

**Philosophy 203**  
***History of Modern Western Philosophy***

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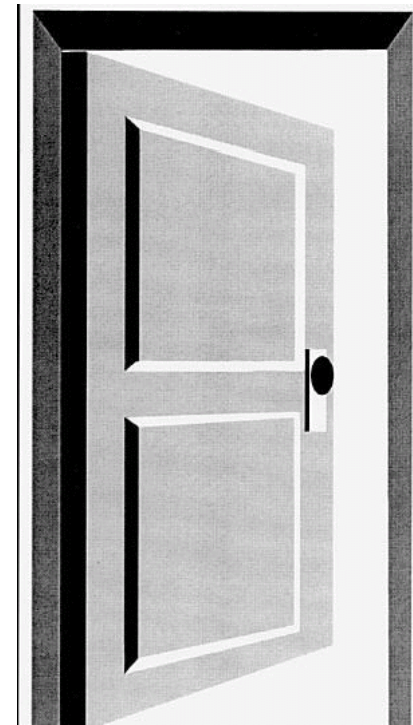


**Class #27**  
**The Transcendental Deduction**  
**The Refutation of Idealism**

# Review

## Introduction

- To make room for metaphysics, Kant argues that there are synthetic *a priori* judgments.
  - mathematics
  - physics
- Since these judgments are synthetic, they do not follow simply from conceptual analysis.
- Since these judgments are *a priori*, they can not be learned from experience.
- The door is open to serious metaphysical work.
- Kant works backwards, or transcendently, to the conditions that must obtain in order for us to have synthetic *a priori* knowledge.
- Such conditions will be the necessary structures of our logic, or reasoning.



# Review

## Transcendental Aesthetic

- There are two coordinated aspects of our cognition: intuition and understanding.
  - In intuition, we are given the matter of cognition.
  - In understanding, we apply concepts to intuitions to create thought.
- There are two pure forms of intuition: space and time.
  - All possible experience presumes space and time.
- Space is the form of outer sense.
  - “The representation of space must already be presupposed in order for certain sensations to be referred to something outside me (i.e. referred to something in a location of space other than the location in which I am)...We can never have a representation of there being no space, even though we are quite able to think of there being no objects encountered in it. Hence space must be regarded as the condition for the possibility of appearances...” (A23-4/B38-9, AW 730b-731a).
- Time is the form of inner sense.
  - “Simultaneity or succession would not even enter our perception if the representation of time did not underlie them *a priori*”(A30/B46, AW 733a).
- The pure forms of intuition are ways in which we structure the world of things in themselves, not ways in which the world exists in itself.

# Hume's Influence

- Hume reinterpreted 'cause' as a mental phenomenon.
- Taking space and time to be forms of intuition, Kant extends Hume's claims about causation.
- Space and time are not things in themselves.
- Consequently, Kant is able to take objects in space and time to be empirically real.
- "Our exposition teaches that space is *real* (i.e. objectively valid) in regard to everything that we can encounter externally as object, but teaches at the same time that space is *ideal* in regard to things when reason considers them in themselves, i.e., without taking into account the character of our sensibility. Hence we assert that space is *empirically real* (as regards all possible outer experience), despite asserting that space is *transcendentally ideal*, i.e., that it is nothing as soon as we omit [that space is] the condition of the possibility of all experience and suppose space to be something underlying things in themselves" (A28/B44, AW 732b).

# Kant is an Empirical Realist and a Transcendental Idealist

- The world of space and time, of appearances, is the real world.
- We can say nothing of the noumenal world of things in themselves.
  - not even that they are in space and time
- Berkeley's empirical (or material) idealism made the mistake of denying an outer, material world on the basis of the transcendence of the noumenal world.
- The rationalists, as transcendental realists, made the mistake of asserting knowledge of things in themselves.
- Kant's claim is that we can have significant knowledge of an external world (of appearances) without claiming any knowledge of the noumenal world.
- Space and time are properties of our representations of the world, and not the world as it is in itself.
- Space and time are real properties of empirical objects.

A collage of mathematical formulas and diagrams on a grid background. The top section features various algebraic and trigonometric identities such as  $(x+y) \cdot (x-y) = x^2 - y^2$ ,  $3 \times 3 = 9$ ,  $15 \cdot 4 = 2 \cdot 18$ ,  $(x+y) \cdot (x-y) = x^2 - y^2$ ,  $3 \times 3 = 9$ ,  $\sin$ ,  $\cos$ ,  $\frac{a^2 - b^2}{2a}$ ,  $x_1 = x_2$ ,  $y = y + 6$ ,  $2 \times 2 = 4$ , and  $x_1 = x_2$ . The middle section shows a triangle with vertices labeled  $A$ ,  $B$ , and  $C$ , and a point  $D$  on the base  $BC$ . The bottom section includes the formula  $r = \frac{a+c-b}{2}$ ,  $x_1 = \frac{a^2 - b^2}{2a}$ ,  $\sin$ ,  $\cos$ ,  $(x+y) \cdot (x-y) = x^2 - y^2$ ,  $x_1 = x_2$ ,  $\sin$ ,  $\cos$ , and  $x_1 = x_2$ . A white vertical bar is positioned on the right side of the collage.

- Marcus, Modern Philosophy, Slide 6

# From Intuition to Understanding

- So Kant separates two faculties of cognition.
  - sensibility (the faculty of intuition)
  - understanding
- The faculty of intuition gives us appearances.
  - Appearances are the raw data, the content, of experience.
  - Our intuitions are passive.
- The raw data of intuition is processed in the understanding by the imposition of concepts.
  - “All our intuitions, as sensible, rest on our being affected; concepts, on the other hand, rest on functions. By *function* I mean the unity of the act of arranging various representations under one common representation” (A68/B93, AW 738b).
- This act of arranging what is given in intuition is what Kant calls synthesis of the manifold.
- This synthesis is then cognized by the structured application of concepts in the understanding.
- If the synthesis is empirical, then we have an ordinary empirical cognition.

# Pure Synthesis

- If the synthesis is pure, then we can arrive at pure concepts of the understanding, which are nevertheless the conditions of possible experience.
- Intuition and understanding thus work together to produce experience.
- “Thoughts without content are empty; intuitions without concepts are blind” (A51/B76, AW 737b).
- The transcendental aesthetic consists of Kant’s explications of the pure intuitions of space and time.
- The transcendental analytic is the much longer explication of the categories of the understanding, how we impose our conceptual apparatus on what is given in intuition.

# Un-Cognized Appearances

- What is given in intuition is not necessarily structured by the understanding.
- We are given appearances in space and time, but without any conceptual structure.
- “Appearances might possibly be of such a character that the understanding would not find them to conform at all to the conditions of its unity. Everything might then be so confused that, e.g., the sequence of appearances would offer us nothing providing us with a rule of synthesis and thus corresponding to the concept of cause and effect, so that this concept would then be quite empty, null, and without signification. But appearances would nonetheless offer objects to our intuition; for intuition in no way requires the functions of thought” (A90-1/B 123, AW 744a).



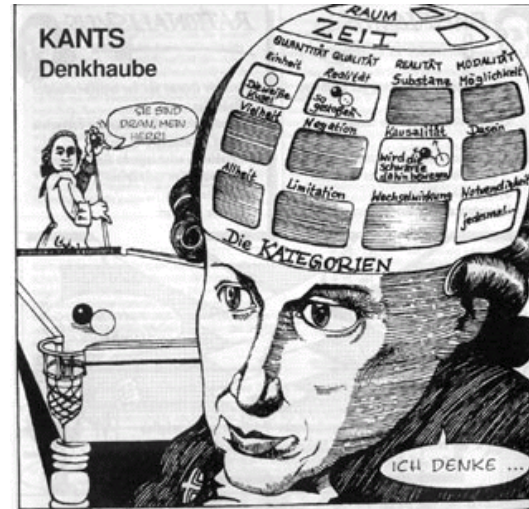
# Our Conceptual Apparatus

both subjective and objective

- In order to think about those appearances, we have to cognize them.
- We cognize using whatever conceptual apparatus we have.
- That conceptual apparatus is subjective, in that it belongs to us individually.
- But it is also objective, because the world of objects is precisely the world of appearances, what is given in intuition.



# Metaphysical and Transcendental Deductions



- Kant presents two deductions of the concepts.
- In the Metaphysical Deduction, Kant presents the categories.
- In the Transcendental Deduction, he argues that they must apply to all understanding.

# Kant and Aristotle

- The Transcendental Analytic is Kant's transcendental derivation of the concepts we impose on appearances given in intuition.
- Kant presents what he takes to be a complete table of concepts, dividing them into four classes.
- In presenting the table, he recalls Aristotle's work on the categories.
- Ten categories of being
  - A1. substance (e.g. man, horse)
  - A2. quantity (e.g. four-foot)
  - A3. quality (e.g. white, grammatical)
  - A4. relation (e.g. double, larger)
  - A5. where (e.g. in the market)
  - A6. when (e.g. yesterday)
  - A7. being-in-a-position (e.g. is-standing)
  - A8. having in addition (e.g. has-hat-on)
  - A9. doing (e.g. cutting)
  - A10. being affected (e.g. suffering, passion)
- According to Aristotle, all language, indeed all thought, belongs to one of these categories.
- When we say, or think, something, we combine instances from two or more of the categories.

# Adapting Aristotle's List

- If Aristotle's list were complete, we could adopt it as a fundamental theory about our thought.
- If, further, this list were not merely accidentally complete, but necessarily complete, we might see it as indicating *a priori* conditions of human cognition.
- Such a list could not be gathered empirically.
- Hume presented an empirical collection of psychological capacities, as did Hobbes and Locke.
  - Look where it got those guys: skepticism!
- Kant wants to make sure that the list is complete, and that it is *a priori*.
- For Kant, the categories will function as laws of thought, as logical.
- “[The categories] are concepts of an object in general whereby the object's intuition is regarded as *determined* in terms of one of the *logical functions* in judging” (B128, AW 745b).
- Kant's logic is thus a psychological program.

# Four Conditions for the Transcendental Analytic

- (1) The concepts must be pure rather than empirical.
- (2) They must belong not to intuition and sensibility, but to thought and the understanding.
- (3) They must be elementary concepts, and must be distinguished carefully from concepts that are either derivative or composed of such elementary concepts.
- (4) Our table of these concepts must be complete, and the concepts must occupy fully the whole realm of the pure understanding (A64/B89, AW 737b).

# The Categories of Thought

twelve categories in four classes

- Quantity
  - Unity
  - Plurality
  - Totality
- Quality
  - Reality
  - Negation
  - Limitation
- Relation
  - Inherence and Subsistence (substance)
  - Causality
  - Community (Interaction)
- Modality
  - Possibility and Impossibility
  - Existence and Non-Existence
  - Necessity and Contingency

# The Universality of the Categories

- Kant does not argue that any being would have to be subject to the categories.
- He argues that the categories apply to any being with separate faculties of intuition (sensibility) and thought (understanding).
- The categories are used to unify, through synthesis, the manifold given in intuition.
- They apply only to creatures whose relation with the world essentially involves representation.
- “For if I were to think of an understanding that itself intuited (as, e.g., a divine understanding that did not represent given objects but through whose representation the objects would at the same time be given or produced), then in regard to such cognition the categories would have no signification whatever. The categories are only rules for an understanding whose entire faculty consists in thought, i.e. in the act of bringing to the unity of apperception the synthesis of the manifold that has been given to it from elsewhere in intuition” (B145, AW 750a-b).

# Transcendental Deduction and the Categories

- The development of these categories proceeds transcendently, rather than empirically.
- Hobbes, Locke, and Hume proceeded empirically, looking at our psychological processes and generalizing.
- Kant insists that such empirical deductions could never yield the necessity that underlies synthetic *a priori* reasoning.
- “Experience contains two quite heterogeneous elements: namely, a *matter* for cognition, taken from the senses; and a certain *form* for ordering this matter, taken from the inner source of pure intuition and thought. It is on the occasion of the impressions of the senses that pure intuition and thought are first brought into operation and produce concepts. Such exploration of our cognitive faculty’s first endeavors to ascend from singular perceptions to universal concepts is doubtless highly beneficial, and we are indebted to the illustrious *Locke* for first opening up the path to it. Yet such exploration can never yield a *deduction* of the pure *a priori* concepts, which does not lie on that path at all. For in view of these concepts’ later use, which is to be wholly independent of experience, they must be able to display a birth certificate quite different from that of descent from experiences” (A86-7/B118-9, AW 742b-743a).

# Causation: A Case Study

- Consider the difference between an instance of causal connection and one of accidental conjunction.
  - A massive object falling to the surface of the Earth
  - Checking my mail and then having lunch at the diner
- The causal relation has an element that necessitates the effect.
- The accidental relation has no such aspect.
  - I could check my mail without going to the diner.
- If the world were Humean (i.e. a world of conjunction rather than connection), then all relations among events would be like that between the mail and diner.
- But, in fact, the world is full of causal connections.
- “This concept [causation] definitely requires that something, A, be of such a kind that something else, B, follows from it *necessarily* and according to an *absolutely universal rule*. Although appearances do provide us with cases from which we can obtain a rule whereby something usually happens, they can never provide us with a rule whereby the result is *necessary*” (A91/B124, AW 744a).

# The Transcendental Deduction: An Overview

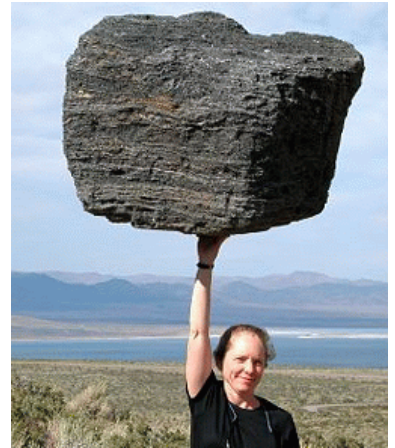
- Intuition presents us with bare appearances.
  - Raw appearances come to us as an unordered, unstructured, mess.
  - These bare appearances have to be structured in order to be thought.
- We impose concepts, the categories of thought, on the manifold.
- The deduction is an attempt to show that the categories necessarily apply to the manifold given in intuition.
- Another way to put the goal is to show how the sensible and intellectual functions of our cognitive capacities align.

# Van Cleve on the Deduction

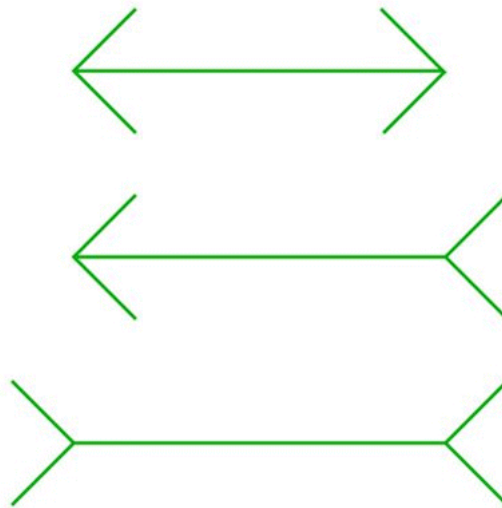
1. *The Unity Premise*: All representations of which I am conscious have the unity of apperception.
  2. *The Synthesis Premise*: Representations can have such unity only if they have been synthesized.
  3. *The Category Premise*: Synthesis requires the application of Kant's categories.
- Conclusion*: The categories apply to all representations of which I am conscious.



# Unity and Synthesis



- The unity is both objective and subjective.
  - It is subjective because it is my unity.
  - “Just as appearances exist not in themselves but only relatively to the subject in whom the appearances inhere insofar as the subject has senses, so the laws exist not in the appearances but only relatively to that same being insofar as that being has understanding” (B164, AW 754b).
  - It is objective, since it represents to me external objects
  - “We must now explain how it is possible, through *categories*, to cognize *a priori* whatever objects *our senses may encounter* - to so cognize them as regards not the form of their intuition, but the laws of their combination -and hence, as it were, to prescribe laws to nature, and even to make nature possible” (B159-60, AW 753a).
- Contrast:
  - ‘if I support this body, then I feel a pressure of heaviness’
  - ‘this body is heavy’
- Since we have knowledge of physical laws, we are able to make the latter claim.
- Unless the subjective unity of apperception were also objective, we could only make the former claim.



“These lines look like they differ in length, but they are actually the same length.”

# Objectivity

- Relations among appearances are not merely arbitrary or accidental.
- We know of causal relations.
- Thus, we must be able to make objective claims about objects, not merely subjective claims.
  - Hume's skepticism was problematic precisely because we do know about causal relations.
  - Balls of uranium and balls of gold
- Intuitions become objects for an individual, but they are still objects.
- Instead of opposing subjectivity merely to objectivity, Kant is making a three-part distinction:
  - subjective
  - objective
  - transcendental/noumenal
- We are not making the noumenal world possible.
- But, nature is not a property or aspect of the noumenal world.
- It is a result of our structuring the raw data of experience that we are given in intuition.
- We can distinguish between fantasies and appearances.

# The Category Premise

1. *The Unity Premise*: All representations of which I am conscious have the unity of apperception.

2. *The Synthesis Premise*: Representations can have such unity only if they have been synthesized.

3. *The Category Premise*: Synthesis requires the application of Kant's categories.

*Conclusion*: The categories apply to all representations of which I am conscious.

- Establishing the Category Premise is a long affair, taking Kant deep into the *Analytic of Principles*.
- Kant shows that the categories apply to all creatures that use intuition, that represent the world.
- Even my own existence is known only through the categories, only as an appearance.
  - “Although my own existence is not appearance (still less mere illusion), determination of my existence can occur only in conformity with the form of inner sense and according to the particular way in which the manifold that I combine is given in inner intuition” (B157-8, AW 752b).
- An infinite mind might work by direct awareness, not by representation.
  - That mind would have no use for the categories.
- Any pure concepts will only apply to objects of possible experience.
  - Mathematical propositions hold only for objects of possible experience.
  - “The pure concepts of the understanding, even when they are (as in mathematics) applied to *a priori* intuitions, provide cognition only insofar as these intuitions...can be applied to empirical intuitions... Consequently the categories cannot be used for cognizing things except insofar as these things are taken as objects of possible experience” (B147-8, AW 751a).

# The Categories and Inner and Outer Sense

- When I turn the empirical intuition of a house into a perception by apprehending the intuition's manifold, then in this apprehension I presuppose the *necessary unity* of space and of outer sensible intuition as such; and I draw, as it were, the house's shape in conformity with this synthetic unity of the manifold in space. But this same unity, if I abstract from the form of space, resides in the understanding, and is the category of the synthesis of the homogeneous in an intuition as such, i.e. the category of *magnitude*. Hence the synthesis of apprehension, i.e. perception, must conform throughout to that category (B 162, AW 754a).
- This synthetic unity, as an *a priori* condition under which I combine the manifold of an *intuition as such*, is - if I abstract from the constant form of *my* inner intuition, i.e., from time - the category of cause; through this category, when I apply it to my sensibility, *everything that happens is, in terms of its relation, determined by me in time as such*. Therefore apprehension in such an event, and hence the event itself, is subject - as regards possible perception - to the concept of the *relation of effects and causes*; and thus it is in all other cases (B163, AW 754a).

# Transcendental Discovery of the Categories

- Abstracting space and time, we find that the categories were presupposed.
- We do not, via abstraction, create the categories.
- We discover them already imposed on our experiences.
- “The *possibility of experience* is what provides all our *a priori* cognition with objective reality. Now experience rests on the synthetic unity of appearances, i.e., on a synthesis of appearances in general performed according to concepts of an object. Without such synthesis, experience would not even be cognition, but would be a rhapsody of perceptions” (A156/B195, AW 761a).
- The forms of intuition meet up with the categories of the understanding because they are both *a priori* impositions of the subject.
  - ▶ “Either experience makes these concepts possible, or these concepts make experience possible. The first alternative is not what happens as regards the categories (nor as regards pure sensible intuition). For they are *a priori* concepts and hence are independent of experience...The categories contain the grounds, on the part of the understanding, of the possibility of all experience as such” (B167, AW 755a-b).
- We don’t know about the conditions on objects in the noumenal world.
- We do know that for us, experiences (i.e. appearances of objects in nature) must have certain abstract features.

# After the Transcendental Deduction

- Kant explains, or transcendently deduces, all of the particular categories.
- Then, he shows how his transcendental idealism applies to a variety of traditional philosophical problems and paradoxes:
  - the question of the existence of an external world
  - whether space and time are absolute or relational
  - whether we have free will
- In some cases, Kant sides with the rationalists, claiming that we have knowledge.
  - certainty of mathematics
  - knowledge of an external world
- In other cases, Kant finds the rationalists' claims overly dogmatic, exceeding the limits of pure reason.

# Two Last Topics in Kant's *Critique*

1. The refutation of idealism
2. The ontological argument for the existence of God

# The Refutation of Idealism



Kant lecturing to Russian officers

# Overview of the Refutation

- Neither Berkeleyan idealism nor Humean skepticism are justified, given the conclusions of the Transcendental Analytic.
  - “**Theorem** The mere, but empirically determined, consciousness of my own existence proves the existence of objects in space outside me” (B275, AW 782a).
- First, Kant distinguishes between problematic idealism, which he attributes to Descartes, and dogmatic idealism, which he attributes to Berkeley.
  - The dogmatic idealist complains that space and time must be properties of the noumenal world.
  - But, since we can’t know anything of the noumenal world, then we must have no knowledge of space and time.
- By taking space and time to be pure forms of intuition, Kant provides a context for rejecting dogmatic idealism.
  - We can take them to be objective properties without committing to knowledge of the noumenal world.
- Thus, the real problem for Kant is the problematic idealist.
  - The skeptic of the First Meditation
  - “Problematic idealism...alleges that we are unable to prove by direct experience an existence apart from our own...The proof it demands must...establish that regarding external things we have not merely *imagination* but also *experience*. And establishing this surely cannot be done unless one can prove that even our *inner* experience, indubitable for Descartes, is possible only on the presupposition of *outer* experience” (B275, AW 782a).

# Tlumak's Version of the Refutation, Part I

1. I am judging.
2. Some act of judging is occurring.
3. Any act of judging is an act of consciousness or awareness.
4. Acts of consciousness or awareness are representative (have a content).
5. Awareness of the instantaneous is impossible.
6. So the content of awareness is non-instantaneous.
7. Any non-instantaneous content is a successive content, that is, a series of items occurring in an order, and not all at a single instant.
8. So judgmental awareness is of a succession of items.
9. Awareness of succession implies awareness of a plurality of items as a plurality - awareness of a diversity or manifold.
10. Awareness of a plurality of items as a plurality requires that the plurality be apprehended as a numerically identical collection over the time during which the awareness is occurring.
11. This identity of the manifold over time requires that the act of awareness of this identical manifold connect up or relate the various elements which comprise it, that is, be aware of all the elements together.
12. Such a connective awareness requires that earlier items in the series be recognized together with the later items, and that all the items be recognized as belonging to this unity over time.
13. Only a persisting, identical subject of awareness can be connective; a series or collection of diverse subjects of consciousness is incapable of such connective activity.
14. So any act of judgment requires a persisting judger.

# Tlumak's Version of the Refutation, Part II

15. An identical judger must be able to be aware of his unity of consciousness.
16. But awareness of an objectless awareness itself is impossible. I can be aware of consciousness only by being aware of the object of consciousness.
17. So awareness of a persisting consciousness requires awareness of a persisting object of consciousness.
18. So awareness of succession requires awareness of something persisting.
19. This something persisting cannot be an item in the series, or of the succession, since only by being aware of it can I be aware of the series.
20. This series of items (of acts of representation) constitutes my mental life.
21. So the persisting something is not part of my mental life.
22. But if something is not part of my mental life, it is existentially and attributively independent of me.
23. And since it is something which I can perceptually identify and which persists, it is re-identifiable.
24. So the persisting something required for awareness of succession, which in turn is required for judging, is an objective particular.
25. So I am aware of an objective particular.