

Conceptual Determination of the Criticism of Metaphysics in Kant's Philosophy

Kant Felsefesinde Metafizik Eleştirisinin Kavramsal Belirlenimi

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Abstract: In this paper it will be dwelt on the conceptual ground-work of analyses by Kant in the matter of metaphysics, which is the oldest philosophical discipline and the queen of sciences, on why it cannot be understood within the limits of reason. According to Kant, metaphysical judgments do assert a claim that they had given knowledge of the truth, by connoting logical themselves. However, this case is nothing short of the logic of illusion. That the relation between metaphysics and logic has the real but not the ideal character, states that it consists of an illusion.

Keywords: Kant, metaphysics, criticism, *a priori*, *a posteriori*, judgment, reason, knowledge.



Introduction

Metaphysics, which has not lost its importance since the rise of philosophy and which has been shown as the *highest science* by Aristotle (2004: 1026a20-5), has maintained its prestige, though it has become a target of some critiques occasionally. The serious critiques against metaphysics have been stated by Locke and Hume in their works on *Human Understanding*, and this case has been reached the zenith with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Locke claimed that there were no innate ideas and human mind, as *tabula rasa*, had attained its all knowledge by experience (Locke, 1974: 1.1.1). Afterword Hume stated that metaphysical judgments were entirely fallacies because of being out of focus for factual attribution (Hume, 1995: 173). Hence, metaphysics has come in for highly effective criticism and it has been questioned that it was the queen of sciences. Besides this case, that some great philosophers, especially Cartesians, were seriously defending metaphysics had persuaded philosophical circles to be its living possibility as a powerful science. But Kant's criticism in this field has reduced to old metaphysics to absurdity, by seeing as an unimportant science.

1. Determination of Metaphysical Question

1.1. A Short Presentation of the Question

In modern philosophy Kant undoubtedly deals with metaphysics as an epistemological question and he tries to set up philosophy around this question, and he closely looks to set up systematically critical philosophy. The most important question in the critical thinking, which begins with the critique of pure reason and proceeds to critiques of practical reason and power judgment, is of the possibility of metaphysics. In ancient and medieval philosophies metaphysics was the queen of sciences because it was science which was given the first principles to philosophy. By this critical philosophy, it was required to be shown whether metaphysics was science or not, even how it science of the first principles if it was. That is to say, had metaphysics possibility as speculative philosophy? To ask this question requires to investigate thoroughly the topic. This was doing necessary criticism of metaphysics which was standing at the outset of Kant's investigations on the possibility of metaphysics. According to him,



it had to be researched whether metaphysics was possible as a science or not, and it had to be asked why it had no any continuity if this was possible, why it was stringing along human understanding with vain hopes if this was not possible, and all of these questions had to be answered (Kant, 2004: 5-6). The reason which lies behind Kant's attitude is previously Hume's criticism of reason. In Kant's statement, Hume interrupted him from *dogmatic slumber* (2004: 10) and, on the distinction between mental and empirical, contributed to see that progression of knowledge was in way:

Hume started mainly from a single but important concept in metaphysics, namely, that of the *connection of cause and effect* (and also its derivative concepts, of force and action, etc.), and called on reason, which pretends to have generated this concept in her womb, to give him an account of by what right she thinks: that something could be so constituted that, if it is posited, something else necessarily must thereby also be posited; for that is what the concept of cause says. (Kant, 2004: 7)

Since the criticism of causality is basis on the criticism of reason, Kant has taken the most important part of Hume's philosophy, but has not neglected to speak of error about proceeding to the farthest stage in doubt. In consequence of this influence, it will be asked the question that what reason knows independent of experience. Metaphysics is not a science of physics because it is science which states for itself that belongs to the field beyond physics. Can reasoning and inference on thing-in-itself of objects make by means of pure reason or understanding which become valid by experience? Answer the question is possible by clarification of what metaphysics could achieved till now and henceforth what it can achieve. Of course, such an inquiry field will serve as a guide in exhibiting effable things belonging to not only its field of philosophy but also other sciences do. In fact, to philosophize is already to say to constitute the classification of sciences by wallowing in metaphysics. For metaphysics, as the *science of principles*, determines matters of action for other philosophical fields, even other sciences dependent on philosophy. This determination task, from the outset, aside from causing to tendency to see philosophy as the *sovereign of sciences*, it has made parallel progress of sciences to progress of philosophy and has limited their movement areas. If



the limits of pure reason can determine and be presented its scientific value, it will also be determined the limits of our knowledge.

1.2. *Emerging the Manner of Approach to the Question*

The science of metaphysics, which gives the first principles to being, though it has actually been called *divine field*, the subject matter of metaphysics was determined by Aristotle that “it will belong to this to consider being *qua* being, both what it is and the attributes which belong to it *qua* being” (Aristotle, 2004: 1026a30). In the account on classical philosophy, metaphysics was a field which was giving principles to all sciences, and which was called *divine science* by being taken to top in the classification of sciences. Aristotle has told as follows:

But just suppose that among the things that are there is one nature of this kind. In this, if anywhere, would we find divinity. This would be the primary and fundamental principle. And this shows that there are three kinds of theoretical science, physics, mathematics and theology. And the highest kind of science is the theoretical kind, and of theoretical sciences the highest is the last in our list. It has to do with the most valuable of the things that are, and it is the proper object of a science that determines its relative excellence (Aristotle, 2004: 1064a35-b5).

There, of course, was logic uniting the principles of being with of reason and explaining them in the basis of such statements. Aristotle, by an account on which similarizes the principles of being and of reason, has applied logic to metaphysics and has tried to show that the limits of reason had a structure exceeded the limits of physical things. Indeed, such a frame of mind has emerged concerning evolution of notion *logos*, and explanations about category question has been bound to the relation of language and thought to being. The conversion of metaphysics from the science of first principles to the science of *things-in-itself* proceeds from Neo-Platonic philosophical commentaries by Plotinus. So that these commentaries make for tendency to see philosophy as the field which requires to serve to religion. In fact, the science of metaphysics coming under Kant’s criticism is conception leading to the determination of philosophical field by Descartes. Rational philosophy has developed in becoming *philosophy of knowledge* (epistemology) more than *philosophy of being* (ontology), and as a consequence, the partition between psychology



and cosmology has been on the side of psychology in theological comments. Kant has made use Cartesian knowledge triad in his critical philosophy and he has dealt with ideas of *soul*, *freedom* and *God* as three speculative points while making the critique of reason.

Kant's criticism of metaphysics, of course, is not only determined per triad classification, but also these three fields have led to him in terms of constituting three parts of speculative philosophy. Kant has figured out that it was required to determine absolute and to show informational situation of absoluteness, and he has endeavored to go to extreme point in order to make critique of pure reason. To be able to make this, at first, it is required to make criticism of logic and to determine the application area. He has firstly attempted with logic, then he has questioned the place of metaphysics in application area of logic, that is, whether the principles of pure reason and the principles of being are the same.

2. Proposition-Types and Status of Metaphysical Propositions

2.1. *Partition of the Proposition-Types*

Whether or not being is *predicate* is important for questioning the place of logic in metaphysics. As distinct from Aristotle, Kant's expression concentrates on how predicates indicated as categories of being actually make contact to being. He does not accept being namely category of *substance* as a predicate or judgment-form, because, according to him, substance is any form of the *relation*. To prove this, we have to mention judgment-form firstly.

Kant divides judgments in half as *a priori* and *a posteriori* judgments. *A priori* judgments are, with his own words, judgments which are independent from experience and sensory impressions exactly (Kant, 2000: B2). That the judgments are independent from experience must be understood as independence in logical sense. Becoming independent two judgments from each other means that none of those judgments require another or its contradictory and that the same condition is valid for contradictories of those judgments as well. All other judgments related to or based on experience constitute *a posteriori* judgments which are empirical depended on experience.



Kant also divides judgments as analytic and synthetic; that is to say, our judgments are acquired by immediate in first and by experience in second. A statement feels the need for adding something to the subject in order to be knowledge; in other words, our knowledge has to consist of empirical and synthetic. Partition of judgments to analytic and synthetic firstly occurs in Locke and Hume. Both philosophers have remarked analytic knowledge, by dealing with the inter-ideas relations, however this partition appears in Kant's epistemology. In Kant, whereas analytic judgments are that the predicate implicitly includes in the subject, in synthetic judgments the predicate does not include in the subject but it is connected with the concept of subject (Kant, 2000: A6-7 / B10-11). Since the predicate includes within the subject in analytic judgments, the negation of these judgments constitutes a contradiction. But the negation of synthetic judgment does not constitute any contradiction, because the subject of such judgments does not include its predicate. Our knowledge expands by synthetic judgments and thus we acquire new information.

2.2. *Metaphysics as Synthetic A Priori Knowledge*

Distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* is not peculiar to Kant, but it has been used since Aristotle, and Kant has contributed to this distinction by partition of analytic and synthetic. The differentiation between necessary and contingent judgments in Leibniz's philosophy constitutes the most important part of distinction. Leibniz, spoken of mental and factual realities, mentioned that mental reality was necessary reality being impossible its contradiction and that factual reality was contingent reality being possible its contradiction and he stated that this distinction originated in the principle of noncontradiction (Leibniz, 1948: 32-3). The distinction between necessary and contingent propositions has been made systematic more in modern philosophy by Kant. The difference between Leibniz and Kant is on the partition of propositions to analytic and synthetic. Leibniz argues that in all positive propositions, necessary or contingent and universal or particular, the concept of *predicate* is contained in the concept of *subject*. Leibniz also instantiates this condition by thinking which individual substance or the nature of perfect being has a perfect notion and it is sufficient in containing and inferring all predicates of the registered subject (Leibniz, 1992, 8).



The important matter for Kant is to determine what kind judgments are used by metaphysics. According to him, judgments are three parts called analytic *a priori*, synthetic *a priori* and synthetic *a posteriori*. By displaying to coexist as dependent on experience and independent from it for any judgment is logically absurd, it can be proven not to be possible for analytic *a posteriori* knowledge. So metaphysics claims to use a source of knowledge independent from experience, synthetic *a posteriori* cannot be a kind of judgment used by this science. If we think about that analytic *a priori* judgments do not have any function excepts for repeat the current knowledge, we see that it remains a kind of judgment for metaphysics. This kind of judgment which to provide both independent from experience and constituting knowledge to metaphysics have to be synthetic *a priori*. The function of metaphysics should not be to analyze but it should expand this knowledge and attempt to infer others from that knowledge. This is because, metaphysics should use synthetic *a priori* judgment, at least, as far as *its end* (Kant, 2000: B18). The specified state, of course, is not the aim of natural metaphysics comprehending objects as *a priori* but it is the aim of absolute metaphysics claiming to go beyond the objective world, and Kant's criticism is intended for this metaphysics.

We see that Kant benefits from Aristotle's classification of theoretical sciences, by saying that reason uses synthetic *a priori* judgments in theoretical sciences. Aristotle, by talking about science which has given the first principles to being, mentions three kinds of theoretical sciences. Mathematics merely examines quantitative things and physics does natural things, that is to say, both sciences examine particular things but the science of first principles is the science of universal things. Aristotle qualifies metaphysics as the science of being or ontology, which is called the *first philosophy* by him. Because metaphysics, since it is the science examined substance, is the only science given the first principles. Despite Kant takes this triad classification, he deals with these theoretical sciences by reason of which their judgments are synthetic *a priori* but not being the sciences of first principles.

Kant proposes something very important: All mathematical judgments are synthetic. This case has not been expressed till then, because it was necessary another synthetic judgment to prove them. In physics, for



example, when we deal with the concrete world conception, we see that they are both *a priori* and synthetic because of which we think not only concreteness related to quality but also quantity or extensiveness. For Kant, there is no problem in which there are *a priori* judgments in mathematics and physics. Real question concentrates on the possibility of metaphysics on synthetic judgments. Metaphysics just cannot be contented with analyzing the present data, for in this case it can never be known the field of *thing-in-itself* metaphysics claims. It should make such a judgment that it should be its knowledge *a priori* and be freed from experience by extending knowledge. In that case, metaphysics should make synthetic *a priori* judgments, at least as far as its end (2000: B14-8).

3. Determination of Concepts of Pure Reason

3.1. *Distinction between Mind and Reason*

One of the most important contributions for Kant to philosophy is undoubtedly the exact distinction between mind and reason. This distinction was firstly pointed out by Descartes, but it was not differentiated between them in meaning. Expressed the relation between mind, soul, intelligence and reason, Descartes said that these faculties not only were faculties of thought but also they interested in which was given by them. According to Descartes, each of these notions mentioned above could substitute each other (Descartes, 1999: II 123). In the period which criticism of metaphysics is seriously dealt with, both Locke and Hume have thought that they would substitute the term *idea* instead of the mental and rational functions. Yet Kant, in that the person who displays very definitely the distinction between these faculties, has succeeded bringing an explication in philosophy:

Concept of reason, too, is a somewhat clumsy expression; for the concept is in general something rational, and in so far as reason is distinguished from the understanding and the concept as such, it is the totality of the concept and objectivity (Hegel, 2010: 670).

Whereas mind corresponds to the power of understanding, reason correspond to the power of conception, that is to say, the difference between understanding and conception is shown not only *de facto* but *in posse* as well. Thus, Kant has made a distinction between ideas and con-



cepts and he has separated judgments of metaphysics and logic from each other. Thereafter, this achievement of Kant will be the greatest and the most important reason for see the difference *sensibility* and *understanding* in the classification of categories. Because through this it could be possible such a categorical distinction between sensible and intelligible things.

Objects are therefore given to us by means of sensibility, and it alone affords us intuitions; but they are thought through the understanding, and from it arise concepts. But all thought, whether straightaway (*directe*) through a detour (*indirecte*), must ultimately be related to intuitions, thus, in our case, to sensibility, since there is no other way in which objects can be given to us (Kant, 2000: B33).

Mind has been no longer a faculty which provides to comprehend objects immediately, and it has turned into a faculty which only provide to perceive. For Kant, reason is described as a place where objects perceived by understanding turn into entirely comprehending. After having pointed out to equalize either faculties of getting knowledge which have been used by both rationalist and empiricist philosophies, Kant has shown that they had functions *on a par* in constitution process of knowledge. The basis factor which takes Kant to this conception is outcome of the proposition that "thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (Kant, 2000: A51 / B75).

3.2. *Concepts of Sensibility and Understanding*

With sensibility Kant means the capacity of acquiring representations through the way in which we are affected by objects. Sensibility provides to us intuitions, and notions occur after these intuitions become intelligible through the mind. These two faculties can never be reduced to each other and never be derived from each other. Much as this thinking brings to our mind the Cartesian distinction between substances, the state mentioned by Kant is not the ontological but the epistemological. Mind intuitively nothing and sense also thinks nothing but both constitute knowledge. At the end of this, it arises Kant's distinction between *phenomenon* and *noumenon*. Because the mind with no sensibility cannot include any phenomenon. Phenomena, if there are intuitions which to correspond to themselves, can make senses, on the contrary, concepts with no intuitions only remain as ideas and they cannot be spoken of anything.



Likewise, intuitions without concepts cannot include knowledge because of becoming blind, and consequently, they have no meaning.

With us understanding and sensibility can determine an object only in combination. If we separate them, then we have intuitions without concepts, or concepts without intuitions, but in either case representations that we cannot relate to any determinate object (Kant, 2000: A258 / B314).

Sensibility has the faculty of receptivity giving things within *space and time*, and for this reason, space and time are conditions to be given to us objects and to have intuitions. According to Kant, space and time are the absolute forms of sensibility as necessary representations in the basis of intuitions, and they are prepared in the soul. Space and time are not concepts abstracted from intuitions but the absolute forms of intuitions. In this case, they can be intuited themselves but those are *a priori* intuitions but not empirical (Kant, 2000: A21 / B36).

3.3. *Transcendental Dialectic and Its Relation to Metaphysics*

Kant calls metaphysics as *the battlefield of these endless controversies* (2000: Aviii) and he expresses the statements belong to this field as the logic of antinomies. The term dialectic is commentated with meaning used in sophistic and eristic philosophies, but not in Plato and Hegel (Kant, 2000: B86). Here, dialectic is both the form of paralogism in which reason falls cyclically and the form of indication of the wrong in order to correct it. He exposes the reason to be in paradox, by proving the impossibility of opposite of both thesis and antithesis. The term dialectic in the Aristotelian meaning can be explained as the art of getting the exact knowledge from premises based on assumptions. To make critique of philosophy with this method arises from the nature of theological thinking. For theological statements has been called *dialectic* but not *apodictic*, because of being intended for debate and based on acceptance respect to philosophy, that is, included the *accepted premises* (Aristotle, 2002: 71a5-10). Reason for Kant's using the attribute *transcendental* is related to using except for all sense perceptions, in other words, related to pure imaginations in which there are no imaginations concerning sensations. These imaginations are not given to us by any experiences, because of information presented by pure reason in *a priori*; human beings get this information by their mental procedures.



The relation between dialectic and metaphysics begins with reasoning about theories of knowledge by Socrates and Plato. There exists dialectic in the basis of this reasoning and by this art; mental things are stated within certain rules. Plato has endeavored to arrive at the world of ideas by dialectical reasoning, and thus he has founded dialectic as the only philosophical method. But Aristotle, although he has considered *dialectic* as a phase of way leading on the truth, has qualified the method leading on the exact knowledge as *apodictic* and he has called dialectic as an *endoxa* which is the science of assumption. Aristotle has meant syllogistic proof or apodictic demonstration for the form of syllogism whose premises consist of the first principles or exact things.

Dialectical method is definitely dealt with as *the logic of illusion* by Kant. The reason is that Kant counts dialectic as the method of sophistic and eristic philosophies that show a strong defense in sharp contrast to the truth during the debate. This sort of dialectic appears to us as the art which legitimizes itself by exaggerated grammatical statements and which wants to verify itself by defeating its opponent. Yet, according to Kant, such a situation is in opposition to the nature of truth, and it is convicted to be the logic of illusion.

Conclusion

We tried to define the conceptual determination of criticism of metaphysics in Kant's philosophy. Notwithstanding Kant accounts metaphysics as an *illusion* of pure reason, he argues that reason cannot abandon from thinking about metaphysical field. The connection of metaphysics to the field of *thing-in-itself* beyond the world cannot go beyond of illusion. Kant propounds this conception from proposition above that thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. This result arises from that there are *a priori* forms of sensations apart from *a priori* categories of reason.

Space and time, which are *a priori* forms of sensations, while limiting human mind, show to be occupied with empty ideas in contacting to transcendental field. The critical tendency in philosophy has made an important progress with Kant, and critical thinking still follows in Kant's wake.



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Özet: Bu yazıda, en eski felsefe disiplini ve bilimlerin kraliçesi olan metafizik konusunda, onun aklın sınırları içerisinde niçin anlaşılabilir olduğu hakkında Kant'ın çözümlerinin kavramsal zemini üzerinde durulacaktır. Kant'a göre, metafiziksel yargılar, kendilerini mantıksal diye ifade ederek gerçekliğin bilgisini verdikleri savını dile getirirler. Yine de bu durum, yanılısma mantığından başka bir şey değildir. Metafizikle mantık arasındaki ilişkinin gerçek değil de kavramsal yapıya sahip olması, onun bir yanılısamadan oluştuğunu ifade eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kant, metafizik, eleştiri, önsel, sonsal, yargı, akıl, bilgi.

