

Explain and illustrate Hume's Fork and what it tells us about the types of knowledge that we can't have

Hume's fork shows us that we can have only two forms of legitimate knowledge. That is relations of ideas and matters of facts. Matters of fact are source of substantive knowledge (knowledge that can tell us something new about the world). Knowledge in matters of fact is also a posteriori (knowledge that is gained after/through experience) and synthetic (tells us something new about the world). In contrast, is Relation of Ideas which hold the attributes of analytic (true by definition) and a priori (known prior to experience). Hume holds that knowledge has to comply with his fork and if it does not we must "cast it to the flames for it is nothing but sophistry". Hume is saying that all a priori knowledge is analytic and it can't tell us anything new about the world because we are simply relating the ideas thus they can never be a 'synthetic a priori'. For example, $1 + 1 = 2$, we are simply relating the ideas of 1, 2, + and = - by doing this we aren't learning anything new about the world. Matters of fact however, do tell us something about the world. Hume limits knowledge to synthetic a posteriori and analytic a priori.

Explain Ayer's development of Hume's position

Ayer developed Hume's position by creating a criterion of meaning. A statement is meaningful if it is either a posteriori or analytic, if it is not meaningful then it is not true knowledge.

Explain and illustrate Ayer, Hume, Locke and Mill on morality and religion

Ayer and Hume deny there is any moral knowledge at all because moral knowledge doesn't express propositions (which is the only way we can determine if it is true or false). Ayer goes as far as saying 'God' is literally meaningless. Locke, however says that morality and the existence of God can be established; Locke looks that at the principle that nothing can come from nothing, therefore he must be created by something that had always existed. We know this because it is analytic - thus we can deduce the existence of a knowing intelligence. Locke then says that moral knowledge is like this as well, it is analytic. We deduce from the nature of God and of ourselves what our moral duties are. The only reason people haven't got to it is because they can't reason so well. Mill argues that moral knowledge is based on observation and experience. He claims that the only evidence of what we have for what is good is based on what we desire. (Analytic?)

Why does Kant claim that $1 + 1 = 2$ isn't analytic a priori and what does he think it is?

Kant defined analytic as something that doesn't "add anything to the subject" and that the predicate must "be contained" in the subject. Thus 2 is not contained within '1 + 1' and so the statement is synthetic as it does add something to the subject and the predicate is not in the subject.

What objections are there to Kant's claim that maths is synthetic a priori? (Focus on Ayer's claim that it must be analytic)

Ayer says that Kant has misled himself, the fact that we can think of $1 + 1$ without thinking of 2 is more to do with our psychological understanding of subject and predicate. It's a bad test of subject and predicate: we don't realise the implications of something. Thus Ayer concludes that we should understand analytic statements as those which we can not contradict and validity depends upon the symbols they contain and synthetics ones as those whose validity is based by facts of experience. Ayer showed that if we count 5 pairs and get 9, it doesn't mean that we have disproved $2 \times 5 = 10$ but we have merely made a mistake or the amount has changed. We can't allow them principles of maths and logic to be false because it would mean contradicting ourselves. Analytic knowledge doesn't have to be obvious - it's still analytic.