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Philosophy 514 Final

PART [1]: WHY WE HAVE TO TAKE CHEMISTRY

The explicit premises of the argument are these:¹

- 1) We make judgments of experience.
- 2) Judgments of experience are objective.
- 3) ∴ Judgments of experience are necessary.
- 4) The necessity of a judgment of experience is not due to the (mere) connection of perception.
- 5) ∴ Some additional element is required.
- 6) This additional element is not from experience.
- 7) This additional element must be pure.
- 8) Judgments are conceptual.
- 9) ∴ The additional element is pure concept(s).
- 10) ∴ The objectivity of a judgment of experience depends on pure concept(s).
- 11) This pure concept is “superadded” to those abstracted intuitions.
- 12) ∴ There must be a pure concept that determines the forms of judgment.
- 13) There are exactly 12 formal features of judgment.
- 14) There are exactly 12 pure concepts.
- 15) These forms of judgment are synthetic *a priori*.

The conclusion of the argument is that, contrary to the beliefs of Hume, synthetic *a priori* principles are possible. There can be knowledge about experience that is not derived from experience.²

The point of the argument is that the validity of synthetic, *a priori* statements gives subjects such as mathematics, metaphysics, and natural science a solid grounding in reason.

¹ Lecture, Prof. King, Mar. 5, 1992.

² Lecture, Prof. King, Feb. 27, 1992.

PART [2]: THE SKEPTIC VS. THE CRITIC

Hume's view differs from Kant's. Hume wrote skeptically (despite blasting the skeptics³), stating that we cannot know the nature of objects because neither experience nor reason can accurately record an impression that our minds can trust.⁴ We cannot turn to God, either; had He wanted us to know about objects, Hume reasoned, He would have made Himself clear.⁵

Hume didn't confirm anything; he wrote only that nothing could be confirmed. He said we might as well believe that things which are self-evident (in other words, appearances) are true because we have no way of knowing otherwise.⁶

Kant, on the other hand, wrote with certainty about the existence of things-in-themselves; that these were properties of an object that we would never and could never know about. He clearly delineated a boundary between appearances and things-in-themselves.⁷ Appearances are what we are able visualize through experience; things-in-themselves are the reality behind the appearance that we cannot know.

The difference between Hume and Kant is not wide at all. The only division that I see is that Kant states explicitly and with confidence what Hume only alludes through his skepticism. I think this division is notable because there is a difference between speculation (Hume) and certainty (Kant).

³ *Enquiry*, §12, pg. 104.

⁴ *Enquiry*, §12, pg. 105.

⁵ *Enquiry*, §12, pg. 105.

⁶ I believe that this was what Prof. King gave as Hume's position in his lecture of Feb. 18, 1992.

⁷ *Prolegomena*, §§30-33, Aca 312-315.

PART [3]: THE ULTIMATE CONFUSION OF THINGS

(I have had endless problems with this question because I am not aware of, and could not find, any direct, formal argument Leibniz may have made regarding sufficient reason. I have had to piece together my own, which may not be sufficiently reasoned⁸ to make this acceptable.)

Leibniz uses the term “sufficient reason” to describe God’s justification to choose one object instead of another (exs. this world over another world; or one monad over another).⁹

Leibniz’s argument for this principle goes as follows¹⁰: There is a Supreme Being who made the world. He had the power to choose to make any world. By His nature, he must have chose the best possible world¹¹. To have chosen this world, then, He must have judged this one the best. Therefore, every thing distributed on this world must be here because God judged it best. God must have a sufficient reason for judging it best, and it is not necessary that we understand that reason for it to be sufficient. There is no chance and no randomness¹²; only God’s well-considered, pre-conceived plan.

This relates to knowledge because all the things we can know were chosen by God, and so there must be a sufficient reason for those things. Without sufficient reason, there would be nothing to know about.

Hume would stop this argument right at its beginning. “Not only the will of the supreme Being may create matter; but, for aught we know *a priori*, the will of any other being might create it. . .”¹³

Hume had two categories of knowledge: matters of fact and relations of ideas¹⁴. Hume considered traditional metaphysics, which did not fit into

⁸ Yes, God help me, the pun was intended.

⁹ *Monadology*, §§50-55.

¹⁰ Taken from *Origination*, pgs. 149-50.

¹¹ *Discourse*, §3.

¹² Lecture, Prof. King, Jan. 21, 1992.

¹³ *Enquiry*, §12, Footnote 69.

¹⁴ Lecture, Prof. King, Feb. 25, 1992.

either of these categories, to be bankrupt.¹⁵ Also, he specifically wrote¹⁶ that beliefs based on the existence of God (theology) are best considered as matters of faith, not matters of reason.

Kant also believed traditional metaphysics was bankrupt, calling it a “fruitless and perverted cultivation”¹⁷ beyond saving. He offered his “critical philosophy” as a replacement. His reply to Leibniz was that we cannot use the principle of sufficient reason because it is a synthetic argument that metaphysicians had never proven *a priori*.¹⁸ Kant also said that we cannot conceive of subsistence, which he described as “the necessity that at the foundation of the existence of things there lies a subject which cannot itself be the predicate of any other thing.”¹⁹ By this, he seems to be saying that the idea of God as the originator and ultimate reason of all things is beyond our ability to reason and prove. Therefore, Kant, like Hume, kills Leibniz’s argument at the beginning.

¹⁵ Lecture, Prof. King, Feb. 18, 1992.

¹⁶ *Enquiry*, §12, pg. 114.

¹⁷ *Prolegomena*, Solution, Aca 365.

¹⁸ *Prolegomena*, Solution, Aca 368.

¹⁹ *Prolegomena*, §27, Aca 310.

PART [4]: WHERE THERE'S SMOKE. . .

(Scene: LEIBNIZ, HUME, and KANT are at a barbecue hosted by their neighbor, JONES. As JONES throws yet another rib on the grill (remember, HUME is one of the guests), a flame flares up from the coals, and smoke pours from the Weber. JONES, embarrassed, makes a common sense observation.)

JONES: Must have been a hell of a flare to have produced all that smoke!

HUME: (always skeptical, but always eating) Why bo oo tink dat?

JONES: Well, it stands to reason, doesn't it? Fire always produces smoke. . .

LEIBNIZ: Jones, God has blessed us by bringing us to you, the best of all possible cooks,²⁰ but you are no metaphysician. Let me explain your error:

Fire and smoke are not related elements. They are monads created by God as part of the best possible world he created for us. These monads, which are similar to what you would call atoms, work together in a pre-established harmony given to us by the goodness of God.²¹ Fire does not cause smoke; there can be no causal relationships because all happenings are part of the order determined by God. The monads do not interact at all with each other.²²

HUME: Stop confusing the poor man, Fred! You're just as bad as that syphilitic windbag King George you gave us!

Jones, your mistake is fully understandable, but stupid nonetheless.²³ When you look at fire, and you see the smoke that always seems conjoined with the flames, it is easy to think that, yes, the two are causally connected. But you can't prove it!! If you consult your original impression – one of the perceptions that is the source of all your knowledge of the world – you will

²⁰ This particular form of satire is copied from *Candide*. [Remember, “each source. . . must be given proper citation.”]

²¹ Lecture, Prof. King, Jan. 14, 1992.

²² *Monadology*, §§6–8.

²³ The following is derived from *Enquiry*, § VII.

find that all you can say with certainty is that the second event, smoke, followed the first event, fire. Even if we assumed that fire caused smoke, we would not know how. We are profoundly ignorant of either causality or non-causality; the word “connection” can have no meaning for us because it is only one more impression that our more concrete impressions tell us nothing about it. To say otherwise is groundless arrogance put forth by pernicious. . .

KANT: Please, Herr Hume! Your arguments, though useful to rouse the sleeping, are grating once one has awoke!

I agree with you, Davey, that we cannot use reason to comprehend the possibility of causality.²⁴ How can we say, then, that two substances, in this case smoke and fire, with separate existences can depend on each other?

The answer is simple: Despite the lack of reason that causality involves, we humans still persist in using causal relations to connect substances because without it we can have no cognition of an object.²⁵ This leads me to think that causality is a built-in part of the human thinking process, which we cannot avoid using.²⁶

But we can only use this causality to learn about how the appearances of objects relate to one another; we can learn nothing of their true natures, or as I call them, their “things-in-themselves”. So causality is only valid for what we perceive; not for what actually is.

Now, my dear Jones, do you have any questions?

JONES: Only one. Would any of you care to produce smoke without lighting a fire? Or shall I have HEGEL light a fire under you?

²⁴ *Prolegomena*, §27.

²⁵ *Prolegomena*, §28.

²⁶ Lecture, Prof. King, Feb. 25, 1992.