe that there are certain ways of understanding what it is to be without which one could not intend any being. From this it follows immediately that, in so far as Heidegger is a phenomenologist, he believes that our knowledge of how it is possible for us to have synthetic *a priori* knowledge is *ultimately* synthetic *a priori* itself. And, as we ought to have recognized by now, no pragmatist could believe *that*, on pain of inconsistency.

Since pragmatism and transcendental philosophy are in fact compatible, it is false to say that Heidegger could not consistently be a transcendental pragmatist. What one can say truly is that because pragmatism, transcendental philosophy and phenomenology are inconsistent, it is incoherent for anyone, including early Heidegger, to be a pragmatic transcendental phenomenologist. Now I am sure that many would go on from here to conclude that since Heidegger was surely a transcendental phenomenologist, he could not consistently be a pragmatist. But, as that other great pragmatist Quine has taught us, which of an inconsistent triad one chooses to reject is to some degree optional. And, since it seems so clear to me that most of what is interesting in early Heidegger is his pragmatism, and phenomenology is such a dubious method anyway, it is also clear to me that Heidegger could not be a phenomenologist because he was (or should have been) a transcendental pragmatist.

Notes

1 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, A11/B25.
2 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A720/B748.
3 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B41.
4 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B232.
5 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A158/B197.
6 Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982, p. 20.
7 Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 52.
8 Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 20.
9 Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, trans. T. Kisiel, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1985, p. 79.
10 Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 15.
11 Later pragmatists such as Sellars have pointed out that, while the action-guiding character of beliefs is central, there are other conditions that must be met if an agent is going to count as having beliefs of the human type or knowledge. The issues here are complex and need not detain us now.
12 Mark Okrent, *Heidegger's Pragmatism*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1988.
13 Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 159.

14 Christine Korsgaard, 'The Normativity of Instrumental Reason', in Garrett Cullity and Berys Gaut (eds), *Ethics and Practical Reason*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 245–9.

15 I have also argued in the past, and would defend today, that it is possible to know *a priori* that every agent capable of intentions must satisfy certain universal and necessary conditions, and thus possible to come to have *a priori* knowledge concerning the meaning of the being of any intentional agent, just as Heidegger thought. And if this is the case, it should also be possible to come to know how this *a priori* knowledge of intentionality is possible; that is, it should be possible to do what I have called transcendental semantics.

16 Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 20.