

## FRIEDMAN'S EPISTEMIC PROBLEM

BORIS GROZDANOFF, PH.D.  
SOFIA UNIVERSITY, MARCH 2<sup>ND</sup>

A PRIORI (KNOWLEDGE OR JUSTIFICATION): INDEPENDENT FROM EXPERIENCE  
TWO NOTIONS TO BE SPELLED OUT:

1. EXPERIENCE
2. INDEPENDENCE

### CURRENT DEBATE ON (2):

- DOES INDEPENDENCE INCLUDE EPISTEMIC FALLIBILITY OR NOT?
- IF IT DOES NOT: EASIER TASK FOR THE APRIORIST
- IF IT DOES: PROBLEMS; SHE HAS TO ACCOUNT FOR THE EPISTEMIC FALLIBILITY INDEPENDENCE FROM EXPERIENCE.
- FRIEDMAN FACES THE PROBLEM

<p>3. <b>DESIDERATA:</b></p> <p><b>[D1]</b> TO PRESERVE COMMITMENT TO A KANTIAN OR NEO-KANTIAN CONCEPTION OF A PRIORI PRINCIPLES IN THE EXACT SCIENCES [LOGIC, MATHEMATICS, PHYSICS].</p> <p><b>[D2]</b> TO ACCOUNT FOR THE DYNAMICS OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE. EPISTEMICALLY THAT WOULD INCLUDE FALLIBILITY OF SCIENTIFIC PROPOSITIONS AND THE CONDITIONS FOR THEIR REVISION.</p>	<p>“Although we explicitly acknowledge that what we are calling here a priori principles (both mathematical and physical) CHANGE AND DEVELOP ALONG WITH THE CONTINUAL PROGRESS OF EMPIRICAL NATURAL SCIENCE, AND IN RESPONSE TO EMPIRICAL FINDINGS, we still insist, against Quinean epistemological holism, that these principles should nonetheless be seen as constitutively a priori in something very much like the original Kantian sense.” [DOR, p. 71]</p> <p>“In periods of deep conceptual revolution, it is precisely these constitutively a priori principles, which are then SUBJECT TO CHANGE – UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE, NO DOUBT, FROM NEW EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ESPECIALLY ANOMALIES.” [Friedman, Michael [2000] “Transcendental Philosophy and A Priori Knowledge: A Neo-Kantian Perspective” in Boghossian and Peacocke (eds.) <i>New Essays on the A priori</i>, OUP; pp. 367 - 383; p. 383.]</p> <p>“If these .... principles ... can thus be empirically tested ... What real point is served by continuing to characterize such principles as a priori?” [DOR, p. 86]</p> <p>“The crucial question, however, is whether such a principle can thereby become empirically false?” [DOR, p. 87]</p> <p>“What can it possibly mean to call principles a priori that change and develop in response to empirical findings?” [DOR, p. 71]</p>
<p>4. <b>PROBLEMS WITH DESIDERATA AND WAY OF REACHING</b></p> <p>NATURAL QUESTIONS: WHY WOULD ONE WANT D1? WHY ONE SHOULD ACCEPT D2? WHY ONE SHOULD TRY TO COMBINE THE BOTH? THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS WITH FRIEDMAN'S ACCOUNT, HOWEVER ARE:</p> <p><b>HOW ONE COULD KEEP A PRIORI PRINCIPLES A PRIORI, IN THE FACE OF THE EXPLICITLY ADMITTED EMPIRICAL REVISABILITY OF THOSE PRINCIPLES?</b></p> <p><b>WHAT COULD BE A SUCCESSFUL STORY BEHIND THE DYNAMICS THAT REGULATES THE REVISION OF THE A PRIORI PRINCIPLES ?</b></p>	