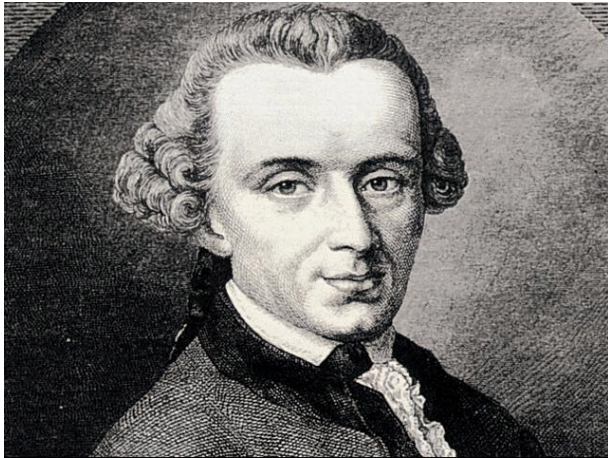


Philosophy 203
History of Modern Western Philosophy

Russell Marcus
Hamilton College
Spring 2016



Class #25
Kant's Copernican Revolution
The Synthetic *A Priori*
Forms of Intuition

Kant iRAT

- 8 minutes

Team Activity

Kant tRAT

- 9 minutes
- If you want to write an appeal, you can come get a form at any time.
- No opening your textbooks or notes until after the RAT is done!

Business

- Papers *or* End-of-Unit-4 Writing Assignment are due on Thursday.
 - We'll draw questions at the end of class.
- The list of questions for the final is posted.
- The End-of-Unit-5 Writing Assignment will be distributed next week.
 - Draw questions on the last day of class.
 - Due at the time of the final.
- Final Peer Evaluations will go out next week, too.

The *Critique of Pure Reason*

- First Critique
 - “Is metaphysics possible?”
 - “If so, how?”
 - What are the limits of human knowledge?
- Two editions
 - A version, in 1781
 - B version, in 1787
- The Second Critique (*Critique of Practical Reason*) concerns moral philosophy.
- The Third Critique (*Critique of Judgment*) concerns aesthetics.
- Kant’s work marks the end of the modern era.
 - Continental tradition
 - 19th century idealism (Fichte, Hegel, Bradley)
 - Marx, Comte, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche
 - Sartre, Foucault, Zizek
 - Analytic tradition
 - Mill, Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein
 - Quine, Kripke, Lewis

On 'Critique'

Critique has been used as a verb meaning "to review or discuss critically" since the 18th century, but lately this usage has gained much wider currency, in part because the verb *criticize*, once neutral between praise and censure, is now mainly used in a negative sense. But this use of *critique* is still regarded by many as pretentious jargon... (*American Heritage Dictionary*, Fourth Edition).

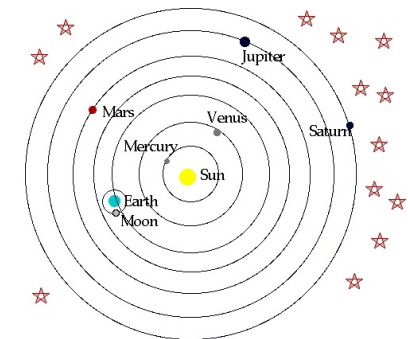
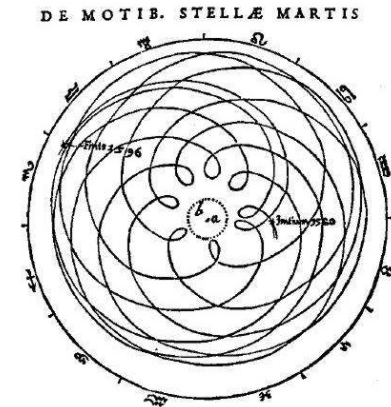
'Reason'

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*

- Everyone we have read accepts that we have some sort of ability to reason.
- The rationalists and empiricists disagreed about the matter for reason.
 - The rationalists thought that the content of our judgments is provided by innate ideas and (maybe) sense experience.
 - The empiricists thought that the content is only sensory, and looked to reduce reasoning to some kinds of psychological associations among images.
- They also disagree about the nature of reason itself.
 - Rationalists: innate principles and capacities
 - Empiricists: psychological associations among images
- Kant rejects both rationalism (dogmatic, going beyond its true abilities) and empiricism (skeptical).
- A proper analysis of the faculty of reason will synthesize, unite, and answer all legitimate philosophy questions.
- Kant's project is logical.
 - Taking logic as the laws of thought
 - Reason can determine an object (structure it).
 - Reason can make it actual (pure thought).
 - Some cognition is pure, reason acting on itself.

Kant's Copernican Revolution

- Aristoteleans believed that the sun, stars, and other celestial bodies circled the earth.
- Astronomical discoveries made the cycles of those bodies highly complicated.
- Copernicus and others found that the mathematics became tractable if he posited a moving earth.
 - ▶ “Having found it difficult to make progress there when he assumed that the entire host of stars revolved around the spectator, he tried to find out whether he might not be more successful if he had the spectator revolve and the stars remain at rest” (Bxvi, AW 720a).
- Hume and Berkeley found it impossible to justify knowledge of the material world by assuming that our cognition has to conform to objects.
 - ▶ We are stuck, either with Berkeley, as idealists, or with Hume, as skeptics.
- But, if the objects have to conform to our cognition, then we might have *a priori* knowledge of those objects.
 - ▶ Transcendental Idealism



Kant On Locke and Hume

Locke left the door wide open for *fanaticism*; for once reason has gained possession of such rights, it can no longer be kept within limits by indefinite exhortations to moderations. Hume, believing that he had uncovered so universal a delusion—regarded as reason—of our cognitive faculty, surrendered entirely to *skepticism*. We are now about to try to find out whether we cannot provide for human reason safe passage between these two cliffs, assign to it determinate bounds, and yet keep open for it the entire realm of its appropriate activity (B128, AW 745b)

Subjective Idealism

- One way in which objects conform to our cognition is in imagination, when we fantasize.
- If all of the world were merely one person's fancy, then the objects of that world would necessarily conform to that person's cognition.
- Such a view of the world would be an unacceptable, subjective idealism.
 - Is Berkeley a subjective idealist?

Transcendental Idealism

- In Kant's transcendental idealism, the world conforms to our cognition because we can only cognize in certain ways.
 - The world of things-in-themselves remains, as it did for Hume, inaccessible, completely out of range of our cognition.
 - The noumenal world is beyond the limits of possible experience.
- But any possible experience has to conform to our cognitive capacities.
 - The phenomenal world, the world of possible experience, is necessarily structured according to those capacities.
- A proper understanding of that phenomenal world must include a full examination of those structuring capacities.

Our Cognitive Capacities

intuition and understanding

- Intuition (sensibility) is our mental faculty for having something presented to us.
- Understanding, which is structured according to certain basic concepts, is our mental faculty for determining, or thinking, about objects.
- All objects have to be presented in intuition and determined by concepts in order to be thought.
- Thus, all of experience necessarily conforms to our cognition.
- Logic, as the laws of thought, will help us understand our faculty of cognizing, and will thus help us understand the phenomenal world.

Kant Against Rationalists

- We should distinguish between the realm of objects of possible experience and the world of transcendent objects.
- God, for example, is outside the range of possible experience and thus can not be an object of knowledge.
 - ▶ “In order to reach God, freedom, and immortality, speculative reason must use principles that in fact extend merely to objects of possible experience; and when these principles are nonetheless applied to something that cannot be an object of experience, they actually do always transform it into an appearance, and thus they declare *all practical extension* of reason to be impossible. I therefore had to deny *knowledge* in order to make room for *faith*” (Bxxx, AW724a-b)
- Other topics outside the range of our possible experience
 - ▶ freedom
 - ▶ immortality
 - ▶ Infinitude of space and time
 - ▶ Ultimate constituents of the world (monads or atoms)
- We can not have any knowledge of such topics.

Kant's Central Claim

- Proper metaphysics, within the bounds of reason, is possible; it consists of synthetic *a priori* judgments.
 - Mathematics
 - Causation and induction
- Two distinctions
 - Analytic vs synthetic claims
 - *A priori* vs empirical, or *a posteriori*, claims
- Bonus distinction:
 - Necessary vs. contingent claims

Team Activity

Language, Epistemology, Metaphysics

- The analytic/synthetic distinction is linguistic, about meanings or concepts.
 - ▶ All bachelors are unmarried; 'bachelor' contains 'unmarried'.
 - ▶ This apple is red; there's nothing in 'apple' which means 'redness'.
- The *a priori/a posteriori* (empirical) distinction is epistemological, about how we know or justify a belief.
 - ▶ We know that all bachelors are unmarried without seeing any bachelors.
 - ▶ I believe that the apple is red because I see the redness when I look at it.
- The necessary/contingent distinction is metaphysical, about ways the world may or must be.
 - ▶ Bachelors are unmarried in all possible worlds.
 - ▶ This apple is red, but it could have been (and probably was) green.

Team Activity

Language, Epistemology, Metaphysics

1. Whales are mammals since it is part of the concept of a whale that it bears its young.
2. Our belief that whales are mammals is not the result of inductive generalization.
3. Whales must be mammals.
4. Some Richard Linklater movies are funny, but others are not.
5. 'Everybody Wants Some' is funny, I heard from a friend.
6. It is not part of the meaning of 'Everybody Wants Some' that it is funny.
7. The consecutive angles of all parallelograms are supplementary.
8. A parallelogram may be a rhombus.
9. By analyzing the meaning of 'rhombus', we find that it is a parallelogram.
10. I know that parallelograms are rhombi without drawing or seeing one.
11. If we add the concept of an equal-sided quadrilateral to the concept of an equal-angled quadrilateral, we find that some rhombi are rectangles.
12. It is impossible for a body to be non-extended.
13. All bodies are extended, since it is part of the concept of a body that it have a size.
14. I know that all bodies are extended without experiment.
15. A body might be heavy, but it might be light.
16. The concept of 'body' does not include 'heaviness'.
17. To know whether a body is heavy or light, we have to measure it.



Conceptual Containment

two different notions

How a plant grows from a seed



- Kant uses what Frege (in the late nineteenth century) calls beams-in-the-house analyticity.
 - ▶ When we look at a house, if we want to see if it contains a certain structure, we merely peel back the walls.
 - ▶ We literally see the beams.
- In contrast, Frege defends a plant-in-the-seeds analyticity.
 - ▶ A statement can be analytic as long as it follows from basic axioms according to analyticity-preserving rules of inference.
 - ▶ Frege can handle statements that are not in subject-predicate form.
 - 'I give a rose to Emily'
 - 'Astrid walks with those with whom she strolls'
 - 'If it is snowing, then it is cold'
 - ▶ The latter sentence is analytic, true in virtue of the conceptual containments of its parts.

Hume's Alignment

epistemology and semantics

- Relations of ideas are justified *a priori* and analytic.
 - and thus necessary
- Matters of fact are justified empirically (by tracing ideas back to initial impressions) and synthetic.
 - and thus contingent

	<i>A priori</i>	Empirical
Analytic	Relations of Ideas	--
Synthetic	--	Matters of Fact

Kant's Big Claim

	<i>A priori</i>	Empirical
Analytic	Logic/ Beams in the House	--
Synthetic	Most Mathematics, Metaphysics, and Some Physics	Empirical Judgments

- Metaphysics is possible, and it consists of synthetic *a priori* judgments.
- “Experiential judgments, as such, are one and all synthetic” (A7/B11, AW 725a).
 - Hume
- There are also synthetic claims that are not experiential.
 - Kant's innovation