

A History of Philosophy

53 Kant on Understanding

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This afternoon, we move beyond Kant's transcendental aesthetic to the transcendental analytic. And if that complicated vocabulary has registered in your consciousness, you'll recognize that that means we're moving from his examination of the preconditions that make possible sense perception to consideration of the preconditions that make possible conceptual understanding and judgments. The transcendental aesthetic is about sense perception.

And the transcendental method that he's employing is simply the procedure of bracketing all particulars within the experience, the content of the experience, so as to identify the universal structure of perceptual experience, which is characteristic regardless of all the variables of particular experiences. And you recall that he finds that the two forms of sense perception, space, that is to say, we see things in three-dimensional ways, and time, experience comes to us sequentially in time. And the study of those pure forms is what gives rise to mathematics, geometry, the science of space, and arithmetic, the science of numbered sequences, the sequentiality of time.

Well, Kant has also told us, you'll remember, that percepts without universal concepts of some sort are blind. It's not enough for you to say, blue patch now, and I add patch and now to get the space-time qualities of it, the forms. Blue patch now, if that's all you say, somebody will say, what on earth are you trying to say? Because you're not affirming anything of anything.

You're not interpreting the blue patch now in any way. So the understanding of our experience, the interpretation of perceptual experience, requires that we call on more abstract general concepts in talking about it. And in the transcendental analytic, he is after those abstract concepts which are the necessary prerequisites for interpretive understanding of what we experience, just as the forms structure perception.

So, the categories of understanding give structure to our understanding, okay? And so we want to get to these categories. Now, as we get to them, keep in mind the comparison with Aristotle's categories that I mentioned a couple of days ago. Aristotle identified 10 categories of thought that are also categories of being.

Kant identifies 12 categories of thought, but he does not know that there are categories of being. Keep that difference in mind. His categories are really Newtonian categories.

So the outcome of this is to conclude that Newtonian science is dealing only with subjective structures of our thinking, the way we structure the world, rather than with the way the world objectively is. In today's parlance, he is not a realist about science, but an anti-realist about science. Science does not tell us about reality.

It tells us only about phenomena. And one other thing to notice is that when he does present to us his categories, they come in four groups of three, four triads, and some historians have pointed out that this is the beginning of the Hegelian dialectic, thesis, antithesis, synthesis, structuring all thought, and for Hegel, all being, you see? When we get to Hegel, we'll trace out his triads, thesis, antithesis, synthesis, concepts, and categories. But Kant's 12 categories come in that triadic form, though he doesn't see it as a dialectic.

He doesn't think of that. That comes later with Hegel. Now, the way in which he gets at them, identifies what the categories are, is really very straightforward.

If these are the ways in which we understand things, the ways in which we classify things, if you like, the way in which we classify our experiences, then it's natural that if you can lay out a classification of different kinds of judgments we make, those judgments are likely to embody the a priori categories. And of course, that's precisely what he does. So that if you look on pages 388 and 389, and I hope you brought your Kauffman.

If not, look at somebody else's. Pages 388, 389. You notice that at the top of 388, he represents under four heads 12 different logical kinds of judgments.

And as you look over them, you'll think that he's perhaps taken this from an introductory logic textbook, like perhaps you used in Logic 243. Because the quantity of judgments represents three kinds that we talk about in ordinary logic, Aristotelian logic. There are universal judgments, particular judgments, and singular judgments.

Universal judgments, all men are mortal. Particular judgments, son, are. Singular judgments, this one, Socrates, is.

So these are three different quantitative categories. Okay? Then look at quality, affirmative and negative, or indefinite. The term infinite doesn't seem quite to fit, indefinite, yes or no, maybe.

Affirmative and negative. All A's are B, no A's are B, affirmative, negative. The relational judgments we make, in logic we speak of a categorical judgment, all men are mortal, a hypothetical judgment, if you're a Cretan, you're a liar, and a disjunctive judgment, either you are, or you're not.

And those of you who've gotten some introduction to logical symbolism recognize that those are the three kinds of things that we identify in a symbolic form, so that P and Q is a conjunction of two things, you see. P horseshoe Q is the hypothetical, if P then Q, and P wedge Q is the disjunct, either or. You see? So logical form, logical form, he's talking about the logical form of judgments.

And then the modality, once again, something is problematic, or it's simply asserted, or it's apodictic, that is to say, it's demonstrably necessary. So modality would say it may be, it is, it must be, you see. And we get that even in the moods of verbs in the study of language.

It may be subjunctive, it may be optative, it is the indicative, and then it must be the third way. So each of them has its own form, its own structure, its own logic, you see. Each of them embodies some abstract idea in addition to the particular subject matter of the judgment.

Now, what are those abstract ideas, those categories, and you get that at the bottom of 389, where he identifies the categories assumed in the judgments. Categories, again, of quantity, quality, relation, and modality. You don't need to memorize the 12, but get those four at least straight.

Quantity, quality, relation, modality. The idea of a unity, of a plurality, of a totality, those are abstract ideas. The idea of, under relation, substance and accidents, yes, the accident that inheres in the substance, the quality, the substance-quality distinction.

Cause and effect, and reciprocity, both cause and effect. So the concept of cause and effect, which he told us he was after, comes right there. It's an a priori concept.

And then under modality, things like contingency and necessity, possibility and necessity, and existence. These are categories that go, oh, in a way, all the way back to Aristotle's thinking, very much embedded in Newtonian and Lockean thinking. And they are things which Hume was quite skeptical about as far as knowledge of them in an empirical or a priori basis.

So that's the way in which he gets at them. It's pretty straightforward. Now, before we go further, however, I want you to notice one thing else that he says on 388 and 389.

In the second column of 388, towards the bottom of the column, notice this. We'll see hereafter that synthesis in general, the synthesizing, unifying of our thinking, is the result of what I call the faculty of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul. Without which we'd have no knowledge whatsoever, but of the existence of which we're scarcely conscious.

Imagination necessary for knowledge. Now, look at 389 again, that first big paragraph in the first column. By means of analysis, different representations are brought under one concept.

But how to bring not representations, but the pure synthesis of representations under concepts. This is what transcendental logic, what he's doing now, means to teach. The first that must be given us a priori, for the sake of the knowledge of all objects, is the manifold of pure intuition, space and time.

The second is the synthesis of the... Okay, imagination, again. Now, this is a different concept of imagination than we had in Hobbes and Locke. Their imagination was simply having mental images, okay? That is to say, the images that stick in your mind, in retention, in memory.

The images that you conjure up fictitiously in your mind, picture images, sense images. That's not what Kant is talking about. He's talking about some imaginative way in which the mind draws everything together into a unified field of understanding that may have nothing corresponding to it out there.

You see? We create our own organized world; we imagine it. Now, this is the beginning of the Romanticist conception of imagination. In the Enlightenment, imagination is simply having sense images.

Now it's a creative thing, building a world, you see, in the mind. Well, as far as Kant is concerned, there are these universal principles that contribute to the building of the unified world in the mind. These categories.

Oh, and then more. But at least these categories. So keep that in mind, if you... In mind, I didn't intend that to be a pun.

But keep it there anyway, if you would. Now, that's as far as we come then on identifying the categories. Any questions there? Comment? Yeah.

Okay, you mentioned the Romantics, and if Kant... How did Kant's conception... How did the Romantics... Did the Romantics say that there weren't universal categories of imagination? Oh, the Romanticists are not as interested in categories. Particularly logical, rational categories. They're interested in the creative resources of the human mind, of the human spirit.

What they add to what Kant does is a reaction against the notion that we're basically rational beings. The notion of the rule of reason, which Kant still holds to, is out, you see. We are not ruled by what we know, for the Romantics.

The Romantics are emphasizing more that we are emotive beings, feelingful beings, imaginative, creative beings, you see. So Kant is the transitional figure, in the sense that, one, he's turning away from the view that we are detached spectators, remember, to the view that we are creators of our world of experience. The Copernican revolution.

And two, in bringing that sort of change in the way he uses the term imagination, which becomes crucial in the language of Romanticism. Okay? David? This is a question that was raised at a school yesterday, but I was thinking of... I think forms are aligned as well. Yes.

The forms and categories are both a priori preconditions. That is to say, our sense perception simply works in such a way that we structure all the sense impressions spatially and temporally. Now, when you say a space and time in our minds also, well, they're not innate ideas or self-evident concepts.

No. They're simply functional principles. This is the way the mind functions.

So it's not that we start with a concept of space or time. It's rather, as you start analyzing the actual way in which you perceive things, you begin to realize that you perceive things spatially and temporally. And say to yourself, now wait a minute, I didn't get that from the raw data.

My mind must have contributed to that way of doing it. The same with the categories, you see. You don't fish through your checklist of categories in your mind and say to yourself, now let's see, do I want a quantity, quality, relation, or modality category in this case? No, you're not even aware of them.

But when you look at the understandings that we have by looking at the structures, the logical structures of judgments that we make, you realize, no, wait a minute, I don't get those ways of structuring things from experience. I don't experience hypotheticals. The hypothetical is the form of judgment that I get.

It's my way of interpreting what's going on. And so you only become aware of these in operation. You're aware of them as functioning.

And then you stand back and abstract them from that. They are forms of sense perception. Now, if you understand what Kant's doing, you don't need to stop and tell yourself, I must memorize this, only two forms of space and time.

Those are the only two. No, you don't have to tell yourself that. Just look at your own sense perception.

And you immediately see why he says, only two. Because there are only two. You see? He's drawing it from an obvious description of the way we perceive things.

We perceive things in spatial relationships, and we perceive things in temporal relationships. Ah, got it. As far as the other twelve categories go... Yeah, not the other twelve, the twelve.

Yeah. Kant believes that these have definite bases or definite uses only when there are those intuitions coming into them and then being separated out. Yes.

These concepts without percepts are empty. And he says that old-fashioned metaphysics, or the old metaphysics, if it is going to be a science, deals without any of the percepts coming in, right? Yeah. Only with concepts, and he's going to analyze whether you can deal just with concepts.

If it's the metaphysics of the rationalists and their innate knowledge, it's trying to deal with concepts devoid of percepts. If it's the empiricists dealing only with sense perception, they're trying to deal with percepts without concepts. So when he says concepts without percepts are empty, he's saying to the rationalist, you can't do it.

And when he says percepts without concepts are blind, he's saying to the empiricist, you can't do it. Neither kind of metaphysics works. Yes.

You cannot have empirical knowledge without interpretive concepts. And you cannot have a priori knowledge without empirical input. I'll put it this way.

We likened the forms and categories to a lens. Do you see a lens? No. You see through a lens.

And you only realize you have the lens and are using the lens when you're without it. So it's not that you're conscious of the lens. It doesn't hang heavily on your nose the way spectacles do.

You're just not conscious of it. Okay? Does that help? Yeah, so try to avoid saying that you were talking about grouping for the words, and try to avoid saying that the forms and categories are innate. In Plato's sense, they're not.

In Descartes' sense, they're not. In Leibniz's sense, they're not. Yes.

Try to avoid saying they're learned. Because in the usual sense of learning by experience, they're not. They may be recognized and identified in the course of experience, uncovered, but are spotted in operation by functioning.

Karl? Yeah, well, I think the answer is go back to Hume. And without such a lens, like the concept of cause and effect, can you know any matters of fact beyond present experience? No. Your perceptions without the concept of cause and effect are blind; you can't know anything, can't see a thing.

That is self-evident. No, no. No, for the moment, well, let me come back to your first question.

Your first question is, how do we know the lens is there if you can't see it? To which the simple answer is, they're not empirical objects. And the more sophisticated answer is, don't you remember what Hume told you? Yes, sir. Hume told you that without the lens of the cause-and-effect conception, you can't know a thing beyond present experience.

Now, what was the second question? Perceiving a case, how do we separate out what is the lens and what is the case? By the transcendental method. Let us say you try to catch it in the act. How do you do that? Well, in the case of sense perception, you bracket out, eliminate all particulars of sense experience, all particular qualities, and so forth, and ask, what's left? And you find space-time forms.

With the understanding, you take a look at the different logical types of thinking and cut out all of the particulars of what you're thinking about. What's left? Nothing. Certain logical concepts are in use.

A conceptual apparatus that's functioning there. All right, he's still not satisfied that this is enough. And for two reasons.

One is the fact that we have a variety of sense perceptions coming at us through five different senses. So that our perceptions are so utterly fragmented in their sources, yet somehow or other unified in our experience. So you need to explain the unity of our perceptions.

The unity of the perceptual field. Okay? The second thing is that while you have the forms of perception, the categories of understanding, what gets them together? How do they meet? This is Kant's equivalent of the mind-body problem. The perceptions that come into the mind, and then the understanding that gets hold of that.

Perceptions are particular. The categories are universal. How do they get together? And that's what he's talking about in the schematism of the understanding.

Okay? So this is the unity of perception, and this has to do with the unification of perception and thought in the understanding. Okay? Now this is a segment that I, let's see, I did not ask you to outline, but tremendously important for the completion

of the story and for some of the things that arise out of it. Now, as far as the unifying of experience is concerned, his initial statement is on page 391.

And I want you to take a look at that. It's the second paragraph on 391, the first column, where he says this, if every single representation stood by itself, okay, every particular sense, idea, sense, idea, simple idea, if every simple idea stood by itself, isolated, separated from the others, nothing like what we call knowledge could ever arise because knowledge forms a whole of representations connected, compared with each other. Now, how do you get to begin with, from simple ideas to complex ideas? Hume had said there are principles of association, psychological association, resemblance, contiguity, cause, and effect.

What's Kant going to say? Well, he says, I ascribe to the senses a synopsis. Synopsis, seeing together. Opsi from optical.

Synopsis is seeing it together. I ascribe to the senses the capacity to see it together because in their intuition, they contain something manifold that corresponds to it, always a synthesis. Receptivity can make knowledge possible only when joined with spontaneity.

This spontaneity appears threefold, which must necessarily take place in every kind of knowledge. First, there is apprehension, the synthesis that is apprehension, apprehending. That is to say, being aware of it, grasping it as one.

And the apprehension is in representations. The apprehension of representations as modifications of the soul in the intuition, the ancient, and the insight. Secondly, the reproduction of them in the imagination.

There's that funny word again. Reproduction of them in the imagination. And that sounds like it's the old use of the word.

When you're reproducing something in the imagination, it sounds like memory. And third is the recognition of concepts. So you have the synthesis of apprehension, you have synthesis in reproduction, you have synthesis in recognition.

And in the pages that follow, he takes up each of these. Now the apprehension is being aware of representations under the form of time. That is to say, you apprehend things as a temporal unity.

Remember brr, brr, brr? Now you heard that as three, but you heard it as one. A temporal unity. And particularly when I speed it up, brr, you hear it as one.

Or maybe if you listen closely, three, maybe four. So there is a synthesis that goes on in the act of apprehension. Under the form of time.

Now, reproduction comes on 392. Reproduction by the imagination. Yeah, and he appeals to the association of ideas imaginatively.

The imaginative association of ideas. Because if you try to reproduce that sound that I made, you must first imagine it before reproducing it. It's an imaginative reproduction.

So the imagination is at work in being able to reproduce it in memory. You see? In memory. Or in actual fact.

Imagination. And in order to associate ideas by virtue of their similarity and in developing empirical concepts of greater generality, we have to remember other cases in order to combine them with these cases. So the imagination is at work in any generalization.

And then there is recognition regarding concepts. Recognition regarding concepts. General concepts that are necessary for recognition.

Now, those general concepts, of course, are drawn from the categorical structure of the understanding. Now, look at page 394. And he gives you an example.

The first full paragraph on 394. No knowledge is possible without a concept. However obscure and imperfect.

And a concept is always something general that can serve as a rule. So you measure the complex idea you've been developing in relation to that concept; that's the rule. The concept of a body serves as a rule for our knowledge of external phenomena according to the unity of the manifold, which is thought by it.

Now, you get a general complex idea of that thing and that thing and that thing. And what's involved in recognition is the realization that all of these meet the rule for using the abstract concept body. What's a body? It's a thing, something that exists, a substance.

Look that up in his list of categories. So the concept of body, whenever we perceive something outside us, necessitates the representation of extension, impermeability, and shape. Necessity is always founded on transcendental conditions and so forth.

All right, you have that then representation. Now, you have the three subjective sources at work in this unity of apperception. Apprehension, reproduction, recognition.

This is the mechanism at work in the mind, the way it functions in producing that inner synthesis. Now, the outcome of this is that there is a unity to apperception that is transcendental. It is in the inner resource of the human consciousness.

And this is what gives rise in Kant's mind to the question, what is this I, this self, this mind that unifies? You see, that's the old issue, isn't it? How naive Descartes now sounds with his, I think, therefore I exist, a thinking thing. Where on earth does he get that? I think. My goodness, that's a complicated process.

Apprehension, reproduction, recognition, forms, categories, I think. Gives me a headache just to think about that. I think, therefore, what? I. But a thing? Where's the thing in all of it? All you've got is mechanism, function.

You see? The most I can say at this stage in the analysis, Kant in effect tells us, the most I can say at this stage in the analysis is that I am a transcendental unity of apperception. I'm the unified totality of all my thoughts. Well, that's a bit better than what old David Hume did.

The way he said it, I'm a bundle of perceptions, but I didn't have anything to bundle them together with. At least, to bundle them together, Kant has apprehension, reproduction, recognition, and all that implies. And later on, when he gets into the transcendental dialectic on Friday, well, when we get into his transcendental dialectic on Friday, we'll see what he has to say about the conception of something more like a soul.

But all he has to start with for the I at this juncture, and all he can be sure of at this juncture, is that I'm a transcendental unity of apperception. That's the I. Now, in a way, that's very much in keeping with the whole tradition from John Locke. You see, that business of personal identity.

You see, how do I know what I am? How do I know the I? What is the I that I know? And in the empiricist tradition, it depended on memory. You see, in all of the present awarenesses I have of my past and present, that's the I. At least, that's the empirical I, the I that I'm aware of. But Kant has gone further than that.

You see, because that's an atomized kind of I. He's got a unified kind of I. It's a big step forward in that sense. And it's because of the a priori that he can call it a unified I. You see, because the I is contributing its unity. Now, when I say the I is contributing its unity, it's not just that the I is unifying its world that it imagines out there, creating our world.

The I is creating its own unity. I create myself. Well, Kant doesn't put it that way, but Sartre does.

And Sartre is able to put it that way. I create myself. Because Kant gave him the tools for doing it.

I said that existentialism was a byproduct of what Kant is doing. All right, so the transcendental unity of our perception. Yeah, the question, of course, is still whether nature in itself corresponds to the way we think.

And on that, take a look at his conclusion to this section on 396. 396. The bottom of the second column.

It sounds, no doubt, very strange and absurd that nature should have to conform to our subjective ground and be dependent on it with respect to her laws. You remember the Copernican revolution that Kant was pulling was that it's not the case that our knowledge is dependent on what nature is like, but that nature is dependent upon what we think, at least nature for us is. And it sounds, no doubt, very strange that nature should have to conform to us rather than us conforming our knowledge to nature.

But if we consider that what we call nature is nothing but the whole of phenomena, nothing but appearances, that's what nature is, it's what we experience, not a thing in itself, but a number of representations in the mind, then we'll no longer be surprised that we only see her through the fundamental faculty of our knowing, the transcendental perception, and in that unity without which it couldn't be called the object of all possible experience. That is nature. In other words, once you get the way in which the world of nature is unified for us, then you see that what we call nature is conforming to us rather than us simply passively conforming to it.

So you anticipate the phenomena-noumena distinction. Okay, any questions to that point? I'm ready otherwise for the schematization. Okay, 403 is where the schematization begins.

And here, as I said, the question is, how do the forms and the categories get connected? Because one is dealing with particular sense experiences, and the other is dealing with abstract concepts. They are heterogeneous. And if they're so heterogeneous, do they have any point of contact? In other words, the question is, do they have anything in common? Any point of contact.

That was the trouble with Descartes' pineal gland. A pineal gland is a physical thing. How can it help you make contact with an immaterial thing? See, that's why the pineal gland was such a goof.

I didn't say goof off, I said goof. Descartes' mistake. And obviously Kant does not want to pull another pineal gland on us, or anything analogous to it.

So you've got to find some commonality between the sensibility and the understanding, between the forms and the categories. What's that going to be? Well, in a word, time. Time.

How come time? Well, you remember his discussions of space and time? Where space is the form of the outer sense, and time is the form of the inner sense. In Lockean language, space is the form of sensation, and time is the form of all our reflections. Where is your time consciousness? What is it? The sequence in your consciousness.

That's why time drags, races, or stands still. Time consciousness. Races, drags, stands still.

So time is the form of the reflective consciousness. But, of course, it's in the inner consciousness, in our reflective awareness, that we're aware of our concepts, abstract ideas. You see? So they have that point of contact.

Time is in common to both sense perception and thought. Because they both go on in the consciousness. So what he tries to show, then, is that we can relate the concept of time to all of the categories.

We can relate the concept of time to all of the categories. And what we develop, then, is an abstraction. You see? You can call it a temporalized conception of cause and effect.

Isn't that the ordinary way we think about cause and effect? The cause must be concurrent with or antecedent to the effect. You see? We think it that way. And the idea of substance is of something that is.

It has an enduring identity. Enduring identity. Continually in time.

And so these categories in relationship to time provide us with a schema. Now that's his term. Schema.

I suppose you might call it a conceptual model. A conceptual model. A paradigm.

An abstraction. Something of that sort. Schema.

Then you use the word schema in some other regard. But look at page 404. 404, the top of the page.

Where he says, The fact is that our pure sensuous concepts do not depend on images of objects, but on schemata. That's the plural of schema. No image of a triangle in general is ever adequate to its concept.

How do you think the concept of a triangle, a little picture of lines in your mind, or of things that have breadth as well as length? Lines don't have that. No, what you have is something that exists nowhere but in thought.

Not in sense images, but in thought. In abstraction. And it's a rule for the synthesis of imagination with respect to triangular things.

So you develop mental abstractions, concepts. You verbalize them. Maybe you can provide mathematical formulae for them.

But you don't picture them. So the schemata. You find, therefore, on page 405 that he runs through the various categories.

The schema of substance. 405, first complete paragraph. The schema of substance is the permanence of the real in time.

The representation of it is a substratum for the empirical determination of time in general, which therefore remains while everything else changes. So we think of substance as a substratum. That's a schema.

It's an abstraction. And in the next paragraph, the schema of cause and causality is the real, which, when once supposed to exist, is always followed by something else. You think of it as an abstraction.

You define a cause. A definition in that sense is like a rule. A model.

Schema. And so forth all the way through. The schematization of the understanding.

So on 405, halfway down the page, he says the schemata are nothing but determinations of time a priori according to rules. He has ways of thinking about time according to rules. And as applied to all possible objects, they refer in the order of the categories to series of time, contents of time, the order of time, and the comprehension of time.

So the schemata, then, are the conditions that are involved in thinking. Schematization of the understanding. Well, with that in hand, the section on the phenomena and the noumena follows very easily.

And I'd encourage you to read that because this is really the conclusion of the whole transcendental analytic. The conclusion of the whole transcendental analytic. The ground of distinction of all subjects into phenomena and noumena.

Phenomena, remember, appearances. The thing for me. The ding.

The noumena, the ding und zick. And my mind went blank on the thing for me. Ding für mich.

Ding und zick, and so forth. The thing for me, the phenomena. On page, oh, let's see, page 412.

Page 412. He says at the top of the second column, Unless we are to move in a constant circle, we must admit that the word phenomenon indicates relationship to something, the immediate representation of which is no doubt sensuous, but which nevertheless, even without this qualification of our sensibility, must be something by itself, an object independent of our sensibility. Hence arises the concept of a noumenon.

You see, thus far, he's been speaking of the way things are for us. For us, with our forms and categories. For us, through our lenses.

But how do we know there is such a thing as a thing in itself, noumena? Well, you know, he could say, notice the phrase ding für mich, it's still got the ding. Well, the way he puts it is this: if what we're talking about is the way in which we are bombarded with empirical input, jumbled, confused, otherwise bewildering, and it is met on the other hand by a priori forms and categories, and what comes out is something that we can understand spatially and temporally and so forth. Well, there wouldn't be any content to the phenomenon unless there were something out there to provide it with that input.

You see? The ice cube tray alone does not give you ice cubes; you've got to put water in it, man. The lens alone doesn't help you see your friend's face. There's got to be something there, even though it may not be really like the way you see it through a distorting lens.

You see? You've seen these distorting mirrors where you walk in and see yourself so fat and so tall and so forth. Supposing there were distorting lenses like that. For all we know, that's the way our mental lens is.

So, there may be something I know not what there. There must be something I know not what there. This is not Berkeley's idealism.

In fact, in the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason, he added a section at this juncture called the Refutation of Idealism, in which he was arguing against Berkeley. Because in the first edition, he had been accused of being a Berkeleyan idealist. We create our own world, don't we? No, but you create it out of the raw material that the real world gives you through your senses.

So, there is something there, even though we structure it in our own minds. Certainly. Certainly.

So, he is not an idealist. He's a phenomenalist. A phenomenalist does not deny the existence of reality in itself.

A phenomenalist simply says our knowledge is confined to things as they appear to us. He's a phenomenalist. There are some passages that at a first reading might be confusing because he uses the word reality in two different ways.

He speaks of an empirical reality, which is the way in which it's real in our own experience. Like when somebody is suffering from hallucinations that are very real to her. And the phenomena are very, very real to us.

You see? But exactly what it is out there, we don't know. Science doesn't tell us. Nor can rationalist metaphysics tell us.

So, the conclusion of the transcendental analytic is about the phenomena-noumena distinction. Now, let's see. One final word.

He speaks of the conception of noumenon as being a limiting conception and a problematic conception. It's a limiting conception because it's intended to keep our knowledge claims limited. If there is a noumenon out there that we don't know, then you're going to be modest in what you claim for what you think you do know.

Okay. So, it's a limiting concept. It's also a problematic concept.

In the sense that while it's not contradictory, self-contradictory at all, you just cannot know what it is. It's a problem. It's problematic.

That's it, okay. But what it is, however, can we know? The problem is what a later writer calls the egocentric predicament. I can't know something without the I being involved.

Maybe it would be better called a category-centric predicament here. I can't know something without the categories being involved. Well, this is his epistemology.

What comes next in the transcendental dialectic is his look at actual attempts to do metaphysics. So next time, we'll look at some of the classic metaphysical arguments and what Kant thinks about them.