

I am no expert on Kant or Heidegger, though I think that my understanding for both of them is developing to the point where I can speak competently about their work. Nonetheless, I'm not sure that my argument here is entirely valid. It seems right to me, but if anyone knows of anything that I am overlooking, let me know.

Until I thought of this, I was much less accepting of McDowell's view about perceptual content. I tend to be sympathetic to the positions of Evans, Peacocke, Bermudez, and Cussins and have argued for the existence of nonconceptual content on several occasions. Now I'm not so sure, because, for me, Heidegger's ontology, among other things, seems to capture more of the architecture of phenomenality, than anything that contemporary Anglo-American philosophy has to offer. I'm no Heideggerian dogmatist, but it does prompt reconsideration of my position. Anyway, this arose out of a long-standing confusion I have had concerning McDowell's attribution of many of his ideas to Kant, which don't occur to me to be implications of what Kant says (though once again, admittedly, I could be wrong).

When McDowell claims that experience (intuition) involves operation of conceptual capacities (spontaneity) from its outset, he attributes the idea to Kant. However, Kant's claim is not that perceptual contents are conceptual by strict necessity, but rather that without concepts, intuitions are unintelligible (and conversely, that thought without content is empty—thus insignificant). But it seems clear that for Kant, the act of spontaneity is subsequent to intuition, or else what is judgment? Judgment is meant to be an act of understanding through a synthesis of intuitions and concepts. If McDowell is right to think that Kant considered the contents of perception to be conceptual through and through, then what significance is there in his maintaining (a) that a separate cognitive faculty is necessary to incorporate conceptual content into the synthetic unity of apperception, and (b) that it is semantically permissible to speak of intuitions and concepts as being even notionally separable?

McDowell's idea that the contents of experience are primordially conceptual is to be found more determinately stated (and with greater force than McDowell presents it) not in Kant's epistemology, but rather in the existential phenomenology of Heidegger. He states, "What we 'first' hear is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking wagon, the motorcycle... Dasein, as essentially understanding, is proximally alongside what is understood" (Being and Time §164).

In fact, Heidegger's account of language, cognition, and perception are not individual modes of understanding for Dasein, but rather are an amalgam which form a constitutive structure of Dasein's Being-in-the-world: understanding. The three are inherently entangled as concepts to such an extent that to speak of any one of them implies the other two as co-referents; that is, they are ontologically, although not ontically, co-extensive. The reason for this is that (i) Heidegger never speaks of the faculty of cognition explicitly, but a coherent account of it can be inferred apophatically from what he says about understanding; (ii) language and perception arise ontically as significations of assertion, which (assertion) in turn derives from interpretation, which in turn is a mode of understanding—as it (understanding) develops itself.

Thus, for Heidegger, understanding is a unitary structure, which forms our cognitive, linguistic, and perceptual capacities as a singular constituent of Dasein's Being-in-the-world. They are not modally distinguishable, and are therefore equiprimordial, since all three are in fact references to the same

existential: understanding. This means that, in Heidegger's terms, *perception* and *conception* are part and parcel of the same thing, and must always be found together, as the meaningfulness of Being-in-the-world. In other words, from the very outset of experience, the contents of perception already involve an operation of the conceptual capacities.