

# WHY IS ACCORDING TO RUDOLF BRAJIČIĆ KEILBACH'S CRITIQUE OF KANT UNACCEPTABLE TO KANT? Is a Direct Critique of Kant Possible?

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## *Introduction*

Kant's philosophy is present in our author's considerations in numerous articles and more particularly in two books — *Opravdanje čistoga uma (Justification of Pure Reason)*<sup>1</sup> and *Filozofski eksperiment (A Philosophical Experiment)*<sup>2</sup>. We shall discuss here an unpublished article written by Father Rudolf Brajičić, titled: *Why is Keilbach's Critique of Kant Unacceptable to Kant? The subtitle reads: Is a Direct Critique of Kant Possible?* In this unpublished article, the author engages in a reconsideration of synthetical a priori judgments and distinguishes Kant's interpretation of those judgments from his own reflection on them, as we shall see in the article itself. We believe that in this introduction, in order to learn about the subject-matter discussed, it is sufficient to mention three conclusive and fundamental points in which, in author's opinion, Kant goes astray. First of all, Kant has failed to gain a comprehensive view of and recognise the nature of synthetical a priori judgments. Furthermore, he has failed to take into account that metaphysics is built upon sufficient, not compulsory evidence, which is why those propositions are accepted responsibly and freely and why metaphysics is in this sense a free science. And finally, that only one true metaphysics is possible, although various schools may have taken divergent paths in its interpretation. Those are the main thoughts we are about to present.

I suppose that we are fairly well acquainted with Keilbach and his *Theodicy or Natural Theology*, built upon a rich literary basis comprising well

1 R. Brajičić, *Opravdanje čistoga uma, U svjetlu transcendentálnih odnosa*, The Philosophical and Theological Institute of the Society of Jesus in Zagreb, Zagreb 1988

2 R. Brajičić, *Filozofski eksperiment, Signifikantni i egzistentni vidici u filozofiji*, Croatian Philosophical Society, Zagreb 1996

over a hundred units.<sup>3</sup> In this part, there are 27 references to Kant or brief mentions of him.

In a reference book we cannot expect to find any other method of presentation of opponents' views, in this case those of Kant, but the referential method; a clear, although not a comprehensive account of such views, particularly if they are an element of a distinct philosophical system, but only to the extent to which they relate to the subject-matter of the reference book itself. A system such as Kant's is discussed in more detail within the framework of the history of philosophy and noetics. One ought not to expect in reference books the scientific results of author's own research. This is true also for Keilbach's "Natural Theology." We should emphasise, though, that in his work Keilbach cites the views of over five hundred different authors who wrote about God from the philosophical point of view, ranging from A, for Abelard, to Z, for Zimmerman. The quality that particularly recommends Keilbach for a writer of reference books is his extreme accuracy, evident in a clear division and more profound analysis of the subject-matter.

Keilbach's fundamental critique of Kant is elaborated on the pages about the justification of the principle of causality from the point of view of Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy.<sup>4</sup> A proper analysis of this principle leads Keilbach to the following conclusion: an unnecessary being that really exists may exist only in a dependence of another i. e. by cause.<sup>5</sup> Kant will answer to this in the following way: We have to think that it is necessarily so, although we do not know whether it is really necessarily so. There is an example of an agnostic reply by Kant! Keilbach's critique is expressed by a synthetical judgment, in which a predicate is not contained in the subject. How should we know then that it is necessarily so, asks Kant.

In all truth, however, we should add that in his critique of Kant's understanding of the principle of causality from the point of view of the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy, Keilbach does not directly criticize Kant's teaching about a priori synthetical judgments as such. It is exactly what we would like to do.

Our basic proposition is that Kant did not provide a *complete* definition of synthetical judgments. He says: Synthetical judgments are those in which predicate is not contained in the concept of subject, as is the case with analytical judgments. This is true, but it is not the *entire* truth about them. Namely, it is true that their predicate is not contained in the subject, but this is

3 V. Keilbach, *Problem Boga u filozofiji*, »Teodiceja« ili »Naravno bogoslovlje«, published by the State Printing Office of Croatia, Zagreb 1944, pp. 83–94.

4 V. Keilbach, *Problem Boga u filozofiji*, pp. 84–94.

5 V. Keilbach, *Problem Boga u filozofiji*, p. 91.

only a negative and only a partial statement about synthetical judgments. He should have made an affirmative statement about them, too. Namely, in affirmative sense, they are judgments in which the subject in a judgment is contained in the predicate of the judgment. Kant said that analytical judgments were in fact the definitions of objects, but he did not say that synthetical judgments were in fact the necessary properties (specific differences or necessary qualities) of objects, so that by their simple reverse order we obtain an analytical judgment and vice versa, by a clean reversal of an analytical judgment we obtain a synthetical one.

Here is a synthetical judgment put forward by Kant:  $7 + 5 = 12$ . Kant says for this judgment that it is synthetical because 12 is not contained either in 7, or in 5. We say: But 7 and 5 are contained in 12. Therefore, this judgment may be cleanly reversed. Thus, it reads:  $12 = 7 + 5$ , whereby we have obtained an analytical judgment in which 7 and 5 are contained in the subject, meaning that insofar as the “necessary” in synthetical judgments is concerned, for which Kant asks where it is from, we reply: It is from an analytical judgment. But, whether from this judgment formally or materialiter, it is connected with it in an inseparable way.

The same is with other synthetical judgments. Let us take the example of the following synthetical judgment: A straight line is the shortest line between two points. Why is a straight line the shortest line between two points? It is the shortest line due to its nature. It is the shortest line because it is *straight*. Since a straight line is *necessarily* straight, it will be also *necessarily* the shortest line.

Let us state separately a synthetical judgment whereby Kant expressed the principle of causality: *Every event has a cause*. If we turn this synthetical judgment into an analytical one by clean reversal: *Everything that has a cause is an event*. Why is everything that has a cause an event? Because the meaning of an event is to have a cause. Kant, however, protests: In his formulation of the principle of causality, he does not say: “an event has a cause,” but “every event has a cause.” He asks therefore: How do we know that every event has a cause? PERHAPS an event is possible without a cause. What shall we answer to that? First of all, we shall warn Kant that he has behaved differently when he formulated the greatest shortness of a straight line. Then he did not formulate the synthetical judgment as: everything that is a straight line is the shortest line between the two points. Nor did he think: PERHAPS there is a straight line which is not the shortest. Why different standard? Kant has a perfectly satisfactory explanation: Because by observing a straight line drawn on a board at the same time I see that it is absolutely impossible for any straight line between two points not to be the shortest line. We must admit that Kant is true to himself. We shall not answer him now but in a Scholion, with which this presentation ends. And we shall remain true to ourselves, too. True as

regard to what? As regard to the statement that synthetical judgments represent specific differences of objects and that they can be obtained by clean reversal of analytical judgments. It is necessary to know that upon these judgments a true philosophical system may be built. Kant failed to recognize this. As far as the synthetical judgments are concerned, he knows only one thing about them: in synthetical judgments the predicate is not contained in the subject, so he asks himself: How can I know that it is *necessarily related* to the subject?”. That is why he resorted to aprioristic perceptions of the necessary infinite successive space and the necessary infinite successive duration or time, which conceptionally demonstrate an absolute necessity of relation between the subject and the predicate in synthetical judgments, as a basis which his entire construction of the Critique of Pure Reason rests upon. In the Scholion which follows, on the other hand, we conclusively show that Kant has undoubtedly, in that respect, too, deficiently observed a straight line as the shortest line between two points, so that his entire philosophical system is called into question. This may seem an overly ambitious statement, but the error (insufficient knowledge of the nature of synthetical judgments) committed in the beginning must have been at some point called to attention in their future consideration.

### *A Scholion Instead of a Conclusion*

That a straight line is necessarily the shortest line between two points, we know beyond any doubt just by looking at the straight line drawn on a board. Thus spoke Kant. We accept this, and add: If we observe a straight line drawn on a board, we see with equal certainty not only that the straight line is *necessarily* the shortest line, but also, with equal certainty, the *reason* why a straight line is necessarily the shortest line, and that is the *straightness* of the straight line, because it is straight. By looking at the board then, we are absolutely certain that a straight line is the shortest line and that the reason for it is its straightness or generally its nature, better still, that it is the shortest owing to its nature, that its attribute “the shortest” is its specific difference which is not expressed by an image, but by a concept. The straightness as a straightness cannot be drawn. Thus we complement Kant’s thought on this problem, by explaining how we know that in a synthetical judgment a straight line is the shortest line between two points, that the predicate “shortest” necessarily belongs to the subject and that it has without any exception a general validity.

Why do we emphasise this complementation? Because we would like to warn that from the concept of a straight line we can form the knowledge of its greatest shortness. Like so: The shortest line will be the one which does

not turn either to the left or to the right, but runs straight forward. It is contained in the essence of the straight line, however, not to turn either to the left or to the right. Therefore, a straight line is the shortest line. Now we can *verify* this (make an experiment) by drawing and examining a straight line on a board. *If* we have no board that we could use for the purpose of this verification, which may happen since we are dealing with metaphysical realities and invisible objects, this leaves the task of our persuasion of the necessity and truth of this synthetical judgment to its conceptual reason. However, if that be the case, we do not have an *evidentiam constringentem* about the truth of the judgment in question, but only an *evidentiam sufficientem* (sufficient evidence) in order to enable a *reasonable and rational belief* in that which this judgment expresses. If the judgment expresses the demonstrated existence of God, the philosophical faith in God will be a *reasonable, free act*. Agnosticism has no place in this, nor does Kant's thesis that we do not know objects in themselves. Kant was wrong to think that Wolf made an argument for God's subsistence on the basis of a *compulsory evidence*. He was not aware of Wolf's doing so with only a sufficient evidence in the service of a reasonable, free i. e. responsible belief.

And what about the principle of causality, the "key to the suprasensible world" (Franjo Šanc)<sup>6</sup> — is it, too, offered to us for a free and responsible acceptance? Is its evidence, too, merely sufficient (*sufficiens*)? We do know that this principle has been successfully argued by our philosophers, and proven, by application of the principle of "sufficient reason." However, they did not address the issue of the arguing power of its demonstrated truth because they did not consider it necessary, although it is exactly what is the most important for refutation of Hume and Kant. Kant also permits that we know this principle from experience, based on a large number of cases, based on a large community of such cases, but at the same time he claims that we do not know absolutely all cases so that it is not immediately clear to us, the way it is immediately clear that it is absolutely impossible for a straight line that we see on a board not to be the shortest line. The fact that something is breaking up in this argumentation of scholastics represents an indicator of their disagreement with respect to this issue, whether the principle in question is an analytical or a synthetical proposition. In the spirit of a scholion, we say that this principle also possesses a sufficient, but not a compulsory evidence, and is therefore offered to us as a subject of our *reasonable, free belief*.

In our opinion, Kant has committed three fundamental errors.

6 F. Šanc, *Stvoritelj svijeta*, Njegova egzistencija i narav i njegov odnos prema svijetu, »Nova tiskara« Vrčak et al, Sarajevo 1935, p. 49

1. He failed to see the full measure of, and recognize, the nature of synthetic judgments;
2. He ignored the fact that metaphysics has been built by sufficient, not compulsory evidence, that metaphysical articles are accepted responsibly and freely, and that in this sense metaphysics is a free science; and
3. That only one true metaphysics is possible, although various schools may have taken divergent paths in its interpretation.

When we say that we see a straight line on a board, we do not mean to say that we see a straight line just like it exists in nature, because straight lines do not exist in nature. What we mean to say is that we see on the board a Euclid's straight line, just like in the dawn of the infinite space in which we see it as the shortest line.