

# KNAPP ON KELLEY

## KANT'S ARGUMENT

Knapp conflates evidence/data with logical foundations. Kant's arguments as every commentator I know sees it, is to adduce examples of various synthetic *a priori* judgments of a particularly important and appealing sort (time, space, cause). He then seeks to explain these data by positing the faculty of intuition. Now, intuition is the logical foundation of the judgments: its existence explains why the judgments exist. Perhaps, and this is important, there are other explanations of these data. Now, not addressing the motivation, the facts from which the faculty of intuition was abducted, but rather talking only about their logical foundation (intuition), is a serious flaw in one's appreciation of the argument-structure. For one then owes us an explanation of the data that provide some evidence for the existence of this intuition: a theory that ties together judgments about space, time, cause, free will, etc. Kelley doesn't give one. Thus when Knapp writes: "For Kant's argument fundamentally depends not on particular examples, but on the central notion of awareness, i.e. intuition." we have a mess indeed. That there *are* examples of synthetic *a priori* judgments is essential for the argument for intuition. If there were none, Kant gives no reason for thinking that we would be justified in thinking there is intuition. The *Kritik* is not just opining about a mysterious faculty of intuition, with various synthetic *a priori* judgments thrown in as amusing examples. When one looks at Kant's earlier writings on space, and the historical context of the debate, it becomes clear that Kant thinks he is giving very good reasons for thinking there is a faculty of intuition. Again, the major commentators agree. (It is true that the particular examples are unimportant, so long as there are some. Kelley either owes us a—difficult to obtain—argument that there are *no* synthetic *a priori* judgments, or that there is alternative explanation of them. He gives neither.)

I don't regard Kelley's analysis of Kant all that important—except insofar as he likes to reject views contrary to his own whenever they are tinged by any degree by any Kantian influence (e.g., Helmholtz).

## PRIMACY OF EXISTENCE

Repeatedly, (p. 2 bottom; p. 6-7) Knapp quotes what I say—which are clearly my paraphrases. Then he says something to the effect that I am attempting to mislead the reader into thinking Kelley states this. But Kelley doesn't mean

this...and then refers to a whole chapter, or a large range of pages. Knapp must appreciate my difficulty in a short review in paraphrasing Kelley, since *he doesn't ever succinctly paraphrase* him either. Nor does he ever show that what Kelley says is flatly incompatible with what I attribute to him. He just refers to large chunks of text or obscure quotations. Paraphrasing is difficult—particularly when one is as evasive as Kelley (a permissible philosophical activity). Particularly amusing is Knapp's attack on my suggestion that Kelley does not define perception: "Is [Dipert's point] that Kelley doesn't define perception? He devotes an entire chapter to the task."

Now, definitions don't take entire chapters! Observe that Knapp himself does not try to paraphrase Kelley's point either!

It is true that Knapp, quoting Kelley does give us: "perception = direct awareness of discriminated entities by means of patterns of energy absorption by sense receptors." But of course we don't have a usable absorption by sense receptors." But of course we don't have a usable definition of "awareness", other than axiomatic truths about it. (Which characteristics are part of the definition of awareness, and which are the "axiomatic truths" about awareness? Who knows?)

But I give an alternative death-blow to the usefulness of this definition when I argue that definitions of perception/awareness cannot refer to the internal physical observations (energy absorption...sense receptors), because these are only known to be true through perception! Thus how could we *know* when we have a case of *this sort of* perception/awareness if the reliability of our senses is exactly the question. Until a critic *understands* the thrust of this objection, (they are free to give argument against it), I refuse to discuss Kelley's views with them; their brain is not turned on.

It is obtuse not to at least anticipate this difficulty in the first place, and doubly of Knapp not to notice how worthless it makes much of Kelley's empirical observations about perception.

In all humility, I think I have probably missed something in Kelley's argument. I have the sense that there might be more to it (or to the general direction of the discussion) than I give credit. But what he says is pretty murky, and fatally falls prey to my objections. Until someone has the courage to paraphrase or reconstruct what Kelley is saying, in other than Kelley's murky chapter-long "definitions"—Knapp certainly does not help at any point in clarifying or rephrasing succinctly what Kelley is saying—then I can't see what in my review is false.

The review is not perhaps as serious as it should have been in carefully paraphrasing or reconstructing Kelley's position. But this is because I haven't figured out how to do so—and neither has Knapp.

The criticism of my overly-glib handling of unconscious inference/computation, calculation is probably correct. But I don't see Knapp giving arguments, other than intimidating lists of *famous people* whose views Kelley rejects.

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