

(SPOS)

" Kant's Aim —
Did He succeed? —

Phil IV

John Shaw

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Good.

What did Kant try to do in his Critical Philosophy?
Did he succeed?

"Metaphysics has been the battlefield of endless conflicts. Dogmatism at first held despotic sway; but from time to time scepticism destroyed all settled order of society... and now a widespread indifference prevails. Hence has metaphysics been so fortunate as to strike into the pure path of science, but has thus groping about, and groping too among mere ideas. What can be the reason of this failure? Is a science of metaphysics impossible? Then why should nature disagree us with a matter lingering after it, as if it were one of our most important concerns? nay more, how can we put any faith in human reason if in one of the very things that we most strive to know, it not merely forsakes us, but lures us on by false hopes only to cheat us in the end? Or are there any indications that the true path has hitherto been missed, and that by starting again, we may yet succeed where others have failed?"... ©

At the time of Kant, empirical philosophy, having been taken to its logical conclusion by Hume, had reached a position of complete scepticism. There was no such thing as a universal and necessary judgment. It simply could not be derived from experience. Unwritten dogmatism was making judgments that would not bear examination. They were contradictory. The "Transcendental Philosopher" wished to mediate between the two positions. He wished to avoid the scepticism of the empiricists and establish the validity of universal and necessary judgments. He wished to establish the validity of causality and substances.

Kant "Critique of Pure Reason" (preface) by John Watson.

He also wished to limit these a priori judgments. He proposes an examination of the realms to which these judgments can be applied without contradiction. To do this he must begin "afresh."

By starting afresh, on some new path, Kant believes that he can do away with the scepticism arising from the two schools of philosophy. He sees that both mathematics and science have made tremendous strides. Perhaps they have a secret that metaphysics have missed.

"It seems to me that the intellectual revolution of which at a bound, mathematics and physics became what they now are is so remarkable, that we are called upon to ask what was the essential feature of the change ... at to try at least to apply to metaphysics as far as possible a method that has been successful in other sciences of reason." ① ...

In mathematics the true method was found not in the practice of inspecting, but as say, the visible figures of the triangle, or to analyse the laws conception of it and from this to read off its properties, but to bring out what was necessarily implied in the conception that had been formed a priori. Much later, physical science discovered its true procedure. Reason, must itself lead the way with principles of judgment based on fixed laws and force nature to answer its questions. "It was seen that reason has weight only in that which it produces after a plan of its own." While reason can do nothing surely of itself get that which it has itself put into nature must be its guide to the discovery of all that it can learn from nature." ②

Let this apply in metaphysics. The objects of experience must conform to our knowledge. In the past.

metaphysics has assumed that knowledge must conform to objects. Even as Copernicus found it impossible to fully explain the action of the heavenly bodies assuming that they revolved around the earth, Kant finds it impossible to establish the validity of reason this basis. As Copernicus changed the centre of reference and supposed the earth to revolve instead of the heavens, so in metaphysics Kant changes the centre of reference. The sensible object, all objects of possibly experience must conform to the constitution of our faculty of perception. This "Copernican Revolution" as it is called, is the centre of Kant's philosophy. An a priori element in knowledge is therefore possible. It is the form of all experience and knowledge. It is universal and necessary, because it is not a habit of experience, but a constitution of the faculty of perception and knowing. All possible experience will therefore necessarily have to conform to it. Pure reason in searching for any possibly a priori judgments is searching for that part of experience and knowledge which it, itself contributes.

This same act of revolution, limits pure reason with its a priori judgments. It is a regulative faculty for objects of possible experience. In as much as it is a determination of things, it cannot be concerned antecedently to our perception of those things themselves. Therefore these a priori judgments are valid only as they establish regulative principles for objects of experience. They are invalid, if employed as constitutive principles or applied to objects that have not come under the forms of experience. By assigning a field to the valid judgments of pure reason, Kant limits them to that field.

The above is the key to the "Critique of Pure Reason". As he goes on he simply works out the details. He does, however, admit that objects as experienced and regulated by the constitution of the faculty of perception, ~~do~~ not conform

the whole of reality. Although we can have no knowledge of it, there is a realm of things in themselves, which act upon our sensitivity. Admittedly, it is true that it is impossible of being known, for if it was known it would have to conform to the conditions of knowing and not be a thing in itself. This realm does exist however, according to Kant, to supply the content of experiencing. There must be something there to supply the matter to be regulated. Furthermore, in that realm, no conditions such as regulative objects of experiencing need, or indeed can, apply. Should a moral philosophy come along and establish such things as God, freedom and immortality, things which unconditioned as they are cannot possibly come under sphere of knowledge, there still remains a realm where they can be established unchallenged by reason.

To sum up then, Kant thinks he has done the following. He believes he has made materialism and spiritualism impossible for ever. He believes he has avoided the scepticism arising out of both. Because of his "Copernican Revolution" he can establish a priori judgments as regulative principles of knowledge, universal and necessary, and limit a priori judgments to the realm of possibly experiencing leaving room for an unchallenged faith in God, freedom, and immortality.

The first part of his "Critique" is called the Transcendental aesthetic. In it he deals with the forms of perception:- Universal and necessary a priori judgments that can apply to all objects perceived. For all perception, external and internal, time is a necessary form. It is a prerequisite to all experiencing. Upon the occasion of every perception there is a relationship of before and after, this one principle of order. Time is not a thing, it is not a property of things. It exists on the occasion of perception. It is a regulative principle, determining all things perceived.

We can have no perception or knowledge outside of it. Nor can it apply to any sphere except that of possible experience because, as it is only a determination of things, it cannot be perceived antecedently to those things. For external perception, the same is done for space. The valid a priori judgment is that all knowledge will come under the forms of space and time. To this extent it anticipates all experience, and it limits space and time to experience. There is a realm, of objects in themselves, where space and time cannot apply.

Having established and limited this form of perception - Time, Kant does wonders with it. He turns next to the Transcendental Logic, both analytic and dialectic, but he is still dealing with perception and sensation. Instead of the forms of perception he is investigating the principles of understanding. However "concepts without concepts are blind, concepts without percepts are empty" "the understanding can perceive nothing and the senses can think nothing." What applies to perceptions they will apply to concepts. Thus the final a priori judgment will respect to the understanding is that it will have to which of the forms of space and time. Concepts are a process of subsumption, a function of unity. By working back from four classes of judgment Kant discovers the universal and necessary elements of knowledge. They are the categories of the understanding or forms of thought. They originate in the mind of the subject. They are the elements of an object thought which are supplied by the reason. Therefore they are a priori. Pure reason can determine them for what they are because they are of itself. They make up the constitution under which all thought necessarily functions. Why the transcendental analytic, Kant discusses the types of judgment that can be made a priori will regard to the understanding.

02.04.2020

One of the first two types of judgment, he gets two categories which have to do with the experiencing of ideal objects. He calls them mathematical. They are quantity and quality. The principles of pure understanding which are derived from them are two principles which have to do with perception.

They are a priori judgments that can be made of all objects of experience in isolation. The axiom of perception is that all perceptions are extensive magnitudes. Space and time are the pure forms of all perception and therefore to be perceived an object must come under them. All perceptions then conform to space and time. The second one which is an a priori anticipation of observation, states that in all phenomena, the real, which is the object of sensation, has intensive magnitude or degree. He is here dealing with the sensation which occupies a ~~portion~~ of time. These sensations are present in different degrees.

"It is remarkable that if quantity in general only a single quality - the quality of continuity can be known a priori, but that if quality, with reality of phenomena nothing more than the intensive quantity can be known a priori which all else has to be learned from experience." ①

The other two categories are called dynamic. They have to do with objects in relation. The "Analogies of perception" are derived from the categories of relation. They state that all phenomena stand and must stand under the rules which govern their relations to one another in a unit of time. All knowledge is a synthesis of the complex contents of time. This function acts under a constitution. The three modes of time are permanence, succession and co-existence. As a presupposition of change, there must be inferred a ground for the continuing identity of the object. Therefore

change would be alteration. Being would come out of non being. There must be something which abides in time in contrast to the changes of its attributes, otherwise an experience of change would be impossible. Substances then is not a fiction of thought but a necessary condition of all thought. Substance is a form of the understanding.

Because time is a series, it contains events. An observation of an event is an apprehension of succession. All is the observation of a relation in a time series. It is not a static apprehension of contiguous in time, but the apprehension of a dynamic event. Therefore the causal connection is a form of understanding. A valid a priori judgement is that all objects of experience will be in a causal relationship. Causality is a universal and necessary form of the understanding.

The unity of our experience also depends necessarily on the necessity of objects which co-exist in space. There is mutual conditioning all the way around.

Hence Kant has established substance & causality as valid a priori principles of the understanding. As forms of thought they are real, but are limited thus.

In his final principle of the understanding, Kant discusses the conditions under which we experience objects. They are the conditions of empirical thought. They decide whether an object conforms to the categories or not.

As a fundamental basis for all experience however, there must be some unity. The synthesis necessary for all perception as well as knowledge is impossible without something which is self identical. There must be an ego which is a unity. As a precondition to all experience, there must be a transcendental unity of apperception. The categories are the functions of this synthesizing transcendental ego. This ego is the supreme principle of understanding.

Thus we have substance, causality, the self, time etc. well established as valid a priori elements in knowledge. The empiricists certainly seem to be answered by the Transcendental Philosopher.

Is the Transcendental dialectic Kant discovers the illusion that pure reason commits because of its very nature. He here is limiting the pure reason to the realm of phenomena where only it is valid. Because of its native pure reason is searching for the totality of conditions which will give the unconditional. Understanding is a faculty of rules, however, dealing with experience. Experience is conditioned and any attempt to use its forms to establish God, freedom or immortality, is false. The H. yper physical use of pure reason is constitutive while its only valid use is regulative. To know the unconditional is impossible, because knowledge means conditioning. To call the ego a substance is making a form of knowing an object of knowledge. This is invalid.

The application of the pure reason to objects in themselves is invalid, because once it is applied the objects are no longer objects in themselves but phenomena. Thus any use of the pure reason in fields such as this yields contradictions as illustrated by the antinomies. Thus knowledge of God, freedom, or immortality is impossible.

This transcendental dialectic does more than this however. It means that causality does not apply to the realm of things in themselves. The empirical element in experience is considered to be derived from it. At this point the mighty Transcendental philosophy collapses. The Copernican Revolution has still not solved the mind-body problem. The establishment of the validity of the causal nexus has meant its limitation. Limited as it is it cannot be called in to explain the transition of a thing in itself to a sensation. Once again there are

seems left out of the Philosophy jig saw puzzle.

Hant has succeeded in establishing and limiting a priori knowledge to that part of experience which reason itself puts into experience. He has not succeeded however in solving the mind-body problem, the interaction of the noumena and the transcendental unity of apperception is still a mystery.