

## Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)



- born in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad, in Russia)
- never left his home town, never married; taught at the University of Königsberg
- attracted students and researchers from all over Europe and Britain



## Major Works

- *General Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (1755)
- *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781)
- *Prolegomena to any future metaphysics* (1783)
- *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788)
- *Critique of Judgment* (1790)
- *Religion Within the Boundaries of Pure Reason* (1793)
- *Perpetual Peace* (1795)
- *Metaphysics of Ethics* (1797)

## Key concepts

- ***a priori***: a way of gaining knowledge without appealing to any particular experience(s). This method is used to establish transcendental and logical truths.
- ***a posteriori***: a method of acquiring knowledge by appealing to some particular experience(s). This method is used to establish empirical facts and hypothetical truths.

## Key concepts

- **analytic statement**: a statement or item of knowledge that is known to be true solely because of its conformity to rules of logic.
- **synthetic statement**: a statement or item of knowledge that is known to be true because of its connection with some intuition.
- Kant regarded mathematics as ***synthetic a priori*** because it depends on the pure intuitions of the elements of time and space.

- In an **analytic** judgment, the **predicate** is contained in the **subject**: e.g., "Triangles have three sides." The truth of the statement is determined by an analysis of the subject.

- In a **synthetic** judgment, the **predicate** adds to or expands the **subject**: e.g., "Triangles were the earliest figures to be discovered in geometry." The truth of such a statement cannot be known by an analysis of the subject.

	<i>a priori</i>	<i>a posteriori</i>
<b>analytic</b>	"Triangles have three sides"	(none)
<b>synthetic</b>	<b>Kant's categories;</b> mathematics	"Some birds fly south in winter"

### *Critique of Pure Reason*

- **Transcendentalism**: philosophical view that there is a form of knowledge derived from **synthetic a priori** judgments.
- Objects in the real world are fundamentally unknowable. They provide the raw material from which sensations are derived.

### Noumena and phenomena

- **Noumena**: "*things-in-themselves*"—objects in a pure state independent of human experience; cannot be known directly.
- **Phenomena**: anything experienced is transformed by the mind into a subjective phenomenon (i.e., conditioned by space and time and the categories).

### *Critique of Pure Reason*

- **Space** and **time** exist only as part of the mind, as "**intuitions**" by which perceptions are measured and judged.
- In addition to these intuitions, Kant proposed that a number of *a priori* concepts, called **categories**, also exist.

### **Kant's categories**

- Kant's categories include the most general concepts of human experience.
- These provide a *conceptual framework* in terms of which all objects are analyzed.
- The objects of empirical knowledge (everything we experience) is "filtered" through the categories.

### Kant's categories

- There are four main categories with 3 sub-categories each, for a total of 12:

<b>quantity</b>	unity, plurality, and totality
<b>quality</b>	reality, negation, and limitation
<b>relation</b>	substance & accident, cause & effect, reciprocity
<b>modality</b>	possibility, existence, and necessity

### Ethical and moral philosophy

- Kant's ethical system is based on the belief that *reason* is the final authority for morality.
- Actions of any sort, he believed, must be undertaken *from a sense of duty dictated by reason*.
- *No action performed for expediency or solely in obedience to law or custom can be regarded as moral.*

### Ethical and moral philosophy

- Kant described two types of commands given by reason: the **hypothetical imperative**, which dictates a given course of action to reach a specific end; and the **categorical imperative**, which dictates a course of action that must be followed because of its rightness and necessity.

### Ethical and moral philosophy

- The **categorical imperative** is the basis of morality and was stated by Kant in these words:  
*"Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a general natural law."*

### Kant's contributions to psychology

- Synthesis of empiricism and rationalism
- Perception is an **active process**; the mind contributes to our experience of reality; its properties can be studied empirically (though he believed they could not be studied by the usual scientific methods, only by philosophical means, via introspection).

### Kant's theory of causality

- Hume's rejection of causality
  - Co-occurrence of events
  - Habitual association
  - (Illusory) feeling of necessity
- Kant's answer: Causality is
  - fundamental to science and human knowledge
  - a relationship not based on observation or logic
  - imposed by the structure of the human mind

### Kant's psychological theory

- **Noumena** and **phenomena**
- **space, time** and the 12 **categories of experience**
- Perception is an **active process**
- mind actively participates in construction of reality

### Kant's contributions to psychology

- Kant believed that mental phenomena could not be studied empirically because they
  - (1) lacked spatial dimensions
  - (2) were too transient
  - (3) could not be experimentally manipulated
  - (4) could not be described mathematically.