

Kant

In France and England, the Enlightenment theories were blueprints for reforms and revolutions—political and economic changes came together with philosophical theory. In Germany, the Enlightenment occurred in a vacuum, the political situation was such that reform was unthinkable. The middle class was powerless, and the country was fragmented into hundreds of tiny states and principalities with no central government, as in Paris or London.

Kant's thought was revolutionary, but it was a revolution that had to remain in the abstract, in abstract idealism. It was, in other words, the enlightenment of the spirit only.

Kant saw his mission in philosophy to be the defense of science, morality, and the rationality of religion. This was no easy task, for science and religion had been at war for centuries. Science had won a long and hard fought battle against the authority of religion—a victory that was good for science, but disastrous for religion. It was a good thing that science had won its autonomy and freedom from the dogmatic interference of religion, but if this meant that all religious and other unscientific beliefs were unjustifiable and, as such, irrational, then the victory of science from a religious and humanist point of view was a disaster. Kant's mission was not just to provide foundations for religion and nonscientific thought; he had to redefine what it meant to be a rational human being. He described his plan as one which would "deny knowledge in order to make room for faith."

German idealism, often called Kantian idealism, is idealistic in the familiar sense of defining abstract ideas. In philosophy, it also has a technical sense: the world is constituted out of ideas. Further, it is idealistic in the assurance that such a world is real and good—an assurance shaken by Hume who raised questions about the foundation of both knowledge and morals, e.g., knowledge for Hume was merely the product of the mind's "habit," and morals, the product of sentiment.

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, the first of three critiques, Kant tackles the problem of knowledge and Hume's skepticism. At the heart of this formidable book, and the dramatic shift in Western thought that begins with it, is an enormous expansion of the concept of the self, its scope, power, and richness. The primary change is a shift from the passive to active mode, a rejection of the traditional idea of the human mind as a receptacle or receiver, to the insistence that the mind imposes its order on nature, an order that is fixed and immutable in all of us. "The understanding does not derive its laws from, but prescribes them to nature."

The first Copernican revolution denied the obvious—it denied that the sun revolved around the earth. What Kant denies seems even more obvious—he denies that the world is "out there" and independent of our experience of it. The whole history of metaphysics depends on the belief in the presence of a reality independent of us. From Plato's defense of a world of Being beyond our own world of change and becoming, to Descartes' systematic doubts about our knowledge of the external world, and the skepticism of Hume.

The *Critique* has a single central thesis: knowledge of the world is possible because of the self—the transcendental self or ego—determines the structure of our every experience.

So long as the world lies outside the realm of our experience, skepticism is inescapable, but to Kant, skepticism was also intolerable. What is necessary is to complete the move that Descartes began, recognizing not only the importance of the first person point of view, but also its all encompassing nature. The world is the world of our experience, not something outside of it. We are not just acted upon by a world we never know directly; rather, we act upon the world to give it its basic forms.

Critique of Pure Reason is a 2 part division of the faculties of the human mind into sense, understanding, and reason.

Sense: our capacity to be affected by sensations, to see, hear, smell, and feel.

Understanding: our ability to categorize these sensations, to recognize objects and relations between them, and to employ concepts in experience.

Reason: our ability to entertain and manipulate concepts, apart from experience, e.g., math and logic.

Understanding is the application of concepts to sensory experience to give us knowledge, while reason is the application of concepts to themselves, which is why self-reflection and philosophy are primarily matters of reason, not experience.

It is the nature of sense experience that all our experience takes place in the forward flow of time in three-dimensional space. It is the nature of understanding that what we experience are objects, not just sensations, and that these objects exist independently in the world, in various causal relationships with one another and with us. The intriguing and somewhat paradoxical thesis here is that the human mind is responsible for the appearance of objects and their structures as independent of us, even though we can come to appreciate, through reason, that this appearance of independence is dependent on us. But reason, because of its ability to operate independently of the facts of experience, is also capable of tying itself up in knots and overextending itself in realms where our concepts are inappropriate. Thus Kant's book is a *Critique of Pure Reason*—an effort to curb the historical pretensions of reason, such as knowledge of God, eternity, and the world beyond our experience.

The *Critique* is an investigation into the structures that determine our experience, that is, the structures or rules of sense and understanding. Kant's stated aim may be critical but his actual method is to clarify and justify our most basic claims of knowledge about the world, those claims whose justifiability Hume had doubted: our knowledge that there is an external world of objects and there are necessary connections among these objects. His method is to introduce a new vision of human knowledge: a basic mode of knowledge that is something more than the passive reception and interpretation of sensation, and more substantial than the abstract manipulation of ideas—knowledge that is basic to and yet independent of experience.

If this vision is correct, and if it can be demonstrated that such knowledge is genuine, then Kant will have succeeded in refuting Human skepticism, and--yet more momentous—he will have succeeded in revising the traditional picture of the human mind. Kant calls such knowledge a priori and it is through the display and proof of the the a priori principles that rule our experience that Kant tries to show that the world has and must have the structures that we impose on it.

The word "transcendental" is central to Kant's theory. Transcendental means necessary and universal, in contrast to merely personal or psychological. To say that an idea or principle is not just personal or psychological is to say that it is not only basic to our experience, but that it is universal and necessary for every being or creature who can be said to have a mind.

The transcendental ego is quite different from the empirical self of everyday life, but it is also much more than the merely formal recognition that my every experience is "mine." It is a rich source of a priori knowledge. It is timeless and universal, and so in a profound sense not "mine" at all. Kant writes not about transcendental egos but the transcendental ego, or "consciousness in general." Kant criticizes Descartes' notion of the self as a substantial entity—a thinking thing—and insists that there is no way that we could possibly know of a self that goes beyond the contingencies of human experience, and at the same time no way that the transcendental self could be an object of possible experience.

In Kant, the ego as a private and isolated entity and the notion of certainty as the relation between distinct ideas give way to a perspective that situates the ego and knowledge in the a priori conditions that make human experience possible. The purity of an isolated ego and its ideas is abandoned. All objects in Kant's scheme are relational. Kant writes, "Though a dove might imagine that flying in empty space would be easier, it is only through the resistance of the wind that its flight is possible." Likewise, knowledge is possible only as a result of the limiting conditions that make human knowledge in general possible. (example--what if you never forgot anything? -- could you think?) Objects, Kant argues, are experienced within the transcendental **categories**; the world that we experience is conditioned by the a priori conditions of sense and understanding, which make our experience possible. Neither we nor our world is free; both are conditioned by epistemic conditions -- that is, conditions of knowing--that make an object an object. The very limitations -- the finitude -- of our experience dictates conditions of (and, hence, the possibility for) this encounter between you and an object of your experience. The boundaries, i.e., the limitations, of our possible experience determine what we, in fact, do experience. "Wherever Kant found limiting or necessary general features of experience, he declared their source to lie in our own cognitive conditions; and this doctrine he considered indispensable as an explanation of the possibility of knowledge of the necessary structures of experience." (Strawson)

These limiting features make up the possibility of human experience; they express how it must be in order to be what it is. Kant does not ask if it is possible for us to have knowledge of the world--the world for us; rather, he assumes that we have this knowledge and ask what is necessary for this to be the case.

Synthesis/Unity of Ideas

Hume recognized that knowledge is the result not of disparate, isolated ideas, but of the relation of ideas--this relating of ideas brings understanding. Imagine what it would be like to live within a jumble of ideas--no idea connected to another--just one random impression after another, and indeed, even your sense of one after another would not be there. Think of schizophrenia--in which ideas are not related rationally --your leg hurts therefore there is someone trying to hurt you.

Kant recognized that our ideas, in order to bring understanding, are not only conjoined, but also united **under** concepts. When it rains, the stones are cooled--these are two ideas -- two sense impressions that are conjoined. Contrast that with the statement: The rain cools that stones. This sentence is more than the conjoining of two sense impressions--in this sentence, you have the concept of one object affecting another object. These ideas are not simply connected, rather ideas are subsumed under concepts, which, then affect one another.

The basic condition for human knowledge is unity or synthesis. This is the condition which underlies all conditioning. It is the most general fact of consciousness-- the "I think" which is attached to all mental content. It is the simple certainty that I am (however that may be --and that my intuitions, ideas, perceptions, concepts, etc., are **mine**, i.e., in one mind. However deluded I may be about the specific nature of this I, the fact that I am and that these are my ideas or delusions cannot be denied. The content of consciousness is thus held, or united, in consciousness **as mine**: "I" am this union, or capacity to unite. I am not my thoughts; I am the unity which makes these thoughts mine. The fact that the content of my mind must be so unified as to be mine imparts the idea of a synthesizing unity to which this content belongs.

The notion of synthetic unity is thus grounded in the fact of consciousness. Knowledge of this unity is possible because the content of consciousness must be unified in a **determinate** way so as to be "mine." Mental content must be conditioned by the structure of mental activity in order to be a part of this structure. And in so far as this unity of consciousness is the **determining structure** of this content--the mode whereby this content is made mine--it is called "**transcendental.**"

The transcendental unity of consciousness must, however, be tied to our empirical concepts derived from experience if it is to have meaning--if it is not to be "empty." The content less structure of consciousness must be linked to the conscious use of concepts, or the abstracting of certain common characters from experience and putting them together in a class if these empirical concepts are to be grounded in the self-certainty of consciousness. Kant makes this link by showing that the conditions, or modes of activity, whereby the content of consciousness is united in one mind, make up the possibility of objectivity itself. Our empirical concepts are, in this sense, grounded in or governed by, the conditions of consciousness, for the latter makes possible the experience out of which these concepts are derived. So the unifying structure of consciousness--the unity of consciousness which makes ideas in my mind, my ideas--regardless of their being true ideas or delusions--the unity that make them "mine" are the same structures that make an object an object.

Thus viewed, the conditions of consciousness establish a required conformity of objects of experience to the constitution of our minds, and thereby enable Kant to ground consciousness in the possibility of objective experience.

These conditions, which are required for experience to be possible, are the forms of sensibility and understanding, defined respectively as the passive and active functions of the mind. These "limiting features" of sensibility and understanding comprise the conditions in experience which make experience in general possible-- they are the a priori forms of possible experience.

Space and time are the forms, or modes, of our intuition; they are how we intuit what affects us. They are what sensibility brings a priori to experience. "Space and time" are a features of our cognitive constitution, and, for this reason a condition of the possibility of human experience, the object affects us in such a way as to produce awareness of items spatially and temporally ordered. We have no modes of intuition but the sensible, we can have no knowledge of these affecting objects as they are in themselves, except the negative knowledge that they are not things in space the time" (Strawson)

"Space and time are the conditions of the objective reality--of all our sense experiences, given in intuition." They are not the condition of the object in itself, for this object lies outside sensibility: these conditions comprise the form which the effect of the object must have in order to be a sense experience of **an object in general**. Hence space and time are neither reality per se nor illusion: they are the conditions of sensibility for an objective reality. They are the a priori intuitions, determining how we receive, or are given, objects: they are the nature of phenomena--the nature of things present for us.

Space, the form of outer sense, or of external appearances, and time, the form of inner sense, or of internal and external appearances, constitute the form of sensibility, "antedating -- coming before -- in my mind all the actual impressions through which I am affected by objects." As the forms of pure intuition, space and time are also the foundation of pure mathematics--a science which constructs out of the **form of intuition** as opposed to being derived from the content of intuition. Kant writes, "Geometry is based on the pure intuition of space. Arithmetic achieves its concept of number by the sensuous addition of units in time." Insofar as the concepts of mathematics are based on the form of intuition, its knowledge can thus be distinguished as **pure synthetic cognition**: it is not dependent upon the content of sensibility. **Grounded in the form of sensibility, pure mathematics is restricted to the content of sensibility and it thus dependent on the object of experience for its objective validity.**

In order that there be knowledge, the receptivity of sensibility must conjoin with the activity, or spontaneity, of understanding. The objects of sensibility are intelligible to us only as a result of the combining activity of the intellect (i.e., the producing of images in the imagination and the recognition of these images in a concept.

Kant writes: "Our nature is so constituted that our **intuition** can never be other than **sensible**; that is, it contains only the **mode in which we are affected** by objects. The faculty, on the other hand, which enables us **to think** the object of sensible intuition is the **understanding** **Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions with out concepts are blind.** ... The understanding can intuit nothing, the sense can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise."

As the receptivity of sensibility has the a priori formal conditions of space the time, so also understanding has certain conditions that are termed by Kant **rules of understanding in general, or logic.**

General logic is concerned with the form of thought, that is, the relation of "any knowledge to other knowledge," not with the relation of this knowledge to the object. "It deals only with that form which the understanding is able to impart to the representations, from whatever source they have arisen." (Kant)

General logic, according to Kant, is either **pure** (i.e., logic which "we abstract from all empirical conditions under which our understanding is exercised") or **applied** (i.e., logic directed to the rules of the employment under the subjective empirical conditions dealt with by psychology." Pure logic is concerned solely with the "form which the understanding imparts to the representation, from whatever source they may have arisen." (Kant) That aspect of logic, however, which is applied to objects a priori, or in order that there be the possibility of knowledge of objects, is separated from pure general logic, and is called "transcendental" -- it is the a priori activity of pure thought on certain representations so as to make knowledge of objects possible.

The laws of understanding--pure understanding--that govern the unifying activity of understanding form the idea of totality or an interconnected system. This totality, however, is possible only within the transcendental realm, for it is in this area alone that the concepts are not contingent upon the empirical world, but rather constitute the possibility of an empirical world.

We understand by bringing representations into this "rule" of unity, i.e., by uniting varied representations under a common predicate, or concept. These concepts are thus grounded in the activity of understanding, as predicates of possible judgments. They are "based on the spontaneity of thought, as are sensible intuitions on the receptivity of impressions." In a judgment, the object is understood as a representation represented through a concept. How we unite representations--the form of judgment--is described by Kant as falling under four headings: quantity, quality, relational, and modality, each heading containing three "moments." These forms are believed to exhaust the function of unity in judgment.

It is therefore within these functions that transcendental logic unites its content -- the manifold of a priori sensibility, presented by the transcendental aesthetic as material for the concepts of pure understanding. Space and time, writes Kant, contain a manifold of pure a priori intuitions, but at the same time are conditions of the receptivity of our mind--conditions under which alone it can receive representations of objects and which therefore must always affect the concept of these objects. In order for this manifold of a priori intuitions to be "mine," however, it must be connected in a specific way, and this act of connecting intuitions is called by Kant "synthesis." This synthesis, which yields the content for transcendental logic, is the activity of the imagination--a blind but indispensable function of the soul--gathering different intuitions together which are, in turn, brought under concepts by the understanding.

The same function of understanding whereby representations are unified in a judgment impart unity to the synthesis of representations in an intuition--the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general is derived from understanding

and "applied" a priori. These unifying concepts of pure understanding that introduce a priori a unifying form to the representations in an intuition are the "categories." Since their synthetic unity is derived from the same functions of understanding as is the unity of representations in a judgment, the categories are equal in number and similar in form to the logical functions of all possible judgments.

Kant calls the means whereby we discover these concepts their "transcendental deduction"--a deduction which speaks not to origination, but of necessity. It is an attempt to establish the conditions in experience, for the experience to be possible.

Two elements comprise experience: the matter obtained from the senses, and a certain form for the ordering of this matter, obtained from the inner source of the pure intuition and thought, which on occasion of the sense-impressions, are first brought into action and yield concepts." That all intuitions are conditioned by the a priori intuitions of space and time is recognized in the fact that objects, to be objects for us, must be given in these forms, and these forms can be evidenced in the mandate of sensibility. The pure concepts of understanding, however, are not part of the experience of our senses. Rather, they relate to objects through predicates, not of intuition and sensibility, but of pure a priori thought--apart from all conditions of sensibility. Given their separateness from sensibility, the objective validity of the conditions of understanding, that is, their capacity to serve as conditions for the possibility of knowledge of objects, is recognized by Kant as difficult to see. Kant explains this less than obvious conformity by pointing out that in addition to intuition of an object we must also have a concept of "object" in general for this intuition to yield knowledge. The categories make the object possible not in terms of its existence, but in terms of our knowledge of the object as an object to us. We must have the concept of objects in general--intuited or not--if we are to have objectivity. These concepts "relate of necessity and a priori to objects of experience, for the reason that only by means of them can any object of experience whatsoever be thought" **The categories thus contain the pure thought in every experience--the pure a priori conditions of possible experience and of an empirical object.** The position or role of the categories in experience is thus marked.

The possibility of knowledge, however, requires more than the categories, or the establishing of the necessity of the categories, for an object to be thought: **the manifold (i.e., the numerous particulars) in intuition must be unified by the spontaneity of understanding**, described by Kant as a threefold synthesis: "the apprehension of representations as modifications of the mind in intuition (i.e., as "mine"), the reproduction in imagination, and their recognition in a concept.

We are conscious of the given manifold of intuition as "ours." If it is given to me at all as a possible subject of thought or discourse it is given to me as mine. This is what Kant is getting at when he speaks of the unity of consciousness as original. Each intuition is thought as mine: each representation is accompanied by the "I think" -- the a priori synthetic unity of consciousness. This synthetic unity therefore must be presupposed before any analytic unity of apperception is possible.

I am conscious to myself a priori of a necessary synthesis of representations. I am aware of representations as mine because it is I who has conjoined them in one consciousness, and I am aware of this synthesis. The synthetic unity of

consciousness is thus the a priori condition under which all representations that are given must stand, but which they have also first to be brought by means of a synthesis. This latter function points to the activity of understanding--an activity of uniting representations under the concept of "object," and it is the unity of consciousness which alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object, and therefore their objective validity and the fact that they are modes of knowledge. If the synthetic unity of consciousness is not merely a condition that I myself require in knowing an object, but it is the condition under which every intuition must stand in order to become an object for me. It is, in other words, the condition of objectivity itself--the condition for synthesis--whatever the empirical and hence contingent properties may be associated with an object.

The manifold in an intuition must be united in a certain way in order that it be an object for me--representations in an intuition must be united under the concept "object." This unity of representations under a concept is entitled the transcendental unity of apperception. This unity is distinct from the conditions of sensibility, or inner sense, for it pertains solely to the pure form of intuition or to the relation of a manifold to the original synthetic unity of consciousness. And this activity of understanding whereby the manifold of an intuition is brought to the unity of apperception and thus made "objective" is judgment. This act of uniting is not merely an assertion of connection between representations; rather it is the assertion of the synthetic unity of an object under which representations are united.

Thus to say "the body is heavy" is not merely to state that the two representations have always been conjoined in my perception, however often that perception be repeated; what we are asserting is that they are combined in the object, no matter what the state of the subject may be. (Kant)

Hence, even if my immediate sense perception of an object is wrong, my capacity to place this misperception in an "object" is valid: it is the necessary unity for the objective determination of all representations. (this objective validity is made clear when, for example, misperception is realized: one does not believe it is the object that has changed, but that the perception of the "same" object has been corrected.)

The unity of the manifold in an intuition is thus possible as a result of being made subject to the unity of apperception through the a priori activity of judgment. The categories, however, are merely rules for understanding--a faculty which by itself knows nothing whatsoever, but merely combines and arranges the material of knowledge, that is, the intuition, which must be given to it by the object.

Knowledge is acquired only when the concept, through which an object in general is thought, is conjoined with the intuition through which an object is given. Insofar as the categories are thus limited to the realm of possible experience, they can yield knowledge only when applied to objects of possible experience. Hence their application is restricted to empirical intuitions which alone affect sensibility, the source of all content for understanding. The succession of representations of inner sense (i.e., representations under time, the condition of inner sense) are thus made into determinate intuitions by the activity of understanding: they are combined and unified by understanding in accordance to the unity of apperception. How this synthesis of representations in the manifold of inner sense is achieved is the role of the imagination.

The synthesizing activity of the imagination is found in its producing of representations in relation to preceding representations within the unity of consciousness. This process of producing representation in accordance to the unity of consciousness is an act of judging, i.e., the subsuming of particular representations under (general) concepts. It should be noted that these concepts are not images, or collections of similar images; rather, they are rules for image production. To be able to apply a concept one must know how to make something, names, images. Judging, therefore is the application of rules to the diversity of representations in order for there to be a unity--a mediated object within the unity of consciousness. Or as Kant states, judging is "reducing the multiplicity of representations to the unity of thinking in general." These rules of judgment are not dependent on the object; they are the possibility of an object to consciousness. They are not derived from the empirical object; they are the conditions of objectivity. They are not the result of our experience; they make experience possible.

The rules for the production of images by the imagination are the schematized categories which link sensibility and understanding so as to make the latter applicable and hence meaningful. This link is achieved as a result of the temporality of the activity of the imagination and its products (i.e., determinate initiations): the categories--when applied to this activity--take on this condition of time. And these "applied," or time-conditioned, categories are called by Kant "schematized."

The schematized categories are hence required if the categories are to have application, or if the forms of general logic are to be used in objective judgments. Each category, therefore, if it is to have meaning, must have this capacity for application, or be a rule for the production of images by the imagination. The manifold of inner sense as time-determined unity is a unity constituted by the categories; but it is also "homogeneous" with appearances insofar as time is contained in every empirical representation of the manifold. "Thus an application of categories to appearances becomes possible by means of the transcendental determination of time, which, as the schema of the concepts of understanding, mediates the sub-assumption of the appearances under the category." The formal condition of inner sense thus constitutes the "universal condition under which alone the category can be applied to an object." And these concepts are applicable because they acquire this a priori condition of sensibility. Though the schemata thus seem to take on the character of a "third thing" mediating between the two functions of sensibility and understanding and indeed Kant uses this phrase to describe a connecting link between these functions, this phrase can be misleading. Though it is necessary to recognize the unique role played by the schemata, they are the a priori functions of understanding: their link to sensibility is found in the nature of their application, or their "object." The pure concepts of understanding are "applied" a priori to disjointed representation in the sense that images are produced by the imagination according to concepts, or the "rules for image production." The term "applied" is hence not used in its usual way: it is not the application of one thing onto something else, for there is no "something else": there is no object to consciousness without these forms. The pure concepts are "applied" a priori.

The mind is not an object in the sense that it is not a substantial being. But we make it an object; we must make it an object if we are to think about it. According to Kant, it is merely a concept, a unifying concept.

Sense -- the passive side of the mind, the receptivity of intuitions.

Understanding -- is the mind's acting on these intuitions (a priori) to "make" objects, and it does this by placing intuitions under concepts. The ocean is blue. Ocean not conjoined to blue, rather, the predicate "blue" is put under the concept of "ocean." Understanding is the active side of the mind. The mind acts upon the intuitions to create, via the imagination, "representations" of objects, and these representations are the objects of understanding. Concepts without intuitions are empty; intuitions without concepts are blind.

Reason--contemplates and manipulates concepts apart from experience.

What we know is not the world, but only our experience of the world. Our understanding produces everything that appears and becomes object -- in regard to its form. But it is a finite understanding; all reality must be given to it. Understanding cannot produce the existence of a single grain of dust. Hence its knowledge is dependent on experience.

But from time immemorial the understanding has sought to penetrate to the ground of things by pure thought. It was encouraged in this endeavor by the supposition that if a proposition was free from contradiction, its content must be real. But though freedom from contradiction is a condition of objective knowledge, it is not sufficient to constitute objective knowledge. Ideas can be free from contradiction and yet relate to unreal, fantastic things. ALL UNICORNS ARE ONE-HORNED ANIMALS. For freedom from contradiction applies only to the form, not to the content, of knowledge. Hence metaphysical judgments are without foundation, because in them the categories--the concepts-- are not realized in --are not filled in - with intuition. In such judgements, logic (freedom from contradiction) is employed as a means of drawing from mere concepts conclusions about things that are inaccessible to experience. Where logic is employed not merely to ensure order in our thinking, but as means of achieving of actual, that is, existing, knowledge, the great illusion arises. Here we have what Kant calls the "logic of illusion," in which there is a "certain illusion" both in logic's positive and its negative statements.

This is what happened in connection with statements about such objects as the soul, the immortality of the soul, freedom, the world as a whole, god. Here, Kant completely overturned the traditional metaphysical thinking. But this is only the beginning of Kant's philosophy. Having explored the reliable knowledge of the understanding, he was not satisfied, but declared: "We are not satisfied with the exposition merely of that which is true, but likewise demand that account be taken of that which we desire to know."

Math and empirical science yield solid ground, but they are limited in scope. This domain is an island, enclosed by nature itself within unalterable limits. It is the land of truth--surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the native home of illusion, where many a cloud bank and many a swiftly melting iceberg give the deceptive appearance of farther shores, deluding the adventurous seafarer ever anew with empty hopes, and engaging him in enterprises which he can never abandon and yet is unable to carry to completion."

Kant shows that the illusion of metaphysical knowledge lies in the nature of our cognitive faculty, and that once understood, the illusion still remains, though it no longer deceives us. Kant's decision to investigate metaphysical meaning as such opened up fertile new perspectives on the supersensible--the beyond the senses--

ground of all things. Freed from its perversion, the truth of reason, which goes beyond the understanding and is destined to guide it, would become the central content of the Kantian philosophy. The elucidation of the structure, meaning, and limits of our knowledge is only the cornerstone and foundation of his philosophy.

After Kant has marked off the limits of our possible knowledge, there remains, outside them, what he calls the "thing in itself," the intelligible, or **nominal**, world. [We know, we experience the phenomenal world--that which is outside the phenomenal world, outside our experience, is deemed the nominal.]

But what we can't achieve with the understanding as something objectively known is accomplished by our reason. Kant discloses the faculties of reason: first in the efficacy--the effects--of the Ideas (theoretical reason); second, in ethical action (practical reason); third, in the contemplation of the beautiful (aesthetic judgment).

Here, a methodological principle is introduced: What is conceived as a limiting concept cannot be known as an object. Or, as Kant put it: I can cogitate--think about--what I do not know. With this proposition he actually opened up the field that he seemed to have shut off completely. What we can think, but do not know, is a vast field. This thinking extends from the play of the understanding at its limits to the elucidation of all the faculties of our actual reason. What is a futile adventure for the knowledge of the understanding becomes accessible through reason--in a different way, but never without the understanding. And this access opens up once the illusions of mere understanding are understood and dispersed.

The Ideas

Though the Ideas are without an object, they play a positive part in scientific knowledge, to which they lend direction and meaning. In the world, I follow chains of causality back to the first cause or to the world as a self-contained whole. In investigating the subject of the soul, I proceed to the substance underlying all its phenomena, which preserves its personal identity while its states changes. In so conceiving the world, the soul, the whole of being, I suppose that I am dealing with an object. In each case, I acquire this object only by transposing categories that are valid for experience in my existence to infinities which, because they cannot be realized in intuition, elude experience. All objects are in the world, but the world is not an object. The soul is not an object, but becomes so through the illusory application of categories of substance, duration, unity, to something which does not exist in experience. Kant took great pains in elaborating the negative results that occur when we mislead ourselves into treating Ideas--the product of Reason--as if they were objects of understanding. Total being (known as *go*) is not an object, for in conceiving the sum total of possibilities I have not conceived of something I might somewhere experience. Ideas manifest themselves where, in the progress of the knowledge of the understanding, I seek a conclusive whole; they mislead us if we suppose that the conclusive totality is a known object. These Ideas are never given; they are "set us as a task."

The Ideas of reason are dictated to us by our reason itself. And, though there are many negative aspects to our Reasoning, many illusions that are created by our Ideas, it is not possible that reason includes fundamental illusions. Thus the Ideas must serve a purpose in our reason. They cannot in themselves, be an illusion, but become one through natural misuse.

Empirical knowledge is infinite. The synthetic unity of individual experience formed by the categories creates the object, but it does not provide the systematic order of objects that constitutes a science. This we first acquire through the Idea, which provides representation of the whole. For example, we conceive the causality of a substance that is called force; we find many kinds of force; we attempt to reduce them to a few, and finally to a single fundamental force. We see the manifold forms of plants and animals; we arrange them into species, genera, races, and try to reduce them to a single principle, a primary form from which they all derive. We observe the manifold of psychological phenomena and order them on the basis of the Idea of a being which preserves its personality.

In other words, soul, world, God considered as delusions resulting from the dialectic illusion of our reason, are Ideas. We do not know them, but we make them into principles underlying the system of knowledge. Through the Ideas we gain rules by which we advance our knowledge; but we do not arrive at the object of the Idea. The Ideas are therefore said to be regulative principles for the progress of science, not constitutive principles for the building of an object. The transcendent use of the ideas--the making of objects, that are somehow known though never experienced--out of these ideas-- is rejected as an illusion, while the immanent use of the Ideas--the Idea of a universe as a whole, a personality as a substantive unity, is indispensable to the systematic character of scientific thought.