



School Mate®

Fashion Trend

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Class: _____

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LEAVES

- * 1. Problem of evil in Leibniz.
- * 2. David Hume's Ethics.
- * 3. Kant's Synthetic a priori proposition, how did he defend it.
- * 4. How did Leibniz, Descartes and Spinoza solve the problem of evil mind and body relationship.
- ✓ 5. How consistent were the empiricist John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume.
- 6. How did Descartes, John Locke and David Hume arrive at the idea of God.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN LEIBNIZ

INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Metaphysical Evil

Physical Evil

Moral Evil

Conclusion

Introduction

Leibniz, a continental rationalist philosopher, argued that God necessarily does only the best and the most perfect things. As such the world which he created is the best of all possible worlds which God could have created. Since Leibniz believes that this is the best of all possible worlds, he has to deal with the problem of evil and explain why there is evil in the best of all possible worlds.

To explain the problem of evil Leibniz distinguished between three kinds of evil which are: (1) Metaphysical Evil

2. Physical Evil

3. Moral Evil.

Metaphysical Evil.

Metaphysical evil is due to the imperfection or the finitude of creatures which renders them liable to error and makes evil possible. This very imperfection of creatures is metaphysical evil.

Metaphysical evil is inseparable from the very nature of creatures as finite and imperfect being. It is therefore inevitable so long as there are creatures, for no finite creature can be perfect.

The only alternative to the existence of metaphysical evil would be the nonexistence of finite being in the universe. But it is better to exist than not to exist. Therefore God who always acts for the best chooses the better of these two alternatives. For it is better for creatures to exist as imperfect beings than not to exist at all. God cannot create perfect creatures, for such beings would be infinite and would therefore be God. There can be only one God.

PHYSICAL EVIL.

Physical Evil is part of the mechanism of the universe. It is part of what constitute the order and harmony in the system of the universe. Even sufferings, disasters or calamities are all part of the system of the universe and often lead to good result.

That's the basic physical evil which includes diseases, sickness, hunger, all kinds of suffering and disasters are in fact metaphysical evils that is, the imperfection of the creatures which constitute the system of the universe.

MORAL EVIL

In the deterministic metaphysical worldview of Leibniz, human freedom cannot easily find a place. Hence to explain moral evil becomes difficult because moral evil presupposes human freedom.

A universe which operates like several clocks or like a huge machine with numerous parts is mechanistic and deterministic. Every substance in the universe is a subject which contains within itself all its predicates. Human beings are no exception, for every human being

is a subject which contains within himself all his predicates, and these include all his past, present and future actions. These are all part of the very notion of any individual man. As such all the future actions of a man have to take place because they are part of him and a full view of him would see these action as part of him and coming necessarily from him.

From this, it follows that man is free not free in his choice of actions, in fact he does not choose his actions since they are part of his being as predicate. are part of a subject, in an analytic proposition.

Leibniz argues that moral evil is reprehensible however and will be punished by God, that God would reward the good and punish those who do bad morally. This obviously presupposes that each man freely chooses the actions he performs.

Leibniz could not affirm this doctrine and at the same time deny human freedom. In fact he affirms positively that man is free but denies that his metaphysical view of the universe rules out human freedom. He explains that when he says that

Man is necessarily determined by his very nature to do certain things, he is not talking of metaphysical necessity but of moral necessity.

Thus, to get out of his difficulty, Leibniz resorts to the subtle distinction between metaphysical necessity and moral necessity. Metaphysical necessity for him is absolute necessity which leaves no room for freedom while Moral necessity only inclines the will or in other words, it prompts the will while still leaving it free. Moral necessity is not compatible with freedom.

Conclusion.

How did Kant explain Synthetic a priori proposition.

Introduction

Kinds of knowledge

Synthetic a priori knowledge of Kant

Kants

Copernican Revolution

Conclusion.

INTRODUCTION.

The rationalists philosophers claimed that knowledge is derived from only reason. The empiricist on the hand posits that knowledge is derived from experiences. However the question about how we derive knowledge is what Kant's critical philosophy centered on.

We shall examine how Kant arrived at the synthetic a priori proposition, which is a meeting point for the rationalists and the empiricists.

KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE.

1. A priori knowledge; and a posteriori knowledge.

Knowledge that is not derived from experience, that is knowledge that is acquired independently of experience is a priori knowledge. It cannot be contradicted or proved false by experience.

Knowledge that is derived from experience is called

2. a posteriori knowledge.

3. Analytic proposition and

A proposition in which the predicate is con-

All bodies are extended.

ained in the subject is an analytic proposition. What is asserted in the predicate is an analytic proposition if it is already contained in the subject. The predicate adds ^{nothing} ~~something~~ new to the subject. Analytic proposition hence is tautological. Example "A husband has a wife" (Analytic proposition is also necessarily true and cannot be denied).

3. Synthetic proposition

This is a proposition in which what is asserted in the predicate is not contained in the notion of the subject. It adds something new to the subject and enriches knowledge but it is not necessarily true as such one can deny it without involving in any contradiction. Examples, "All bodies are heavy"; All seminarians in Bogard are six feet.

SYNTHETIC A PRIORI PROPOSITION.

Before Kant, some philosophers like Leibniz held that only analytic propositions can be ^{and} *a priori*, that synthetic propositions must be *a posteriori*.

Kant, however, argues that there are some synthetic

propositions that are a priori, for him these propositions assert truths which are not derived from experience and yet they are not tautological. In other words there are synthetic a priori propositions.

Q: How can propositions be synthetic and yet assert truths that are not derived from experience. Kant takes as an example the proposition "Every event has a cause". Before David Hume, it was generally believed to be analytic. But Hume denied this and pointed out that when we observe an event we do not observe in it the idea that it is caused. For Hume, causality is not contained in the idea of events since we do not observe causality in an event. The idea of causality it is therefore not a contradiction to say that an event has no cause and we can think of an event without a cause.

Kant agrees with Hume partially in the idea that causality is not contained in the idea of event and that the proposition is not an analytic proposition, he disagrees with Hume that it is simply the result of the habit of associating events with causes.

Kant however, offers his own explanation of the

Idea that every event has a cause. He argues that it is not derived from experience nor is it analytic. For him it is an example of synthetic a priori proposition.

For Kant, synthetic a priori proposition is a proposition that is not analytic but which asserts a truth that experience cannot contradict or disprove and it is not derived from experience. In this, he goes only half way with both the rationalist and the empiricists. With the empiricist he agrees that all knowledge begins with experience and must be related with experience but disagrees with them that all knowledge derives from experience.

For Kant, although human knowledge must be related with experience, not all derives from experience. Some kinds of knowledge are ~~a priori~~ to experience, they do not derive from experience and yet experience cannot contradict them. fact conforms them.

These propositions asserting such knowledge are necessarily true, and the truths that they assert are universal. They are synthetic a priori propositions and can be found in :- Mathematics, and Science.

Mathematics - $7 + 5 = 12$ an example of synthetic a priori proposition.

Geometry - A straight line between two points is

the shortest

Metaphysics - "Man is free to choose"

KANT'S COPERNICAN REVOLUTION.

Nicholas Copernicus changed the view that the earth was at the centre of the universe and the sun and all other planets revolved around it by gathering through evidence that it is the sun that is at the centre of the universe while other planets move around it.

Similarly, before Kant, it was generally assumed by philosophers that in the process of acquiring knowledge, it is the human mind that conforms to the object of knowledge. If this is true, then all human knowledge necessarily derives from experience and it would be difficult to explain how synthetic a priori knowledge is possible. Kant hence carries out a kind of revolution in philosophy.

Kant is convinced that there is synthetic a priori knowledge and it cannot be explained by the existing hypothesis hence we should try another hypothesis. The new hypothesis is the reverse of the previous one.

which is that it is not human mind that conforms to objects but it is the objects themselves that conform to the structures of the human mind.

This implies that we see things only as the structures of our mind makes them appear to us. In other words, the human mind restricts objects and makes them appear to us in certain ways. This can be compared to a man wearing blue spectacles which makes things appear blue to him. He only see things as the spectacle make them appear to him.

Similarly, what we see in things or ascribe to them are not really in things but come from our mind that makes them appear to us with forms and qualities we see in them. Since we cannot see things except the way the structures of our mind makes them appear to us, it means that we can never know what things really are in themselves. Hence knowledge is = Sensibility & Understanding

"Hume's Ethics is an attempt to explain how Man actually behaves and not how he ought to behave."

David Hume's Ethics.

INTRODUCTION.

Man by nature is a social being and as such Man continually relates with his counterparts. However, David Hume discussed at length on the notion of Man's ethics which is seen as the rightness or wrongness of an action.

We shall therefore see Hume's notion of morality which he said is distinct from human reason.

HUME'S NOTION OF MORALITY.

Morality according to Hume is not based on reason but it is based on sentiments, natural feelings, natural tendencies and passions. Reason for David Hume is not concerned with morality but with speculative truths which are those of mathematics and physics. It is also concerned with abstraction and practical matters. The role of reason in morality according to Hume is simply that of a slave, that is, the slave of the passions.

However, Moral judgments, moral approval and moral disapproval are not based on rational calculation but on sentiments, material feelings and actions emotions.

Actions which please us are held to be morally good while actions that displease us are held to be morally bad. As a result of this, Hume posits that morality is concerned with ~~moral judgement~~ natural feelings, natural tendencies or inclinations and not a question of reason; morality is as such not the function of reason.

If moral judgments regarding the rightness or wrongness of actions done to us depend on our feelings as to whether the actions in question please us or displease us, what of moral judgments regarding actions done to others? Or where do we base moral judgments regarding actions done to others?

Hume responding to the above question that is on actions done to others said that "Moral judgments regarding actions done to others are based on sympathy". He continues by saying

that man by nature has sympathy and that this plays an important role in moral judgement. Hence we disapprove as wrong those actions which cause displeasure to others and approve as right those actions which cause pleasure to others.

Furthermore, Hume explains the origin of the sense of justice in terms of sympathy. Prior before the formation of civil societies and the establishment of rules and conduct, man realised that if everyone is allowed to use his own freedom as he liked, everything would be at stake and so they decided to make rules together that would limit their own freedom and improve that self interest..

Finally, even though that self interest is what necessitated the formation of rules of conduct nevertheless, sympathy enables the individual to rise above self interest and to disapprove of any breach of these rules of justice.

MOTIVE OF ANY ACTION:

From the moral point of view, the most important aspect of action according to Hume is called

Motive

Here, if we blame somebody for performing a wrong action, we are in fact blaming him for not being influenced by the right motive. And when we praise a man for good actions we are praising him for being influenced by the right motive.

A right motive is differentiated from a wrong motive. A right motive is a motive that conforms to man's natural inclination, while a wrong motive is the motive that is at variance with man's natural inclination.

Having explained this, we move to criterion for virtue by Hume.

Criterion for Virtue

According to David Hume, the criterion for virtue is utility. For anything to be considered a virtue it must be useful and promote man's well being otherwise it would not be considered as a virtue.

Going further, Hume dismisses celibacy, fasting

Penance, mortification, silence, solitude all kinds of monkish virtues as useless. For him, they are **not** virtues because they serve no useful purposes.

On the notion of human freedom and determinism, Hume denies human actions as being free. He denies human freedom and maintains that human actions are determined.

He explains human actions in terms of cause and effect and said that motive is the cause of every action. Since there is no action without a ~~cause~~ motive, it follows that there is no action without a cause.

Conclusion

We have seen that Hume has a different notion of morality unlike other philosophers. It is pertinent to note that David Hume was one of the empiricist who described human actions and classified the notion of morality on how man behaves and not how he ought to behave.

Criticism of Notion of freedom:

Hume has a wrong notion of freedom since he equate it with chance. To say that an action is the result of a free decision is not to say that it is the product of chance.

Freedom is not opposed to Causality, Hume is right on saying that every action has a cause but he is wrong in concluding that causality removes freedom. There is a free decision between the cause of an action and the actual execution of the action.