

INTRODUCTION

The greatness of Kant is beyond doubt and his greatness as a philosopher is expressed when it is said that no modern philosopher, no matter whether he is a Kantian or anti-Kantian, must use 'not only the method, but also the problems which Kant has bequeathed to philosophy'. The problems are, of course, very difficult and it is the genuine difficulty of the problems, with which Kant grappled, that largely explains why we fail to understand him with that ease with which we understand his predecessors, like Descartes, Hume and Leibniz.

The problem of 'synthetic a priori judgements' is a Kantian problem in the sense that it is Kant who for the first time has used the expression 'synthetic a priori' with reference to judgments and drawn our attention to the significance of such judgments. This problem may be described, without exaggeration, as the central problem of

Kant's philosophy and naturally a good number of books and articles are already available on it. But all these, so far my knowledge goes, are treatments of Kant's central problem in a rather piece-meal fashion. While dealing with this problem, they have confined their discussion within a particular 'critique' of Kant, and so we lack a treatment of it in a greater perspective of all the three 'critiques' taken together. It is this lacuna in the former treatments that has inspired me to undertake my present work. My treatment of the problem, I believe, has a double advantage of exploring the meaning of the expression 'synthetic a priori judgments' in this or that particular 'critique' of Kant and of discovering whether a single identical meaning can be associated with this expression in the whole gamut of Kantian philosophy.

Kant demands that we have synthetic a priori judgments not only in the realm of theoretical knowledge but also in the realms of moral and aesthetic experiences. He further demands that we have such judgments in all the above domains of experience, i.e., in all his three 'critiques' in exactly the same sense. These two claims, though not unrelated, are different. Our assent to the first claim does not imply our acceptance of the second one. The present thesis is, in fact, mainly concerned with the critical

evaluation of Kant's second claim that we have synthetic a priori judgments in all his three 'critiques' in exactly the same sense, though the question of the implication or of the possibility, of a synthetic a priori judgement has not been left untouched.

We do not have 'synthetic a priori judgments' in all the three 'critiques' of Kant in exactly the same sense, and this is not unnatural since the conditions of judgement in the three 'critiques' can not be called identical. For theoretical judgements, i.e., experience of objects in space and time, dealt with in the Critique of Pure Reason, we require an a priori law or principle supplied by the mind or understanding and also an intuition of something given to the mind. Our mind can not produce this intuition by itself. Thus in the first 'critique' our mind or intellect has only a 'logical use'.

In case of moral judgments, dealt with in the Critique of Practical Reason, on the other hand, we are in need only of the a priori moral law or principle supplied by the mind or reason. Unlike the principles or laws of the understanding, the universal moral law of our reason completely determines the instances coming under it. The supreme principle of morality is not just a test for judging an action to be moral but it produces the intuition of such an

action by itself. Thus our mind or intellect has a 'real use' with reference to moral judgments.

An aesthetic judgment, dealt with in the Critique of Judgment, is fundamentally different from the theoretical and moral judgments of the first two 'Critiques', since its predicate, 'beautiful' is not at all a predicate in the true sense of the term. An aesthetic judgment does not assert anything about an object but simply expresses our feeling towards an object when we represent it to ourselves. An aesthetic judgment is not based on any objective a priori principle with reference to which others may be compelled to accept the judgment.

The present thesis has been divided into six chapters. In the first chapter, an explanation of how Kant performs the difficult job of combining the notion of necessity or a priority with that of syntheticity has been given and thereby the meaning of the expression 'synthetic a priori', as it is used in the first 'critique', is explained. For this purpose two relevant distinctions, viz., a priori - empirical distinction and analytic - synthetic distinction have been taken up for discussion.

In the second chapter, attempts have been made to discover the real implication or significance of Kant's

thesis that 'some judgments are synthetic a priori' and thereby the meaning of the expression 'synthetic a priori' has been further explained. This chapter identifies some assumptions required for sustaining the thesis of synthetic a priori judgments.

The third chapter explains the meaning of the expression 'synthetic a priori' as it is used in the second 'critique' and here it is shown that in the second 'critique' this expression does not and can not mean what it means in the first 'critique'.

The fourth chapter is concerned with the third 'critique', the Critique of Judgment. In order to find out the sense in which a judgment of taste is synthetic a priori an analysis of such a judgment has been undertaken from different standpoints. It has been argued here that the logical status of synthetic a priori judgments in the domain of aesthetic taste must be different from the status of those synthetic a priori judgments which we find either in the first or in the second 'critique'.

The fifth chapter deals with the question of the possibility of synthetic a priori judgments from the standpoint of Quine and logical positivism. The theses of Quine and of the logical positivists are critically discussed and it is argued that the possibility of the synthetic a

priori judgments can not be rejected simply on the basis of the arguments advanced by these philosophers.

In the sixth and concluding chapter it is argued that Kant's 'second claim', the claim that we have synthetic a priori judgments in all his three 'critiques' in exactly the same sense can not be sustained. It is held that the concept of 'synthetic a priori' is a dynamic concept in Kant's philosophy, that it begins to change its connotation as we pass from the first to the second 'critique' and this change continues even in the third 'critique'.

I take great pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness to my supervisor, Dr. Pabitra Kumar Ray, Reader, Dept. of Philosophy, North Bengal University for his invaluable help and suggestions without which it would have been impossible for me to complete the dissertation.

I also express my obligation to the University Grants Commission for awarding me Teacher Fellowship which has proved a great financial help to me in doing this work.

I am grateful to the senior colleagues of my department for their valuable suggestions. My thank is also due to my other colleagues and the Principal, Cooch Behar College for the inspiration and co-operation I received from them.

I must express my indebtedness to my elder son, Partha Pratim Sinha for his kind assistance to me and also to his mother, on my behalf, during my stay at the university for long three years. I also thank my younger son, Sandip Sinha and youngest child, Sm. Manali Sinha for being generous enough to tolerate my absence smilingly. Finally, I express my deepest indebtedness to my wife, Mrs. Banasri Sinha for giving me inspiration and for ungrudgingly sparing me from all responsibilities and anxieties which usually lie on me being the head of the family. But for her co-operation and sacrifice I would not have been able to do the work I have done.



(SUSIL SINHA)