

The Relativity of Material Conditions.

Science primarily is of the universal and necessary, but material things are particular and contingent. Material conditions are 1) what always is are absent from the abstract primary and so abstract object of science, 2) what must be added to the primary, abstract object to arrive at concrete things. Four elements complete the list of material conditions, namely, individual matter, determinate place, determinate time, and the possibility of change. For what cannot change is necessary, and what can change is contingent; what is at a determinate place and time can change, and what is not, cannot; what is materially individual, is at a determinate place and time, and what is not, is not; finally, what is materially individual, is particular, and what is not, provided one remains within the field of human science, is not particular.

contrast of intel- lect&sense. ~~What is true regarding the primary object of science and concrete things, can also be reapp stated in terms of knowledge.~~ Intellect knows the universal and necessary by abstracting from the material conditions presented in sensitive knowledge. Thus, material conditions are a sensible residue; they are known directly by sense; they cannot be known directly by intellect, for direct intellectual knowledge is abstractive and material conditions are what intellect abstracts from. Moreover, though not known directly by intellect, material conditions are known indirectly by intellect, that is, inasmuch as it reflects on its own and on sensitive knowledge and so makes use of the sensibly known to form, for instance, particular and contingent propositions.

what/

In the third place material conditions are relevant to the contrast between universal and necessary propositions on the one hand and, on the other, particular and contingent propositions. The meaning of a universal and necessary proposition is identical, no matter who states it, or where he states it, or when. Thus, "twice two is four" means the same thing to anyone, anywhere, at any time; and this is only to be expected, for the universal and necessary abstracts from all individuals, all determinate places, all determinate times, and it excludes the possibility of change. On the other hand, such a particular and contingent proposition as "John is here now" has as many different meanings as there are different persons named John and different places and times where any John could be. To give a determinate meaning to a contingent and particular proposition, it is necessary to add a context; and adding a context cannot be done simply by adding further propositions of any type but only, in one way or another, by appealing to direct sensitive experience. You may assemble all the genealogies you please, but you will fix who John is only by identifying some person in some genealogy with a person whom I have met and remember. You may assemble all the maps you please, but you will not tell me/the "here" of your proposition means until you point out on some map some place I have been and remember. Similarly, you may explain with perfect lucidity what a ~~is~~ calendar is, but you fix the "now" of your proposition only by relating my present "now" with the calendar. Nor is this surprising. Intellect utters particular and contingent propositions by reflecting on sense, and so it is only by an appeal to sense that intellect can fix the meaning of its particular and contingent propositions.