

question for Insight and Method seminar, 10/14/76:

Speaking of the irrevisability of its given explanation of consciousness, Insight, p. 335, reads:

Again, I am not contending here and now that human nature and so human knowledge are immutable, that there could not arise a new nature and a new knowledge to which present theory would not be applicable. What is excluded is the radical revision that involves a shift in the fundamental terms and relations of the explanatory account of the human knowledge underlying existing common sense, mathematics and empirical science.

Does the first sentence here suggest that human nature might some day change so that we would abandon present forms of knowing, and if so, would this new nature and new knowledge be human? Does the second sentence's limitation to "the human knowledge underlying existing common sense, mathematics and empirical science" suggest that there are other forms of "knowing" perhaps already operative in human experience (e.g. in altered states of consciousness) which define their own "reality" and to which present theory is inapplicable?

My point is negative: what am I not contending
Why the negative point: Decadent Scholasticism up
to Wolff ~~was~~ was greatly concerned with possibility
and impossibility which was determined by the
compatibility or incompatibility of concepts.

My personal stand is that all we know about
possibility is derived from matters of fact,
If X exists then X is possible
and all we know about impossibility is derived
from the principle of contradiction,
if the conjunction XY is self-contradictory,
then the conjunction XY is impossible

Radical revision is a shift in the basic
presuppositions of existing theory:
from Newton to Einstein, from Euclid to Riemann
again from mechanist determinism to statistical
thought as not just a cloak for ignorance

What excludes radical revision is that
both the antecedent and the consequent are verified in cogn theory
but only the consequent in physics, empirical science

Is there other knowledge

Knowledge by connaturality: feelings as revealing values
connaturality of divine grace (chap 4 of Method)