

The Problem of Induction as Pseudo-Problematic:

Mysticism as Metalogical

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Within the mystical experience itself we can no more prescind from the problem associated with the notion of *causality* than from any other state of human affairs. In other words, mystical experience is no more exempt from logical problematics – simply because it deals with the individual in relation to the Absolute – than any other type of experience, and any epistemological attempt to render this account coherent must sooner or later come to terms with the *Problem of Induction*.

Let us first, however, be clear about the problem before we begin to address it. The sequence of events within which we are accustomed to discern *any* causal relation, such that the *effect* perceived is construed to be in *necessary* relation to a perceived *cause* – which is to say as invested with the same type of logical cogency that obtains between premises and conclusions – essentially result from what David Hume in his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* had called a “customary conjunction”, a kind of psychological reflex conditioned by the perceived regular succession of contiguous events. The implications of this type of putative association are profound, and critical to our examination of the concatenation of events we find occurring within the mystical experience.

Let us be more to the point. With no disconfirming instance occurring within our experience of any sequence of events that appear to instantiate a regular succession, we interpret what are essentially two separate and unrelated events – or events related only through observation – as *causally* conjoined and therefore *necessarily* related. A simple analogy will, I think, suffice. Suppose that each time I flip on the light in my study, a car is heard to backfire somewhere in the street. The coincidence at first strikes me as odd ... but I find it recurring again and again, that is

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to say, without exception. Further suppose that, beginning to suspect some causal relation between these two otherwise completely unrelated events, I begin to consciously examine this phenomenon by turning the switch on and off at both regular and irregular intervals – and each time, without failure, a car is heard to backfire. It is extremely likely at this point that I will posit what I interpret to be a *causal* connection to exist between the two, even though I find myself utterly unable to discover the nature of this apparent, but elusive, nexus between two otherwise discrete and unrelated events – if indeed there is one to be discovered at all – and we have no warrant, at least none served by logic, to believe that there is. Even one disconfirming instance will suffice to disabuse me of this notion, but none is foreseeably forthcoming. In other words, it is no less the case in ordinary states of affair, than it is in mysticism, that we cannot state *a priori* and therefore with apodictic certainty what course of events will follow those which precede them.¹

The implications of this assertion, together with the problematics inherent in it, have a direct and significant bearing upon mystical epistemology. While we are unable to say, in any event, what a particular experience will be, especially as it pertains to union with the Uncreated Absolute—whatever it *can* be, it *cannot* be temporal, for this possibility has been categorically eliminated by the *via negativa* as a *condition* to whatever type of experience *will* ensue, although we cannot positively say what this type of experience will be. One cannot, for example, experience participative *union* with the Timeless and Eternal God without experiencing the timelessness and eternity of God in that union which transcends time. And this is to say that the *negative logic* of the *via negativa* invests certain types of experiences subsequent to union with a *negative necessity*. In a sense, while it cannot *prescribe* certain experiences, it *proscribes* others. It informs the nature of subsequent experiences as no positive principle can. As David Hume had correctly pointed out, our experiences subsequent to a given event may indeed *always* be otherwise – but not when the *conditions* informing such experience, that is to say, as *prerequisite* to the possibility of that experience, preclude some clearly defined and distinguishable phenomena from it. In this sense, it is very much analogous, from a purely negative perspective, to the argument that Kant articulates in his attempt to answer essentially the same the question but within a positive context: “How are *a priori* synthetic judgments possible?”; a question to which he first formulates his answer in terms of the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, the principal

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features of which are what he calls the “two pure forms of sensible intuition serving as principles of *a priori* knowledge, namely space and time.”² These Kant saw as *necessary* features of any possible experience, and therefore could be posited *a priori* of every conceivable experience. While we cannot explore Kant’s argument in depth, a brief aside may prove helpful in illustrating our own point.

Mystical Transcendence and Transcendental Aesthetics

For Kant, every possible experience is *necessarily* invested with temporal and spatial aspects which he describes as the two forms of sensible intuition that are the *a priori*, the necessary, conditions of all appearances; time as universal to *every* intuition, and space as relative to every *outer* intuition. Every possible percept, every conceivable concept, Kant argues, is not just invested, but *necessarily* invested with at least one of these two forms of sensible intuition precisely because they are what he calls the “subjective conditions” of sensibility: they are the only way that we can apprehend data given our subjective constitution as such, in other words, given the inherent epistemological apparatus with which we have been constitutionally endowed by nature. In effect, the data delivered by sensibility acquire these spatio-temporal aspects precisely because our subjective constitution invests them with these features in order to make them available to us. As a result, we can state *a priori* that all possible experiences will be spatio-temporal in nature because space and time are the *conditions* under which alone data may be received given our unique subjective apparatus which synthesizes data through the forms of space and time through which alone they subsequently become intelligible to us. In the words of Kant, they are the very “condition of the possibility of appearances.”³ And this, in effect, is how synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible. Within the terms outlined by Kant in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, we can say, *a priori* (that is to say, with certainty) that the nature of any possible experience – even without being able to say *what* that experience will be – will at least be temporal or spatial, or both.

The resulting problem – the penalty, if you will – involved in acquiring this type of certitude of course, is that we subsequently acquire knowledge of what are essentially *appearances*, or

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phenomena, and not what Kant calls the *nouemna*, the objective realities concealed behind the forms of space and time; forms, we had seen, imposed upon the *noumena* of subjective necessity. For Kant, then, whatever our experiences may not be, the matter is that Kant's thesis, as we can now see, is essentially diametric to that of St. John. But where Kant had asked the question "how are *a priori* synthetic judgments possible?", or in other words, how does *necessity* – and therefore, in light of the trenchant objections of skepticism, *certainty* – not simply *obtain* relative to our experiences of the natural order, but *deductively follow from* epistemological considerations deriving from man's subjective constitution as such – St. John now asks, at least implicitly, how are epistemological considerations *necessarily* related to metaphysics in the mystical experience, such that the conclusions drawn by mystics about states subsequently to be experienced, not just follow, but *deductively follow from* previously defined mystical premises? In other words, how are the mystic's epistemological presuppositions *necessarily* related to claims about metaphysical realities encountered in the mystical experience – so that the mystic's purely negative claim, for example, concerning the ineffability of this experience, is validated? In short, are these claims merely analytical propositions that *necessarily* follow from epistemological premises to which no metaphysical reality necessarily corresponds – or do these premises themselves derive of necessity from the metaphysical features outlined by St. John? In a word, does, indeed, *deductive* certainty obtain – and if so, what does it say about the nature of the mystical experience that St. John describes?

To begin to answer this question, we must once again turn to the most fundamental epistemological feature deriving from the *via negativa* itself, namely that, unlike a positive or prescriptive principle which purports to eliminate an infinitude of other possible features or elements in the act of positing *one*, the *via negativa* does not dictate that certain types of experience *will* follow – to the exclusion of all other possible types of experience – but that certain clearly defined types of experience *will not* follow – and will not follow of *necessity* given the conditions under which alone these experiences may occur; conditions themselves dictated by the *via negativa* acting in conformity with the metaphysical parameters to which it is applied. In other words, the *via negativa*, not merely as a negative logical principle, but as a conditioning factor – a presupposition – of certain types of experience, invests each movement in the progress to mystical union with a deductive necessity relative to the type of experience that it

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will not be. We can apodictically assert that certain experiences will not be of such and such a nature simply because these types of experience are otherwise unavailable except *through* the *via negativa* which not simply abolishes ontological incommensurability, but in so doing establishes an epistemological correspondence grounded in the negativity of this metaphysical logic such that statements concerning any subsequent experience whatever will not simply be true, but be *necessarily* true. And this necessity clearly does not derive merely from relations obtaining between logical propositions, but from relations that obtain between ontological realities. That two of the terms negated by this negative principle of metaphysical logic, then, are precisely those terms which Kant posits as necessary to our apprehension of natural phenomena (to which Kant alone confines himself as the only legitimate province of reason) – space and time – is no coincidence.

In this regard, it turns out, St. John is in substantial agreement with Kant relative to the limitations of reason. But St. John would continue on where Kant defaulted, by appealing to knowledge not acquired through reason and relative to experiences that are not sensuously endowed. By a continuation of this inexorable logic, the descriptive utterances of the mystics are understood to deductively follow as so many conclusions from – if you will, consequences of – premises contained within the *via negativa* itself; for example, that certain experiences are unavailable except under certain clearly specified conditions, and that these conditions determine *a priori* and deductively that only such and such experiences can possibly follow. And it is precisely this type of deductive certainty relative to this unique type of experience which, I suggest, strongly corroborates the authenticity of the mystic's claim to a type of experience that is, at the same time, also validated by the demonstrable coherence of what he utters. Nor must we think that the type of certainty that obtains between the mystic and his experiences in any way compromises the acknowledged autonomy of God, for as we had seen, the *via negativa* does not necessitate *that* a particular experience follow from the mystical protocol – merely that *should* an experience follow (solely contingent upon the will of God), it will in fact be invested with certain negative features according to the inexorable logic of mysticism.

The *via negativa*, then, is not simply a practical propaedeutic to, but in fact is *the logic of mysticism*. But what are we to make of the *via negativa* itself? How are we to establish the validity of this negative principle of applied logic – not merely in its negative, logical function

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which, as we had seen, is essentially an existential application of the law of the excluded middle, or the principle of non-contradiction—but relative to the metaphysical assumptions in which we see it exercised by St. John in particular, and, for that matter, mystics in general? And our answer to this, of course, involves the entire metaphysical infrastructure of mysticism. While, from a purely phenomenological perspective, the *via negativa* presupposes the existence of the Absolute, the infinite, the eternal, etc., it is nevertheless a presupposition held to be verified in the mystical experience – which in turn validates the *via negativa* as corresponding to, if not a metaphysical reality, then at least a coherent claim to a perceived reality. In a word, there is an undeniable correspondence between the metaphysics and the experience – and while we may argue from the premises implied in the metaphysics to conclusions drawn from these premises – that is to say, find the conclusions to be implied in the premises and therefore deducible from them, we *cannot* argue from premises to experiences. And the existence of this type of correspondence between the premises implied in the metaphysics and the experience itself, I suggest, strongly supports the authenticity of the mystic's claim.

The reality which the metaphysics purports to describe, and the reality actually encountered by the mystic, correspond too exactly and too consistently to be considered less than strongly evidential. And this, in turn, brings us to a clearly related issue that will be examined in greater detail later on but which at the moment is extremely pertinent to the present inquiry: if experience substantiates the negative claims embodied in the *via negativa*, then this means that not only are statements about certain types of mystical experience logically and metaphysically consistent with the principles from which they purportedly derive, but that such statements deriving from these principles are in fact empirically substantiated in experience. The metaphysics of mysticism, then, is at least logically consistent. But what is more, its strictly logical claims are existentially instantiated in the mystical experience itself – which is to say that the principles correspond to realities. And unless this claim is discredited, the mystic is able to offer the skeptic at least two complementary credentials requisite to any science: correspondence with reason and compatibility with fact. Of course, the skeptic will demand much more of the mystic in the way of complete accountability, but, as we shall find, no more than the mystic would require of the skeptic in the demand for equal accountability.

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Three arguments, then, are essentially brought to bear upon the credibility of the mystical experience. It is one thing to state from a metaphysics that some dimension of reality exists qua rational; in other words, to conclude to some aspect of reality from purely rational premises. It is quite another thing to say that such a dimension has empirical reality. But what is more, it is something else altogether to find that a clear, coherent, correspondence exists, is demonstrable, between what are essentially rational premises and empirical conclusions. It is not merely to say, as in the first case, that the rational is real, but in light of the latter two cases, that the real is rational. In most sciences, for example, the empirical verification of a rationally consistent hypothesis suffices to at least conditionally validate the hypothesis as purporting to *say something* authentic about reality, and inasmuch as it does, it is held to have made a coherent claim *upon* reality. In other words, in light of the confirmation of the hypothesis, warrant is derived to make certain statements about, to predicate certain things of, reality in a way that is both rationally and empirically consistent. In short, the correspondence between the hypothesis and the empirical evidence is of such a nature as to be mutually corroborative, and where this corroboration occurs we are generally agreed that sufficient evidence exists to allow our claim of making a meaningful statement about some aspect of what is real. But what is more, in many cases certain aspects of the reality affirmed to exist by the physical sciences are characteristically unavailable except through an extremely sophisticated procedural protocol coupled with equally sophisticated technical apparatus. These aspects are not only typically beyond normal empirical acquaintance, but cannot, moreover, be apprehended unaided by artificial technology – and even when so apprehended exhibit such disproportion to ordinary perception as to appear to constitute something altogether different. It is not that the reality itself has changed or proven illusory – it is that the level of perception has changed. And this is to say that while the *methods* of attaining to certain ordinarily undisclosed aspects of reality are quite different between the mystic and the scientist, the *results* are strikingly similar. Too similar, in fact, to be summarily dismissed.

The Model of Science: a Reluctant Analogy

So let us carry the argument further. The reality which science purports to disclose to us is, for all practical purposes, intelligible, coherent, only to those who have submitted themselves to

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exacting and rigorous programs in the physical sciences covering an abstract spectrum ranging from integral calculus to quantum theory propaedeutic both to gaining access to, and to meaningfully interpreting, this otherwise and ordinarily undisclosed dimension of physical reality. We may even pursue the point further and say that these aspects of reality at which they arrive are typically unavailable to the ordinary man inasmuch as he lacks the basic aptitude requisite to the type of extremely abstract thought requisite to these disciplines. This is not intellectual arrogance – it is simply a candid assessment that could be equally turned upon the point of artistic ability. Nor am I persuaded that a specific aptitude is a democratic endowment that can be cultivated through education and that, therefore, all men are latently Heisenbergs or Pascals given the proper tutelage. But neither am I implying that there is a mystical aptitude in the way that there are other clear aptitudes within individuals for the arts or sciences. I am simply suggesting that certain dimensions of reality are no more democratically accessible through science than through mysticism. Our basic distrust of this argument, I think, stems from our inclination to believe that, in the case of science, while we ourselves are unable to enter into its mysteries, other men, better able than us, are, and therefore can confirm the realities – described by others – which we ourselves cannot.. But in the end this is either a restatement of the argument, or a deferment of the conclusion. In any case, the layman by and large trusts to the authenticity of the reality described by scientific specialists; specialists who, as we have said, had undergone long, arduous years of training in order to gain access to, and to coherently interpret, dimensions of reality available exclusively through special equipment presumed to authentically disclose elements of reality that in turn are interpretable only in terms of the most abstruse and recondite hypotheses. There is much more to the objection of science than this, but for the moment the analogy, I think, between mysticism and science is fairly obvious. The realities, then, defined by Heisenberg and St. John are in this respect equally opaque to the uninitiated.

Considered from this perspective, then, metaphysics is a statement about the ultimate nature of reality much in the way that physics is a statement about the ultimate nature of reality – and these essentially are not so much competing statements as complementary insights. It is not that there is a conflict about what constitutes the *nature* of ultimate reality – for this issue is entirely outside the speculative interest and competence of physics – as much as a divergence concerning what is *ultimate* in the nature of reality, and we arrive at divergent, even complementary, but not

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intrinsically conflicting answers to this question precisely because the one, physics, delimits the scope of its inquiry and establishes the limits of its competence relative to matter considered as the ultimate constituent of *physical* reality – a claim with which the mystic would not quarrel within its recognized and legitimate province – where, on the other hand, *metaphysics* resumes where physics leaves off and sees not the being of matter, but being as such, together with the relations obtaining between modes of being, as the ultimate nature of reality; a reality that clearly does not preclude physical being, but which is nevertheless not constrained solely, or even principally to it. In a real sense, the one appeals to that from which the other essentially prescind inasmuch as neither, in and of themselves, purport to provide a universal and exhaustive schematic of reality *in toto*, but only a general understanding of the principles underlying it. On the one hand, it would be both unproductive and fatuous to argue that only what is sensible is real, for this would leave a good deal more than pure mathematics and formal logic out in the cold. Or that states-of-mind alone are real – a statement neither entirely congenial to, nor likely to be endorsed by, mystic and physicist alike. Nor yet as the Platonists and Neoplatonists would contend that reality is quintessentially suprasensuous and that our empirical acquaintances are either entirely illusory or at best only impoverished representations of a sensibly inaccessible reality. St. John no less than the physicist would find each of these three alternatives unsatisfactory, and for reasons remarkably similar; reasons pointing to more than a casual correspondence between theory and fact, metaphysics and reality, which in turn strongly suggests that authenticity, in fact, is the copula between the two.

Our question then becomes this. If the logic and the metaphysics of mysticism rationally and consistently explain the mechanics of the mystical experience and, in effect, account for uniform and significant features of that experience – which as such has an empirical basis – then on what grounds are we to reject the mystical experience as non-veridical? The objections to which we have adverted – its characteristic unavailability to the majority of men, the unintelligibility of its utterances to the uninitiated or to layman, the lengthy and rigorous propaedeutics required to have access to ordinarily undisclosed dimensions of reality, its inability to be comprehended except by an apparently select few – without exception equally apply to science. And while it may be argued that one scientist can *confirm* the observations of another, we may equally argue on these very same terms that one mystic can *confirm* the experiences of another. And this is to say that

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the notion of *personal testimony* is a significant feature in both accounts. In short, it is very difficult to understand how the mystical experience is to be rejected offhand without at once rejecting not simply some extremely significant features of the scientific protocol, but science itself as purporting to both veridically and meaningfully convey the physical aspects of reality to us. And this really places us in a skeptical posture that few of us would choose to assume.

This is not to say, of course, that very clear differences do not exist between science and mysticism, but it nevertheless remains that the notion of credibility as it pertains to both accounts is too similar to be glossed over or simply ignored. And while we may be inclined to see reason as superordinate to science as a more comprehensive principle beneath which scientific theory is subsumed – and therefore more clearly evident within, and more confirmatory of, science than mysticism – some philosophical retrospect, I suggest, offers another and quite different perspective on the matter. In fact, the notion of reason, or better yet, specific features of the type of deductive reasoning from which a notion of necessity follows are, I suggest, much more strongly supported by the mystical account than by science, and for this simple reason: science is essentially unable to extricate itself from the problem of induction. It cannot forge, because it cannot discover, the vinculum that binds effects to putative causes. It cannot argue with the type of certainty that is apodictic, or implies necessity, that, for example, what so far *has* been the case relative to specific observations, *will* in fact *continue* to be the case; that given identical circumstances, the implementation of a specific hypothesis will necessarily yield identical results: in short, that the future will conform to the past.

Ex-Huming Hume

Let us assume that *B* has always – that is to say, historically – followed, accompanied, every observed instance of *A*. If we are then asked to justify our expectation that the next occurrence of *A* will be accompanied by the occurrence of *B* we will very likely say something like the following: “every time, without exception, that I have observed *A*, it has been accompanied by *B*, and I have never known of an instance of *B* that was not preceded by the occurrence of *A*: therefore *A* and *B* are so consistently, so uniformly conjoined that the occurrence of *A* is

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understood not simply as antecedent to *B* but *necessarily* antecedent to *B*. There is an observable sequence of uniform events to which no disqualifying instance can be appealed, so *A* therefore is the cause of *B*; there is, then, a necessary connection between *A* and *B* that can therefore be scientifically legislated as a (physical) law which admits of no exceptions.” And this, of course, is quite a subreptive leap from a *history* of a uniform sequence of events, to the *necessity* of the continuing uniformity of this sequence. And in the end, the justification of this argument will always be circular: it will always appeal to experience which will only disclose the sequence of observed events – but not the necessity presumed within them. In other words, there is no discoverable reason why *B*, and not *C* or *Y*, should follow an instance of *A* – it is simply the case that *B*, in our experience, always has. Now, of course we can argue, as indeed Russell has ⁴, that the discovery of uniformities alone, to which no disqualifying instances have thus far been observed, suffices for the rehabilitation of science through extreme probabilities that are quite nearly tantamount to certainty, and that this is really the best that we can hope for since nothing whatever in the way of necessity binds what we construe as effects to events we interpret as causes.

Now, the implications of this argument extend well beyond science and I think, relative to our own position, it will be necessary to examine Russell’s objection more closely, for it rather neatly summarizes the objection from skepticism in general. Russell essentially argues ⁵ along with Hume that our belief in causation results merely from the consistency, regularity, and uniformity of observed events. This much, I think, we are fairly clear about. But the interesting question relative to this line of reasoning is simply this: what are Russell’s grounds for stating that uniform events *cause* our belief in causation? Is it that *hitherto* uniform events have always caused our belief in causes? And who is to say that tomorrow these same uniformities will *not* cause our belief in causes, as they have in the past? To advert back to experience is to reiterate the very argument which Hume and Russell have discredited. And this is to say that if the premises upon which the argument is constructed are not true, then neither is the conclusion. If we *consistently* hold that we cannot argue from causes to effects except inductively, then the grounds upon which we make this statement today – our experience of uniformity in events is the cause of our belief in causes – may not (do not necessarily) hold true for tomorrow. If nothing in the way of necessity binds effects to causes, in either event the result is the same: the

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discreditation of the notion of causality both as it applies to events observed among phenomena, and as it pertains to the construction of the argument by which the notion of causality has been discredited. If this argument is valid, then Russell is correct in stating that we can achieve no more than probabilities. But by the very argument itself Russell cannot argue to this conclusion consistently from his premises. If, then, we have grounds for neither necessity nor probability, we have no grounds for either claims to knowledge or skepticism. Both are equally discredited.

If, on the other hand, this argument is not valid, if this line of reasoning is not sound, then either the premises or the conclusion, or both, are false. And I suggest that the premises are false while the conclusion remains true for this reason: Russell cannot explain the problem with believing in causes without appealing to a cause (of the problem). In other words, he argues *against* causes by *using* causes. And this really is to say that we cannot *talk* about the problem without invoking causes – and this would suggest that the *notion* of causality is necessary to any discourse on causality. In other words, even if, as Russell argues, we cannot discover it in events – we cannot dispense with it in discourse. And that with which we cannot dispense, we understand to be necessary – it is what we *mean* by necessary. The relation, moreover, between my expectations and certain uniform events cannot simply be a matter of inference: we do not *infer* that uniform events cause our belief – our belief is a direct result of, in other words is *causally* related to, these events. It is not the case that we conform our expectations to events; it is, rather, that our expectations arise *from*, are caused by, these events – whether or not this expectation in and of itself is warranted.

There is, it turns out, a necessary relation, not between the uniform occurrence of *B* subsequent to *A*, but between my belief and the events that have caused my belief. We should have no expectations at all, no belief whatever, apart from the events which informed these expectations. Beliefs and expectations, then, are necessarily related to uniform events. While there is no necessary reason for the sun to rise tomorrow, there is a necessary reason for my *expectation* that the sun will rise, and it is that I should have no such expectation except for the observed uniformity of the sun having risen every day. Nor can we argue that the conditions for our belief may not be the same tomorrow; that is to say, that the conditions from which alone the development of *expectations* derive may be different tomorrow from what they have been today, or that tomorrow the uniformities we observe will no longer cause any expectations regarding

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them whatsoever. For this would mean that we can have no expectations. But we do have expectations. Whether or not they are legitimate expectations – which is quite beside the point – is another question entirely, but the expectations that we do in fact possess are necessarily connected, arise out of, derive from, uniform sequences of events, and are unintelligible apart from them as the necessary condition of the formation of expectations. There is, in short, no other way that expectations are formed; they are necessarily derived from consistent and uniform sequences of events and cannot be understood apart from them.

Equally important, I suggest, is that the argument – essentially the Problem of Induction itself – is subreptive upon its own terms. It indicts what it holds to be a circular argument upon circular terms. It arrives, pseudo-syllogistically at a conclusion from, but in violation of, its own premises. What do I mean by this? Quite simply this: to hold that we have no *logical* warrant to *posit* a necessary connection between what *now* appear to be two discrete and unrelated events (say the occurrence of *B* invariably following each and every occurrence of *A* with no disqualifying instance) because we have *hitherto* been unable to discover such a connection – is to make the subreptive leap to the very proposition which the argument holds to be untenable: that the future will conform with the past: in other words, because we *have not* been able to establish a necessary connection up to this point in time, does not warrant the conclusion that we will not be able to establish such a connection in the future. Yes, nothing in the way of contradiction results if we hold that *B* will *not* immediately follow the occurrence of *A* simply because it always and without exception *has*. But by that same token, nothing in the way of contradiction results if we affirm that what we have been unable to establish today, we will be able to establish tomorrow. Upon what basis can we maintain that the argument (to wit, against causality) which now holds today, will hold tomorrow? Inevitably, ineluctably, we invoke the same premises, adduce the same terms that the argument has already repudiated. In the end, we can make no claims whatever, logical or otherwise, upon the terms invoked by the Problem of Induction, not even the problematic posed by the pseudo-problem itself.

It would appear that both Russell and Hume have made something more in the way of a psychological observation than an epistemological claim, and if this in fact is the case then their argument is of little interest to us from a purely epistemological point of view. Their argument essentially appears to be more along the lines of operant conditioning than epistemological

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analysis: in effect, they appear to be conflating two entirely separate issues: our conditioning to observed uniformities, which is a psychological claim, with our inability to discover necessity between expectations and the events that precipitate them, an epistemological claim which in the end, I argue, is a mistaken claim. What they really seem to be talking about is, fundamentally, the provenance of certain types of *belief*. And this, in the end, is all that the skeptic is left with if nothing whatever in the way of necessity obtains in our experiences. But I am not persuaded that this is the case relative to all our experiences, and I suggest that it very clearly is not the case relative to mysticism in particular. The point from which we had departed in this rather long, but I think necessary, aside is this: the pronouncements of science, widely accepted as paradigms of reason, are ineluctably subverted by the problem of induction, and as a result, the type of deductive certainty toward which it strives, it cannot attain.

We had further argued that as a consequence of this disability, reason of this deductive type finds a more consistent paradigm in the metaphysics of mysticism than in the physics of science, and essentially for this reason: within the phenomenology of mysticism, there is no way of stating without contradiction that, for example, subsequent to the negation of time, temporal experiences may nevertheless follow. To presuppose the negation of time as the *condition* to a certain type of experience is to be able to assert not simply with certainty, but with *deductive* certainty that, whatever subsequent experience will be, it will not be temporal. In other words, as metaphysical logic, the *via negativa* binds its premises to its conclusions with a deductive certainty that is clearly analytical in nature. As an existential principle – a condition – it also connects certain types of experience mystical in nature, to certain other types of experience negative in nature which the former presupposes. In either case the conclusions are understood to be implied in the premises, and as such, to deductively follow from them. The mystic, therefore, can appeal to the type of certainty to which the physicist cannot – but it is a certainty only negatively descriptive in nature and will yield no knowledge whatever of what subsequent experiences *will* be; only what they will *not* be. And while the scope of this knowledge is confined to negative assertions, they are at least deductively certain relative to the nature of future experiences – an assertion to which no law of physics can lay claim. And the deductive nature of this certainty itself, I suggest, coupled with the testimony – together with the consistency, uniformity, and agreement

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with reason that we had examined earlier – puts the burden of proof not on the mystic, but the burden of disproof on the skeptic.

There remain problems of another type, however, which must be discussed before concluding our analysis; problems relating to the authenticity of the mystical experience in light of several of the more significant objections commonly brought to bear against it. In attempting to substantiate the mystic's claim upon reality, if we find that the criteria to which we appeal is conceded to substantiate other types of experience as genuine, and not illusory – if this same criteria, in other words, holds true for the mystic's claim as well, then at the very least the probable authenticity of the mystical experience must be conceded also. In the following prolepsis, then, we will consider some of these objections which, if a coherent epistemological account of mysticism is to be achieved, must ultimately be answered.

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