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A CRITIQUE OF KANT'S PURE REASON  
(AS APPLIED TO THEISTIC ARGUMENTATION)

BY

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You would enjoy the work of a Protestant neo-Thomist:  
Samuel R. Thompson, A Modern Philosophy of Religion  
(201 T 377m). Also some of Mascall's writings.  
Have you seen John Wild's An Intro to Catholic Philos.?

WHEATON COLLEGE

1958

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At the cross roads of modern philosophy stands the synthesis of Emmanuel Kant. Implicit in his reconciliation of the previously divergent streams of rationalism and empiricism are some tremendous and perhaps very devastating consequences for the theistic thinker. Hence the subject of our inquiry is to explore the epistemology and metaphysics of Kant with relation to Natural Theology.

*trans Smith, 1933*

First, a brief summary of his argument in The Critique of Pure Reason is necessary to present his case directly. For Kant all knowledge begins with experience, but it does not necessarily follow that it arises from experience (44). There are certain necessary a priori determinations of the mind independent of experience (45). Of these there are two kinds: analytic (definitional) and synthetic (predicate adds to concept of subject) (48). Now analytic judgements merely clarify our concepts while all judgements of experience are synthetic (49). So it is upon the synthetic that all our a priori knowledge ultimately rests (51). Hence, the general problem of pure reason is: how are synthetic a priori judgements possible (55)? To answer this we must form a new science, the Critique of Pure Reason (58). In this we must distinguish and discuss the two elements of knowledge, viz., sensibility and understanding. Through the former, objects are given to us; through the latter,

they are thought (61). When we examine sensibility we find two necessary conditions, viz., "space" and "time". It is evident that these concepts are not empirically derived for they are presupposed in all our thinking about outer appearances (68). Nor can we ever represent to ourselves their absence. They are a priori representations which necessarily underlie all appearances. Furthermore, space is that of which all things must be thought of as existing "in". "Space" then is the subjective condition of sensibility (71). It is not the form of an external reality but a predicate ascribed to appearance only. The same can be said of "time". Only on the a priori presupposition of "time" can things be thought of as simultaneous or successive (74). Hence, we conclude that "space" and "time" are not objective realities nor exist in such but are subjective forms of perception under which alone all things are known by us (76) and which make synthetic a priori propositions possible.

In general, then, we must observe that all our conceptions are of appearance and not of things-in-themselves. What this is remains entirely unknown to us (82). And it is indisputable that the form obscures the content so we have no way of knowing it directly (84,85). This is why in Natural Theology we are careful to remove the conditions of space and time from God. But this we could not do if they were the conditions of all things in themselves. If they were, then we <sup>would have to</sup> ~~must~~ make them conditions of God's existence also (90), which they obviously are not.

Thus synthetic a priori judgments are possible only by the forms and such judgments are valid only for objects of

possible experience (91).

Hence, all our knowledge comes from two fundamental sources of mind: the forms of perception and the categories of understanding. Through the first an object is given and through the second it is thought. Both are indispensable to knowledge. <sup>Both may be either pure or empirical.</sup> Neither has preference over the other. "Thoughts without content are empty and perceptions without concepts are blind" (93). Though they are inseparable yet they are not to be confused. The former is the science of Esthetics and the latter of Logic (95).

The clue to the understanding of these categories is the judgment (106). "We can reduce all acts of the understanding to judgments...the function of the understanding can, therefore, be discovered if we can give an exhaustive statement of the function of unity in judgments" (106). When we abstract all content from them and consider only their form, we find that they can be reduced to four heads: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Modality each of which has three subtitles (113). Now since the mind categorizes the spatio-temporal data it receives, there must be an a priori disposition of the mind which corresponds to each of these judgments (114). Hence, knowledge is only possible under the condition of the a priori forms and categories (138). This is the only possible alternative for if our concepts were derived from objects, then they wouldn't be a priori but empirical (149). So the conclusion is: "We cannot think an object save thru categories; we cannot know an object so thought save thru perceptions corresponding to these concepts" (173).

Under the application of these categories to the concrete

situation in the Analytic of Principles (180) we have the schemata or patterns produced by the structure of mind in general concepts (182) and the synthetic unity of apperception (whole complex of forms and categories) (192) the final outcome of which is a radical distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal. "The understanding can never transcend those limits of sensibility within which alone those objects can be given to us. Its principles are merely rules for the exposition of appearances, and the proud name of an Ontology...must, therefore, give place to the modest title of a mere Analytic of Pure Understanding" (264). Hence, outside the realm of possible experience we can have no synthetic a priori principles (265). And further, we cannot know things in themselves apart from the logical structure we superimpose on them in order to make them meaningful (266). In fact, if the categories were applied to things-in-themselves we would have to postulate a non-sensible judgment, but it is obvious that we have no such judgment (270).

Now when we turn to an application of the categories to the unity of our perceptions, we find that the concepts of pure reason lead us to a pseudo-rationality in all three forms of the dialectical reasoning process (315-328) known as the Paralogisms, (of self), Antinomies (of external world), and Ideals of Pure Reason (of God). Paralogisms are invalid conclusions drawn from the necessity of pure reason (329). We have first the paralogism of Substantiality: I, as a thinking being, am absolute subject of all my judgments and cannot be a predicate. Hence, by definition I am a "substance". But we have proven that

substance has no objective meaning and cannot be predicated of a thing in itself (335). The next concerns Simplicity. I am a thinking subject, and thought is indivisible. Therefore, I am a simple substance (337,338). But the content of all knowledge comes from experience and nowhere have we encountered a simple substance. The third is that of Personality. Self consciousness of numerical identity with oneself is by definition, personality. Now this is exactly what the soul has. Hence, it is a personality (341). But we only know objects subjectively not transcendently in themselves. I argue in a circle when I substitute my self-imposed unity (forms and categories) on myself as object (344). The fourth is of Ideality. We must doubt the existence of everything merely inferred as a cause of perception. Now all outer appearances are of such nature. Therefore, the existence of all objects of appearance is doubtful. But there must be real objects providing content thru senses for categories of understanding else our knowledge would be empty (i.e. only within the phenomenal) (348).

"Thus all controversy in regard to the nature of the thinking being and its connections with the corporeal world is merely a result of filling the gap where knowledge is wholly lacking to us with paralogisms of reason, treating our thought as things and hypostasizing them" (361).

Hence, pure reason is illusory (361).

Next we have the famous antinomies of pure reason. The paralogisms concerned the Self and these, the External World as reason applies to it. The first regards the universe as in space and time. It must be limited in both space and time since if it were not, then an eternity would have elapsed up to every

given moment. But this is impossible since an infinite series of successions would have passed away and an infinity can never be completed (397). On the other hand the world cannot have a beginning since this necessitates a time when it was not or an empty time. Now nothing can come to be when time is not since there is no condition of existence from which it may spring (397).

The second concerns the composition and simplicity of substance. Nothing exists but the simple or what is composed of the simple. For if we remove the simple parts, then nothing remains but the simple or that which is composed of the simple (402). On the other hand, a composite thing cannot be made up of simple parts for if it were, then each part must occupy a space and we would have as many spaces as parts. Space, however, is not made up of simple parts but of spaces. Hence, the absolutely first part would be simple and existing in space. But every<sup>th</sup>ing real which exists in space is composite which is self-contradictory (403).

The third antinomy deals with causality and freedom. It is necessary to envoke both to explain the appearances in the world. If the world is explained only in terms of necessary causes, <sup>then we must posit an infinite series of antecedent causes</sup> to guarantee these effects. But in such a case there would be no absolutely first cause to give causality to the series. Hence, there must be a spontaneity and freedom which produces the whole series (410). On the other hand, "There is no freedom; everything in the world takes place solely in accord with the laws of nature" (409). For every cause must itself be caused, and this allows for no freedom.

The last antinomy concerns a necessary being. Since the

sensible world contains a series of alterations in which things are conditioned upon antecedents, there must be an unconditional upon which all else is conditioned or a necessary being to sustain the contingencies (414). On the other hand, an absolutely necessary being nowhere exists for if one did, then there must be either a first beginning of the series of alterations or an infinite regress. "The former alternative, however, conflicts with the dynamical law of determination...and the latter alternative contradicts itself..." (416). Also, we cannot argue from empirical contingency to actual necessity (418). Hence, the transcendental dialectic as a whole favors a sceptical method in the employment of reason but not a scepticism (449).

Finally, in the Ideal of Pure Reason Kant discusses the arguments of speculative reason in proof for the existence of God (495). He allows reason only three ways to do this and no more: the cosmological, ontological, and teleological arguments. He prefaces the section by stating his intent is "to show that reason is as little able to make progress on the one path (concerning God)...as on the other (concerning external world)...and that it stretches its wings in vain in thus attempting to soar above the world of sense by the mere power of speculation" (500).

First, it is impossible to prove God's existence ontologically. For though thought is compelled to draw such a conclusion yet we can form no positive concept of a necessary being (501). "There is no difficulty in giving a verbal definition of the concept, viz., that it is something the non-



existence of which is impossible, but this yields no insight into the conditions which make it necessary" (501). If we have not a positive concept, we cannot be sure whether we are really thinking anything or not. Further, the alleged examples of such necessary concepts are all taken from judgments not from things. For example, three angles are necessary only under the assumption that we have a triangle. The delusion is the clever assumption of existence in a purely logical proposition (502). Hence, there is no contradiction in rejecting the concept of a necessary being if we also reject the existence of the being. If it is objected that God is the one great exception where existence must be included in the concept, then we reply: there is a contradiction in assuming existence in a thing where we are thinking solely with reference to its possibility (503). Furthermore, when we distinguish between a logical (analytical) and a real (synthetic) predicate, we find that "being is obviously not a real predicate; i.e., it is not a concept of something that could be added to the concept of a thing" (505). So we do not add the least to our concept of God when we say He exists but rather assume that He exists in our very concept of Him (505). Furthermore, in order to ascribe existence to a concept we must go outside our experience which we cannot do (506).

Likewise, we cannot prove God's existence cosmologically. Though professing to begin with experience (a posteriori) this argument makes the same ontological assumption in order to demonstrate the attributes of God, viz., that the concept ens realissimum is the only possible one in defining the nature of this necessary being (509). But we are assuming that we can

q) attempt to define God for concept of Being

infer the concept of an absolute necessity of existence from the highest reality. In which case the absolute necessity is an existence determined from mere concepts which is the ontological assumption. Furthermore, the cosmological proof involves a whole nest of dialectical assumptions which are destroyed by the transcendental critique (511). It involves the assumptions:

1) That we can infer the existence of a noumenal cause from a phenomenal effect; 2) That it is impossible to have an infinite series; 3) That we have arrived at a self-clarify concept on the grounds that we can conceive of nothing further; 4) That the logical and the real predicates are to be identified (512).

Why then does man infer a necessary being? It is a natural conclusion but not a necessary one. The reason is: "I can never complete the regress to the conditions of existence save by assuming a necessary being" (515). Hence, "absolute necessity is a necessity that is found in thought alone" (516). And this "concept of necessity is only to be found in our reason as a formal condition of thought; it does not allow of being hypothesized as a material condition of existence" (518).

Finally the teleological<sup>1</sup> argument is impossible since it is a ~~for~~gone conclusion that "all laws governing the transition from effects to causes...refer to nothing but possible experience, and therefore solely to objects of the sensible world, and apart from them can have no meaning at all" (519). Hence, "the physico-theological argument can never by itself establish the existence of a supreme being, but must always fall back upon the ontological argument to make good its deficiency" (521). The argument runs as follows: The universe  
1. Kant calls this the physico-theological argument.

manifests unmistakable signs of design, order, and purpose. But this order belongs to the universe only contingently. Therefore, there must exist a necessary cause of this order. Now the assumption is that design could not belong to the substance of the universe itself. To prove this we must resort to the ontological argument. Otherwise all we can prove is an Architect of the world hampered by the material with which he must work and not a Creator (522).

The sum of the whole matter is this:

X The physico-theological argument can indeed lead us to the point of admiring the greatness, wisdom, power, etc., of the Author of the world, but can take us no further. Accordingly, we then abandon the argument from empirical grounds of proof, and fall back upon the contingency which, in the first steps of the argument, we had inferred from the order and purposiveness of the world. With this contingency as our sole premiss, we then advance, by means of transcendental concepts alone, to the existence of an absolutely necessary being, and (as a final step) from the concept of the absolute necessity of the first cause to the completely determinate or determinable concept of that necessary being, namely, to the concept of an all-embracing reality. Thus the physico-theological proof, failing in its undertaking, has in face of this difficulty suddenly fallen back upon the cosmological proof; and since the latter is only a disguised ontological proof, it has really achieved its purpose by pure reason alone--although at the start it disclaimed all kinship with pure reason and professed to establish its conclusions on convincing evidence derived from experience. (523-524)

In conclusion, "I maintain that all attempts to employ reason in theology in any mere speculative manner are altogether fruitless..." (528). The only conclusions at which reason can arrive are logical and not existential (535).

But at the same time, while we cannot prove God's existence absolutely yet we can infer it relatively and in so doing it aids us in understanding things otherwise unknown (554). In other words, we must view the universe as if it were the effect of a supreme intelligence in order to achieve unity in our experience (555). But such a principle of systematic unity should be used regulatively only and ought not to be assumed that we approximate reality by means of it (563). Further in this connection, Kant distinguishes between "knowing" and "believing". The former never applies to the existence of God but the latter is justified. "My conviction is not logical, but moral certainty; and since it rests on a subjective ground, I must not even say, 'It is certain that there is a God, etc.', but 'I am morally certain, etc.'" (650). X

Now this moral certainty arises in the following way: by an analysis of our moral experience we discover an a priori structure of the will in which we can distinguish the categorical imperative of duty, viz., "act in conformity with that maxim, and that maxim only, which you at the same time will to be a universal law" (241). Hence, man's will is responsible to the moral law and perfect harmony between the two would be holiness (294).<sup>2</sup> Now such perfection is not possible at any

Moral Argument

2. This series of quotes and references is from the Critique of Practical Reason.

time in this life and yet the moral law demands it (295). Therefore, "pure practical reason forces us to assume such a practical progress toward perfection as the real object of our will" (295). Now this infinite progress is only possible if we presuppose an infinite existence for a rational personality. Thus immortality is necessitated by the moral law. Now "the moral law leads us to postulate not only the immortality of the soul but the existence of God" (296) as its adequate cause. It is evident that man does not cause the demand of duty which precipitates immortality, but God. So we must postulate the existence of a cause that shall be able to secure happiness in harmony with duty. "Or in other words, it is morally necessary to hold to the existence of God" (297).

A note of warning must be added: such a postulate as the existence of God is not theoretical dogma but a presupposition which is practically necessary. So we can see that practical reason is necessary to solve the paradoxes in which we find ourselves as a result of pure reason (299). Further, we can never understand why God must exist except thru the moral law (300).

What can be said in the face of these dogmatic declarations in defense of human reason and Natural Theology? Certainly Kant has left no room for a transcendental employment of reason regarding God's existence. First, we shall briefly consider three replies, then evaluate their relevance, and finally present our critique of Kant in defense of theistic argumentation.

CRITIQUE:

Robert Flint concedes that Kant disposes of Hume's agnosticism by proving that knowledge can't be reduced to

impressions but requires a necessary condition as well as a contingent sensation<sup>3</sup> (169), "but when he proceeds to argue that the constitutive principles involved in knowledge have to do only with phenomena..., but are wholly incapable of placing us face to face with things..., then he virtually undid his own work..." (169-170). Flint enumerates a number of points in which he disagrees with Kant's philosophy. 1) He prematurely adopts a faculty psychology, i.e., he assumes that the sensuous faculty can be separated from the faculty of cognition. This disjunction is not beyond dispute especially among experimentalists (173-174). 2) He does not justify his division of the form and matter into within and without respectively. "No sufficient reason has been shown for conceiving of space as given in the mind before all actual perception..." (174). 3) From the nature of "space" Kant draws two unwarranted conclusions: a) "That space represents no thing-in-itself. Now that inference was manifestly premature unless he himself knew what a thing-in-itself was..." (176). If we do not know substance, we cannot say what does or does not belong to it. Here is clearly manifest Kant's agnostic bias that molds his epistemology. b) "That it (space) is only a subjective condition of sense" (177). If space is not objective and external, then we can have no intelligent and consistent concept of objectivity and externality. Furthermore, "the most rational view of the universe will be that it lies, as Schopenhauer maintained, within the brain, or that it is one vast illusory concept" (179). 4) Kant's doctrine of time is

### 3. Flint, Agnosticism.

even more difficult. The human mind cannot but think of space as unbound and time as endless. This being so, it is irrational to regard them prior to proof as contradictory and inconsistent (181). 5) He attributes the content of all knowledge to sensory experience which reduces to "phenomenalism" (192). For this he gives insufficient reason (193). 6) His deduction of the categories is perfunctory and objectionable (194). 7) His reason for excluding categories to phenomena of sense is insufficient, viz., that otherwise meaning is impossible. This is begging the question (195). From this also followed his error of "referring all universality and necessity in cognition to an a priori and subjective origin" (196-198). 8) And finally Kant's view of reason is faulty in that: a) His concept of mind as a special faculty of illusion is unnecessary and improbable (201), b) He does not establish the utility or good of pure reason (203), c) What he calls reason's illegitimate sphere is its only proper sphere (204), d) "Pure reason" is quite an imaginary faculty while the human mind has no such faculty (205).

With respect to the paralogisms, Flint asserts that Kant bifurcates the merely logical subject and the real thing (207). This assumption of two subjects begs the question. Man has but one ego, real, living, and self active (208). "This knowledge of self is inseparable from all other knowledge whatsoever;... the cornerstone of epistemology,...is at once real and relative" (210).

Concerning the antinomies, Flint proposes that they follow necessarily from his epistemology, viz., that the "antinomies of reason...necessarily arise from our inveterate habit of con-

*{ Can be unaware of what you don't know  
but must be aware of what you can't know*

founding our own laws of thought with independent experience" (212). But this distinction is nonsensical for "there can be an ignorance only of that of which there can be a knowledge" (214). Hence, Kant does not solve the antinomies but dogmatically asserts them rather than critically inquiring into them (215). All of the antinomies are pervaded by the illogical. The first is mere "verbage" not a "demonstration" in its second proposition. The second contains a truism in its first proposition. As a whole it is confused and aimless. The second proposition is a paradox. The third antinomy involves no real contradiction. There is no proof given that the universe does not have room for both necessity and freedom (215). The fourth contains an absurd antithesis; its proof is irrelevant. "In short he has in no wise made out that reason in theorizing on the universe necessarily falls into self-contradictions, and has made it apparent that his belief in self-contradiction arose largely from the irrational separation of the phenomenal and the noumenal..." (216).

Kant concludes that the Ideals of Pure Reason are no more than a dialectical illusion (217). The existence of God is tracable to a disjunctive syllogism, i.e., to know anything completely reason must postulate the idea of a necessary and perfect being. So Kant refutes only the kind of ontological argument that begins with an idea not all a priori arguments e.g., some begin by asserting existence. "The affirmation that something (anything) is...of itself implies that nothing never was, and an eternal and necessary being has ever been" (220). Furthermore, he erroneously treats the ontological argument as



first and basic to all other arguments (221). Finally, he assumes that thought and existence are essentially separate (222), but if essence can't be derived from thought, then all affirmations of existence would be unwarranted (223).

When criticizing the cosmological argument Kant is guilty of his own charge, viz., that the reasoning process is filled with a nest of dialectical assumptions. He assumes that causality cannot pass from experience to existence. If this were true, Hume was right and Kant was wrong (225). Furthermore, reference to an unthinkable infinite regress is unnecessary. We know nothing of intermediate causes. Hence, the first step beyond contingent experience is also the last, viz., a necessary being (226). Finally, Kant confuses the cosmological with the ontological argument while they are essentially different (226).

Relative to the Teleological argument Kant claims that we can only argue for a phenominal designer from phenominal design. This is a confusion. The argument doesn't intend to prove the existence of God, but that there must be an intelligence behind the display of order in the universe (228). This argument rests on the cosmological to prove God's existence; it merely proves God's wisdom (229). That it does not of itself prove God's infinity is true. However, "it certainly gives us no warrant for supposing it (the designer) limited" (230).

Evaluationally, Kant is not to be criticized too severely for he also affirmed that we could not prove the non-existence of God either. So he leaves it possible to "believe" in God, and the door is open for practical reason to construct the moral proposition that God must exist (231). However, Kant

not p. 11.  
He said he had no knowledge  
only belief in God  
↓  
Hid. 139

was not consistent in arriving at any kind of knowledge of God thru moral experience or otherwise (233).

Nevertheless Kant has been very influential in molding the philosophical world while unwittingly he laid the foundations for modern agnosticism. However, he was more constructive than Hume since he laid down the principles which have gone a long way toward refuting scepticism (189-190).

The next to address Kant is Stuart Hackett. His attempt is to show that if the Kantian principles of epistemology are consistently applied that one must be a realist accepting the transcendental validity of the forms and categories. He rejects the disjunction between phenomenal and noumenal for two reasons<sup>4</sup> (52). 1) "The statement itself is either meaningless or self-contradictory. If this assertion is not metaphysical it is meaningless. If it is metaphysical, it contradicts itself by asserting knowledge and claiming agnosticism about reality at the same time. 2) The position reduces to an empiricism which Kant himself wishes to avoid" (52). For either the theory of innate categories is innate or it is not. If <sup>it is innate</sup> not, the whole theory is baseless. If <sup>it is innate</sup> so, then my knowledge of categories is devoid of sensuous content. But if there is some knowledge without sensuous content, then all knowledge cannot have sensuous content. But this is exactly what Kant desires to refute. Hence, his whole theory of the categories is baseless and must apply to reality (53).

Furthermore, there are two reasons why the categories

4. Hackett, Stuart, The Resurrection of Theism.

must apply to reality (54). 1) "The position (which denies this) is self-contradictory and reduces to scepticism" (54). In fact, the assertion is unintelligible since it assumes the very knowledge of reality which it denies. The remaining alternative is solipscism and deeper scepticism. 2) Hence the preformation system must be maintained and Kant's objections to it <sup>are</sup> of inconsequential (55). Finally, it is evident that "in the last analysis being and knowledge coincide in the ultimate reality" (112). That is, the rational is the real and the real is the rational.

~~B~~ Briefly now we may note a Thomistic objection to Kant. In scholastic terminology, Kant is rejecting the ontological and transcendental validity of the first principles of knowledge<sup>5</sup> (100-107). That is ~~to say~~, <sup>Kant denies</sup> that we ~~do not~~ have a simple apprehension of the intelligible in the sensible (110).

Now since it is an immediately evident truth that the intellect apprehends being, it cannot be proved directly (117). Yet "it admits of a sort of indirect proof, by a logical process of reductio ad absurdum...in so far as this principle is at least the necessary law of human thought" (118).

First Kant's assertion led him into insolvable difficulties, viz., "how can the intellect blindly assign to phenomena an intelligibility that they in no way possess?" (120). Or in other words how can he assert that synthetic a priori judgments have no foundation in reality? Furthermore, why are certain phenomena classified under substance and others under causation?

5. Garrigrou-LaGrange, God: His Nature and Existence.

And how do we know the world of sensation will always be susceptible of becoming the object of thought? (121)

Secondly, to deny the ontological and transcendental validity of the first notions of cognition renders absurd the essential elements of cognition (122). It is to say that it is in reality a fact that this idea I have refers to nothing real, which is an evident contradiction. Furthermore being is the formal object of the intellect. To deny this is to say that non-being is the mind's object or we know nothing which is absurd. )x

These principles are also transcendently applicable since by their ontological validity we can establish that God exists as the cause of all existence, so we can clearly see that any perfection existing in creatures must exist in the creator either actually or virtually. This is so, since God cannot give that which He hasn't got. If He could, this would be a contradiction. So there must be an analogy between what the creature is and knows and what God is and knows. And the infinite difference in perfection between God and man does not mean a total lack in similarity (223-233). Hence, the principles of human reason are valid both for a knowledge of finite and infinite being.

Now for a brief recapitulation of what has been said thus far. First by Kant: 1) His epistemological distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal based on an analysis of experience and a deduction of the forms and categories as necessary conditions of knowledge lead him to assert that we know nothing about ~~noumenal~~ external reality. 2) His metaphysical application of pure reason to the self, external world, and God leads him into

insolvable paradoxes which include the impossibility of proving the existence of God, etc.

Flint objects that Kant: 1) Assumes a faculty psychology in epistemology. 2) Asserts an unwarranted and inconsistent disjunction between "appearance" and "reality". 3) Involves himself in sophistical reasoning and dialectical assumptions. 4) And concludes that he has no right to assert the existence of God on a moral ground either.

Hackett charges Kant with <sup>the following:</sup> 1) A Self-contradictory distinction. 2) A system which reduces to an empiricism Kant desired to avoid. 3) And <sup>Hackett</sup> defends preformation against Kant's insufficient criticism of it because it reduces to a scepticism.

Garrigrou-LaGrange defends the transcendental validity of knowledge on the grounds that: 1) It is a reductio ad absurdum to deny it. 2) And it involves two insolvable difficulties, viz., a) An arbitrary classification of phenomena, and b) The dilemma of an intelligible assertion of the intellect that reality is unintelligible.

In conclusion, we will indicate the relevance of these objections and likewise voice our plea for the validity of human reason in theistic argumentation.

First and most basically we must address the Kantian epistemology. How can we know reality? At this point we agree basically with the objections leveled against Kant's disjunction of appearance and reality. 1) It is based on an unproven faculty psychology. 2) It is self-contradictory. 3) It is arbitrarily imposed. In short, it is not "proven". Hence, since Kant never

really "proved" his epistemology, then he never really "disproved" that we can argue to the existence of God and the road is wide open for a demonstration as to how we can do this.

It seems that the clue to the answer of this question has already been suggested, viz., that the necessary a priori determinations of knowledge must also apply to reality. First what are these undeniable categories of knowledge and then why must they be transcendental? There are only three with which we are concerned and these are beyond question. They are the necessary conditions of all human thought because their assertion is always involved in their denial. That is, all rational cognitions have sufficient reason, are not contradictory, and are purposeful. We are not yet contending for their transcendental validity but that these are necessary categories of human thought.<sup>6</sup> In other words we have yet to establish the preformation theory or convert Kant into a realist. But this we need not do for if Kant were consistent, he would have been a realist for the following reasons:

- 1) He can not admit the existence of a noumenal reality without allowing a whole web of truth because existence implies substance and substance is also that about which we have rational concepts etc. Which leads us to our next reason, viz.,<sup>2</sup> that the rational is the real and the real is the rational. This must be so for several reasons. a) Even for Kant the categorical structure of the mind or rationality had some reality. If, then, reason is real, we know some reality and this reality we know is reason.
- b) Furthermore, if we say that reality or being is not rational,

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6. For a more elaborate treatment of this see An Enquiry Concerning Humanian Understanding by same author.

then we are saying that it is self-contradictory, i.e., that being can both "be" and "not be" at the same time in the same sense which is absurd. Now admittedly we are approaching reality analytically by this argument, but we can also view it from an empirical standpoint. In such case, we merely ask the question, is not this "phenomenon" we experience real? If it is, then we know reality by or in our experience. If it is not, then we have no real knowledge and hence must be total sceptics. Therefore, the only alternative of absolute scepticism is the assertion that ~~we can and do know reality experientially.~~ ~~there is at least some reality in experience.~~

To apply these arguments ~~as we did~~ to the three indisputable laws of thought, we would get something like this. Reality or being is purposeful, non-contradictory and has a sufficient cause. For to deny that being is purposeful is to say that it is not being directed to an end by any cause which is a virtual denial that being has a sufficient cause. But if being has no sufficient cause then that which is obviously contingent is also <sup>or that which received its existence did not receive</sup> necessary or that which came to be, always was - which is a self-contradiction. Hence, being is caused, non-contradictory and purposeful in like manner as thought is caused, non-contradictory and purposeful. Now this is more than a striking parallel that both in being (reality) and in reason we necessarily have the laws of causality, non-contradiction and finality. In fact, it is clear evidence of the inseparability of reality and reason and proof of the fact that the structure of one necessarily involves the presence of the other. From this epistemological foundation it is not difficult to see how we "prove" God's

existence. For the very structure of both finite and infinite reality is that which the mind itself possesses and by the rational application of reason to reality we conclude the existence and nature of God.

If the foregoing is so, then it is incumbent upon us to show that reason does not involve itself in the alleged contradictions of the antinomies etc.

Since we do not propose to argue from the "Self" to God we will not consider the Paralogisms of pure reason except to say that no contradiction is involved since the antithesis in every case is wholly dependent on Kant's epistemological disjunction of reality and appearance which has been shown to be faulty. X

Antinomy number one is not a logical inconsistency but a scientific or metaphysical misconception. Space is not a container but a relationship. Furthermore, he <sup>equates</sup> on the term infinity. In one case he refers to a potential infinity and the other an actual infinity. If both are potential, then there is no contradiction. Likewise, the second antinomy involves faulty concepts of space and equates on the term "infinite divisibility", which is a mathematical (potential) infinity and not a metaphysical (actual) one. ~~It is substantially as sophisticated as the first.~~ X

The third antinomy is more serious and crucial. It seems that we are necessitated to posit a first cause and yet each cause must have an antecedent cause. To this we reply that the category of causation only applies to finite reality. Of course X the Uncaused has no cause. This is why it is Infinite. All the principle of causation contends for is that "Every finite being has a cause". There is no antecedent cause for an infinite being. The freedom is in the infinite which needs no cause, has no



cause, and cannot be caused.

The last antinomy relates to necessity and contingency. The thesis is an excellent defense of theistic argumentation, and the antithesis is a sad sophism attempting to contradict it. Once we have established that there is a beginning in the causal series, as we have done under the third antinomy, then this paradox is absolved with it.

The Ideals of Pure Reason present no serious difficulties once the antinomies are solved. We are inclined to agree with Kant concerning the invalidity of the ontological argument especially as stated in its classic form by St. Anselm and Descartes. However, it is a very slippery argument and in the existential form that Flint presents it seems to be valid. But when it is stated this way, it seems to be the cosmological argument and not the ontological. *right!*

But that an ontological assumption is basic in the cosmological argument and that it deserves all the weight Kant adorns it with seems to be an unnecessary "straw man" <sup>which</sup> ~~that~~ he has created to refute. Furthermore, Kant virtually admits that the Cosmological argument 'proves' God's existence, but <sup>that it</sup> makes the illegitimate ontological transition to establish His essence. This seems to be a destructive concession to his whole point. What he is saying is that the argument is valid in establishing the existence of a cause of the universe but we are not permitted by this to define this cause as an absolutely necessary being. Now this is admitting that we have proved the existence of God, but not His nature. The inconsistency in this ~~weak~~ admission

is that once we grant that there exists an Uncaused cause of all existence, it is not difficult to explicate from this something of the attributes and nature of this cause as they are manifest in his effects, only without their finite limitations.

His reasoning is not devastating concerning the Teleological argument either. It proves more than phenomenal design for if an order exists in the universe and God is the cause of all existence (cosmological argument), then God is the cause of this order. The argument is intended as a supplement of the cosmological and indicates more what God is than that He is. In this latter respect, Kant's criticism was relevant. But in its broader relationship with the cosmological argument it proves ~~far~~ more than Kant allows.

So we conclude that both Kant's epistemological foundation and metaphysical speculations were impotent with relationship to invalidating theistic argumentation. His moral argument was at best a poor supplement, futile escape, and an inconsistent assertion while at best it may be employed as an effective collateral of the cosmological and teleological arguments in establishing the ~~existence and~~ <sup>moral</sup> nature of God.

All of this is not to underestimate the extensive influence and historical significance of Kant in Philosophy, but is just a word in defense of the philosophical validity of Natural Theology.

Yes. See how  
Hackett uses it.  
also Flint & Hodge

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