

# THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN

*A Quarterly Journal of Philosophy*

Vol. XI

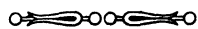
NOVEMBER, 1933

No. 1



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## Kant's Epistemology

GERARD SMITH  
*Marquette University*

KANT'S critique of pure reason is based upon one assumption, namely, that what is not given formally in experience comes wholly from the mind. For example, in the universal judgment, *sugar is sweet*, it is perfectly obvious that the meaning of this proposition outruns our experience. All that we experience, or can experience, is that *this sugar is sweet*, or, *all the sugar I have tasted is sweet*; but never can we experience that *all sugar is sweet*. That truth is not and cannot be given formally in experience. Yet we mean the proposition to cover all possible cases. It must be, therefore, that we have added to our experience something extraneous to it, and this—since experience cannot be its source, nor, Kant admits, can innate ideas—must come from the mind.

Two words express this ideogenesis: *synthetic*, which indicates that knowledge is put together of experience plus an element outstripping experience; *a priori*, which indicates the element in knowledge which lies beyond experience, that is, a power in us of putting together things which are not experienced together. Synthetic, then, describes the "put together" characteristic of certain kinds of knowledge; knowledge which is taken apart from, evolved, drawn out of elements already apprehended is analytic. *A priori* describes the overhand grips of the mind upon reality, overhand grips upon something not contained in the actual grip of experience. Synthetic indicates the addition which knowledge makes to ex-

perience; *a priori* indicates the source of the added element, the unifying function of the mind. Consequently, those propositions are synthetic in which the predicate adds something to a subject not originally containing the added element; and, since the addition is not from experience, it must be based on the synthesizing power of the mind, a power which, prior to experience, is waiting to pounce upon and unify, put together, whatever experience leaves disjointed.

This is the whole of Kant's critical philosophy reduced to its simplest elements. The simplification may seem excessive, and indeed, if Kantian richness of thought be our aim, it is. But any development of his thought would only evolve one or other of the ideas already explained.

As we remarked, Kant's explanation of knowledge is based wholly on the assumption that whatever cannot be found in experience, for instance, the truth, *sugar is sweet*, must come wholly from the mind. He assumes the identity of two possible meanings of *a priori*. *A priori* may mean: a) what is not given in experience; b) what comes solely from the mind. Adverting to the fact that much of our knowledge is *a priori* in sense a, Kant concludes that it is also *a priori* in sense b. By reason of this identification of the two meanings of *a priori*, Kantian philosophy is produced much as a conjurer would extract a rabbit from a hat. The rabbit, to pursue the figure, may be *a priori* in sense a—truly, our experience missed the rabbit—but was it *a priori* in sense b? Or was it there all the time?