

Socrates: Very well, According to Aristotle and Aquinas, we abstract the common universal form from the particular individuating matter. We abstract treeness from trees, or justice from just men and just acts and just laws.

Kant: You reason from the particular to the universal, then. This is inductive reasoning. It is generalization. And inductive reasoning is only probable, not certain. So it is very uncritical to rest all the philosophy on this foundation!

Socrates: No, it is not inductive reasoning because it is not reasoning at all. "Abstraction" comes under what the medievals called the "first act of the mind", conceiving a concept, which is not expressed in a proposition at all but only in a term, a subject or predicate. *Abstraction* comes before the "second act of the mind", which is judgment, judging a predicate to be true of a subject. And it certainly comes before the "third act of the mind," reasoning from some judgments to others, from premises to a conclusion, whether inductively or deductively.

Kant: How does abstraction of universal form work? You just "see" it?

Socrates: I think it is something like a hunter entering a jungle to find a tiger. The hunter is the mind, the jungle is reality, or the world, and the tiger is the universal form. As the tiger lives in the jungle, the universal form exists in its particular substances. Justice exists in just people, acts, societies, and laws, and human nature exists in human beings, and greenness exists in green things.

Now let us suppose the hunter does not want to kill the tiger but just take it captive. He will shoot it with a drug that paralyzes it. Then he will take it out of the jungle and put it into a cage in a city zoo. Similarly, the mind abstracts the universal, which is unchanging and immobile, from the changing concrete things where it actually lives, so to speak, and cages it in a concept. It puts its prey into the mental realm, like a city zoo, which is full of other caged concepts, because there in its immobile cage it can be studied objectively and accurately and compared with the other universal forms.

Kant: Does this philosophy claim that minds make concepts?

Socrates: No. As zoos cannot create tigers, minds cannot create forms, only receive them from the jungles of the world through the actions of hunters,

which are mental acts. And when the mind receives a form into itself, that form in the mind is called a concept.