

Kant, Irrationalism and Religion

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Abstract Kant is a philosopher, which dealt with human recognition. He has been considered as an irrationalist. Many philosophers think that he used the irrationalism to justify the trust in religion and to protect the religion from the science. In this paper I shall take a view to the philosophy of Kant on recognition and to the question if Kant is an irrationalist or not. Did he use the irrationalism to protect the religion from science? This paper shall show that Kant wasn't an irrationalist, but he simply tried to determine the limitations of the recognition and to distinguish between what we recognize and what we simply believe. His philosophy of recognition didn't aim at protecting the religion from the science. He tells us in some passages of the book "The critique of pure reason" that when his theory would be accepted, the men wouldn't conclude of what they couldn't know really, and maybe the religion would have some benefits from it. But I think that he meant the trials to prove either the existence of God or the non-existence of God.

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Kant was firstly influenced in his philosophy by Leibnitz and later by British empiricism. By Locke and Hume he came to the conclusion that recognition stems from the senses and he also received from Leibniz's belief that although the mind does not have any idea born, she has the innate abilities that give shape to the experience brought to it by the senses. Fundamental problem that Kant raised was on how to reconcile the absolute security that gives us mathematics and physics with the fact that our knowledge comes from the senses? Kant's goal was to build the foundations of a new rationality that would be incontestable. In efforts to achieve security he assumed that the mind has three skills: 1. Reflection 2. Will 3. Feelings and he devoted a critique to each of them. Kant's critique created for both rationalists and empiricists a method of transcendent or critical method, by which he meant a study of its reason, an "investigation of pure reason" to see if its judgments have universality beyond human experience and again, are necessary and related to the human experience. The logic involved in these trials may be absolutely safe and can also be applied to the world of things. Kant believed that the thought, feeling and the will are forms of reason and he decided the transcendental principles of the reason in the realm of thought, the transcendental moral principles to the will and the transcendental principles of beauty in the realm of feeling.

In this paper we will try to treat if Kant is an irrational that used irrationalism to justify the religion. To clarify this we must first demonstrate his theory of knowledge and whether Kant was indeed irrational and then if he used this irrationalism to make room for faith in religion. Kant says that his goal of writing the "Critique of Pure Reason" was to put Metaphysics on the basis of sound and to transform it into a science. In the first entry of "Critique of Pure Reason" he writes: Our age is the age of criticism, to which everything must be subjected. The sacredness of religion, and the authority of legislation, are by many regarded as grounds of exemption from the examination of this tribunal. But, if they on they are exempted, they become the subjects of just suspicion, and cannot lay claim to sincere respect, which reason accords only to that which has stood the test of a free and public examination." (Kant,2002 pg.7,)

Kant sought for the metaphysics to achieve the security of mathematics and logic. He was not a skeptic who saw the world as mere sensory appearance, but quite the contrary he was prompted to write this book as a response to the skepticism of David Hume. Kant aims to determine whether it can reach a metaphysical knowledge, and if so whether it can be arranged in a science and what its limits are. The main aim of th Pure Critique is to demonstrate how the answers to these questions can be achieved, provided that the subject is reviewed under a new angle. Kant's own words regarding this are: "This attempt to alter the procedure which has hitherto prevailed in metaphysics by completely revolutionizing it . . . forms indeed the main purpose of this critique. . . . It marks out the whole plan of the science, both as regards its limits and as regards its entire internal structure" (Kant,2002). "The critique of pure reason . . . will decide as to the possibility or impossibility of metaphysics in general, and determine its sources, its extent, and its limits—all in accordance with principles. . . . I venture to assert that there is not a single metaphysical problem which has not been solved, or for the solution of which the key at least has not been supplied" (Kant, 1998).

Kant divided metaphysics into two parts: the first part deals with problems that are knowable by experience such as causality, while the second part deals with the whole in general and as such we do not refer to an object that we are able to perceive, because we cannot perceive the universe as a single thing. According to Kant we can have confidence only

in the first part of metaphysics (general metaphysics) and it may have scientific certainty because its facilities are given in experience and is subject to verification. On contrary, the metaphysics of the second part (special metaphysics), which is so abstract that it overcomes any kind, cannot achieve scientific safety because its concepts are 'blank'.

In the first part, metaphysics deals with everything within the universe and that it is accessible to the senses, while the metaphysics in the second half deals with the universe as a whole and undetected by the senses. Of the first questions can get a correct answer while the latter not, even though these questions is well to be made.

Kant was primarily interested in clarifying whether metaphysics is possible as a science or not. He was convinced that mathematics and natural sciences were true science. But is metaphysics a science?

What Kant must do to achieve a scientific metaphysics was to identify the criteria for a science and then to produce metaphysical conclusions that met these criteria. Kant believed that the first criteria of a true science were that its conclusions were both necessary and universal, as much as judgments in mathematics, and geometry are. To have such universal judgments, it's necessary to find out how they are produced, and to do this we need to see how mathematicians and scientists achieve this. When Kant asks how metaphysics is possible, he is asking how a science of everything that exists can reach the safety of pure mathematics and natural sciences. To understand this we must understand what the concept of science is and what its elements to Kant are. We must understand the use of this concept as the standard for determining whether metaphysics in both its parts is a real science.

Kant conceives the science as a system of real judgments in a specific field of research. All judgments Kant divides into two types, empirical and a priori. An empirical judgment is the judgment coming from experience and can be verified by the observation itself. Kant calls all not empirical judgments as a priori. Example of an a priori judgment is: 'All triangles have three angles ". We verify this by observing not all triangles, but by analyzing what the subject to the judgment 'triangle' means. We find that the real concept of the 'triangle' is already incorporated to the concept of triangle, which is predication of our judgment. It would be contradictory to deny that the triangle has three angles. A trial verified in this way is called by Kant analytical; predicate simply explains the concept of the subject without adding anything new to him. All analytic judgments are a priori known without recourse to any particular type of experience. If all a priori judgments are analytic is another matter entirely.

On the other hand we get judgment "the apple is red". Analysis of the concept 'apple' is not leading us to the concept 'red'. We need to see the apple to understand the subject. This is an empirical judgment and all empirical judgments Kant called synthetic, because they connect the subject with the predicate of the ways that are not analytical, the predicate adds a new recognition of the concept of the subject. All empirical judgments are synthetic; the survey supports the connection between subject and predicate. If all synthetic judgments are empirical-in other words if the observation is always the one that provides the link for the synthesis- is from Kant's view of a very different matter.

If metaphysics is a science consisting of judgments, these judgments are empirical or a priori? First they need to contain any existence as such, so they must be universal and necessary. For example, let's look at a judgment of metaphysics in the first part: "everything has a cause". We cannot allow any exception to this judgment. The opposite of it would be contradictory. Let's see a judgment that belongs to the metaphysics of the second part: "the universe is eternal". Even this judgment does not allow exceptions. This means that any empirical judgment is not metaphysical. They are a priori, but are they analytical?

Let's see once more the judgment "every event has a cause." Predicate here is not included in the concept of the subject. Let's see another judgment: 'the universe is eternal.' Even here the predicate is not included in the subject. So the typical judgments of metaphysics are synthetic and a priori. Even though they are necessary and universal, their predicates are not related to the subjects either by empirical observation or by logical connections. What makes them universal and necessary? What relationship may exist between subjects and predicate that comes neither from the experience nor is conceptual? How are synthetic judgments possible a priori?

To explain the a priori synthetic judgments Kant introduces the notion of pure intuition and differentiates it from the thought. He declares that there are two basic skills of human consciousness, intuition, which is directly aware of a specific individual unit, and the thought which is indirectly aware of things through their abstract types. Each of these skills is to recognize conditions that are a priori limitations on what you can know and what cannot know from their use. A priori conditions of intuition are time and space. A priori conditions of thought are, first, a priori conditions of valid conclusions, and secondly, the conditions a priori to think about objects, forms of judgment and categories.

Kant claimed that he had managed to put metaphysics of the first part in the way of science. As for Kant metaphysics is the study of everything in general, it is the study of everything that can be recognized. In this way, its findings will be a priori synthetic judgments applicable to anything that can be recognized. Kant called these researches for these a priori synthetic judgments "transcendental investigation ", while he is in search of conditions for recognition of all. To discover these terms means to discover to what extent is metaphysics possible as science.

In the first part of metaphysics we seek transcendental conditions, universal and necessary knowledge of all things, and we are committed to stay within the limits of possible experience. The knowledge in this area consists of a final judgment S is P . We are dealing with things or objects and therefore judgments cannot be simply concepts and hence must be synthetic, adding to our knowledge. Our goal in the first part of metaphysics is to bring these items under the categories. But the categories are in themselves as empty files. They can be filled only if we look them by experience. How can one give to an abstract concept an experiencing filling? It is easy to illustrate with a first empirical content. Kant states: "The possibility of experience is . . . what gives objective reality to all our *a priori* cognitions. Experience, however, rests on the synthetic unity of appearances, that is, on a synthesis according to concepts of an object of appearances in general. Apart from such synthesis it would not be knowledge, but a rhapsody of perceptions which would not fit into context according to rules of a completely interconnected possible consciousness. . . . Experience, therefore, depends upon *a priori* principles of its form, that is, upon universal rules of unity in the synthesis of appearances. (Kant 1998).

Have we arrived at the essence of metaphysics of the first part? Since the categories are *a priori* concepts that apply to each item, the corresponding rules for their application should be *a priori* rules with sensory content, unlike empirical content, a rule whose application is a retrospective sensory content. Kant is fulfilling his promise by providing us metaphysical principles which are synthetic *a priori*.

Since all our perceptions are temporarily connected to each other, rules of application of the categories will be expressed in terms of different temporary connections that we know are *a priori* possible. Each of these predications, Kant calls the schema. The Schema of the category of reality is 'being in a specified time.' The Schema of substance category is 'consistency of real in time.'

The result is vindication of metaphysics in its first part and the production of current metaphysical conclusions in this discipline. Kant believed that he had found the conditions that make possible empirical knowledge of things in general, and furthermore to show that metaphysics is possible as a science in the first part.

But, what about the constituency for metaphysics in the second- in other words the study of all things considered collectively? This includes rational cosmology, the study of the universe as a whole, rational psychology, the study of the soul as something which refers to any possible knowledge, and rational theology study of the Creator and manager of everything.

Kant argues that the attempt to demonstrate each of these issues is pointless. The major difficulty is that we cannot have an intuition of the universe as a whole, of the soul or God as a whole. Consequently, there is no possibility to connect the subject with the predicate in a synthetic judgment about these things, no way to verify or refute them. His conclusion is that although we may have certain knowledge in the first part of metaphysics we are excluded from the recognition in the second part of it. He reached this conclusion from a general argument, but he gives particular argument against the possibility of recognition in the second part of metaphysics. All of the alleged evidence for or against the thesis of the so-called science lead to logical absurdities. The whole universe, God, soul, his own free will and immortality can be thought of, but cannot be recognized, and the same can be said about things in themselves. All these things are noumena or simply understandable.

Kant made the distinction between phenomenal and the noumenal reality. There is a difference between things we perceive and those that really do exist. The things we perceive he calls a phenomenon, while those that actually exist he calls noumena. Not only a phenomenon can be addressed to two different noumena (when two different things look the same) but also two different phenomena can be addressed to a single phenomenon (when the same thing looks different in different perspectives).

Noumenon is a physical object and the phenomenon is how it looks. We cannot have any idea, what noumena are. We cannot know what is behind appearance, behind the information we receive from our senses. We cannot talk about what exists, if we don't refer to phenomenal reality. We cannot know neither where nor noumena are, if they exist. We do not know for sure, if there is any different reality outside the reality we perceive. We cannot ever have real knowledge about noumenon in Kant's opinion.

Kant uses the word "knowledge" to refer more to what we know about the phenomenon than what we know about noumenon. This may seem like a contradiction: should not recognition be for real things, rather than simply for their appearance? But, the recognition for real things is impossible according to Kant, because we have no transcendental insight. We can think about real things, we can form beliefs about it, but we cannot have any knowledge about it because our knowledge of the world has only one source: the sensory data. (There are also other types of recognition but they do not apply to the world but only on the concepts and abstractions as mathematics.). Since all our knowledge about the world is created by the sensory information and the sensory data are all phenomenal, then all our knowledge about the world is knowledge about the phenomena and not about noumena.

I think Kant meant that although the phenomenon may be reason to talk about how something really is, only phenomena are not sufficient to show that something exists because the existence is the only feature noumena. To tell the truth one cannot have certain knowledge to show that something exists, we can only have faith that it exists. This means rocks and trees, as well as means God and the soul, but the difference is that for the trees and rocks it is not important if noumena actually exist. Even if a stone is nothing but a phenomenon, it kills again if someone hits with it, so I have to bow to avoid. Ultimately even my own head is also a phenomenon. No matter what is beyond what we know, because everything we have in the physical world are only phenomena, and this is what really counts.

What can we know about things in themselves and other noumena as: God and soul? It is possible to know something about things in them, that they may not be space-time or be recognized by the application over to the categories. But this does not tell us how they are. Kant thought that we have a secure knowledge of things in themselves, that they exist, that they affect the way they affect the senses and contribute (help) content as opposed to the empirical form of recognition. We know that they exist by the fact that it would be absurd to talk about appearance if would not be out of something.

We don't know anything else about noumena. We do not know whether God exists or if everything is fixed or if we have free will, etc.. This does not mean that these concepts do not have a function. The concept of the universe as a whole, the concept of a legislator to the concept of rule and power over the universe, even though unverifiable, can serve as ideas of reasoning – as Kant calls them, that are regulatory to unify all knowledge into a system.

Let us assume that we cannot know anything about noumena: is there any justification for believing that they exist or have this or that feature? By doing this question Kant did the distinction between belief and verification of a justification to accept it. The verification provides a full justification for accepting a belief and a refutation provides a justification to reject it. As long as we can prove or retort, the theoretical knowledge prevails and we are justified in accepting its results. But Kant thought he had shown that there are some things that cannot ever be prove or rejected. Then a question is arisen: is there any justification for believing than knowing?

Kant said that once to the theoretical reason is given to what is up, the priority of practice asserts its interests. Where theoretical reason is concerned with what is, practical reason is concerned about what should be. The theoretical reason could not give us knowledge about subjects that go beyond the experience, therefore we should deny all its claims in this area and give these practical reason issues to the people. Kant says, "I must, therefore, abolish knowledge, to make room for belief" (Kant, 1998). Deny the knowledge and no reason, for practical reason is part of the reason, and because it limits the confidence in the minimum of required arguments, in Kant's view, it is done to protect the morale -existence of God, freedom and immortality. Kant condemns the faith based on religious feelings.

If we understand Kant upon his words, it will be said that he was defending the Enlightenment, the reason and the warning of disaster to come, if these will be abandoned in the name of "feeling". Kant doesn't deny the recognition, it is not a irrationalist. Kant raises a theory of knowledge, which wants to create a scientific metaphysic, rather than makes room to believe in God (religion); he tells us what we can know and what is beyond the scope of human knowledge.

Kant had understood that his method would help religion. He writes that once one accept his theory, people will not disclose to unjustified conclusions on things that they cannot recognize and that religion would benefit from this, but I think he meant this as attempts to validate the idea that God exists or to prove that God does not exist.

What Kant tells us is: we cannot ever know for sure that God and soul exist because we cannot have accurate knowledge of the noumenal existence. This is not an expression of irrationality, but quite the contrary, is an attempt to use rational thinking in order to distinguish it from what we know and what we simply believe.

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