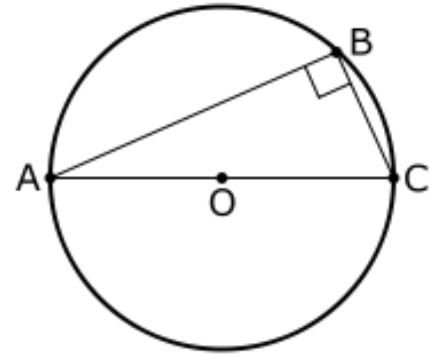




Kant and Critical Philosophy

Week 5. 17th October 2016
Categories and the
transcendental deduction

Class recap



- The synthetic a priori
- Time and space as forms of appearance, and inner and outer sense
- The argument from geometry and its problems
- The two objects/aspects problem, and the 'Neglected Alternative'
- Transcendental idealism

Recap on terms

- **Analytic**: subject contained within predicate
Synthetic: predicate not contained in subject, requires added element
- **Synthetic a priori**: predicate not contained in subject, but whose truth is verifiable independent of experience
- **Transcendental**: knowledge of a priori conditions for possible experience
- **Intuitions**: the object's being as given to us immediately, via senses
Concepts: its being thought about, via understanding
- **Sensibility**: cognitive faculty by which objects given to us as intuitions
Understanding: cognitive faculty which organises concepts
- **Space**: outer sense, a pure intuition of our minds that represents intuitions externally – only appearances, not things in themselves
- **Time**: inner sense, an intuition of our minds representing intuitions internally, through which the mind is aware of itself

	Empirical	Pure
Sensibility	Sense data or 'intuitions' Black and white fluffy thing	Space and time 'a priori forms of intuition'
Understanding	Concepts used in judgements This is a panda bear	Categories: substance, causality 'a priori concepts of understanding'
Reason	Scientific investigations 'All pandas are animals'	Ideas: God, world, soul Limited to regulative use in knowledge

Space and time as appearance...

‘It is therefore indubitably certain, and not merely possible or even probable, that space and time, as the necessary conditions of all (outer and inner) experience, are merely subjective conditions of all our intuition, in relation to which therefore all objects are mere appearances and not things given for themselves in this way; about these appearances, further, much may be said *a priori* that concerns their form, but nothing whatsoever about the things in themselves that may ground them’ (A49/B66)

Transcendental ideality of space

- Space does not structurally represent things as they are, only as they appear to us
- This leads to a distinction between how things appear to us (human knowledge) and how things really are in themselves (impossible)
- Space is empirically real, as it accounts for what is given to us externally as objects, from the human standpoint, and is valid for this.
- It is transcendently ideal in grounding the possibility of experience, but not things in themselves.
- Thus space is empirically real from the human standpoint, but subjectively ideal from a transcendental standpoint – they interrelate.

‘We therefore assert the empirical reality of space (with respect to all possible outer experience), though to be sure at the same time its transcendental ideality, i.e., that it is nothing as soon as we leave out the condition of the possibility of all experience, and take it as something that grounds the things in themselves’ (A28/B44)

‘if we remove our own subject or even only the subjective constitution of the senses in general, then all the constitution, all relations of objects in space and time, indeed space and time themselves would disappear, and as appearances they cannot exist in themselves, but only in us’ (A42/B59).

‘What objects may be in themselves, and apart from all this receptivity of our sensibility, remains completely unknown to us. We know nothing but our mode of perceiving them - a mode which is peculiar to us. ... Even if we could bring our intuition to the highest degree of clearness, we should not thereby come any nearer to the constitution of objects in themselves.’ (A42-3/B59-60)

Implications for transcendental idealism

- ‘the general problem of transcendental philosophy – how are synthetic *a priori* propositions possible?’
- Space and time are simply forms of intuition and are not real in themselves...
- But what enables intuitions to become the content for knowledge?
- Kant needs to outline how the ‘categories’ of the understanding, guided by regulative Ideas, lead to knowledge
- Thus the CPR will move on to explain judgements, categories, self-consciousness, and the conditions for knowledge

Class aims

- Understand the ‘categories’, and the “Metaphysical deduction”
- Familiarity with Kant’s account of knowledge, and the role of the senses, imagination and the understanding in thought
- Recognise the fundamental importance of *synthesis*
- Discuss Kant’s solution to the problem of subject-object relations in the “Transcendental Deduction”
- Grasp why apperception (self-consciousness) is so fundamental to human knowledge for Kant if time...

Core problems: Transcendental Analytic

- Why does Kant need to carry out this complex epistemological work?
- So far, the Transcendental Aesthetic has only explained sensibility, our faculty of experience, through which an object is given to us
- But what makes a confused 'heap' of sensations into a meaningful, coherent experience of the world?
- What enables a subject to understand their appearances of the world?

Transcendental Logic

- Two fundamental sources of cognition: **intuitions** and **concepts**
- **Intuitions**: empirical, passive, receptivity, and in sensibility
 - the ‘reception of representations (the receptivity of impressions)’ (A51/B75)
- **Concepts**: rational, active, spontaneity, and in the understanding
 - the ‘faculty for cognizing an object by means of these representations (spontaneity of concepts)’
- Intuitions allow the object to be given to us, concepts allow it to be thought.
- They are mutually dependent: concepts make intuitions understandable; without intuitions, concepts would have no content.

- ‘through the former an object is **given** to us, through the latter it is **thought** in relation to that representation (as a mere determination of the mind). Intuition and concepts therefore constitute the elements of all our cognition, so that neither concepts without intuition corresponding to them in some way nor intuition without concepts can yield a cognition’. (A51/B75)
- ‘Without sensibility, no object would be given to us, and without understanding none would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.’
- ‘Only from their unification can cognition arise.’ (A52/B75)

Goal of the Transcendental Analytic

- The Aesthetic tackled the a priori rules of sensibility (space and time)
- So the Analytic will tackle the absolutely necessary, a priori rules of thinking, through which the understanding functions (A53/B76)
- What is truth? The 'agreement of a cognition with its object'...
- To grasp that, we must determine the rules of cognition, and the elements of reason (A58/B83) – its *analytic*
- Here is his Copernicanism again.... What matters is not how the cognition agrees with the object as given (a question of sensibility), but what the a priori rules of cognition are by which we perceive an object
- Hence Kant turns to *a priori* cognition, the elements and rules of the pure cognition of the understanding, with actual experience removed
- This leads him to concepts...

Metaphysical deduction: what are concepts?

- Initial negative definition: concepts are a 'non-sensible faculty of cognition', in contrast to intuitions (A68/B93)
- Concerned not with objects, but representations; not particulars, but general rules
- Concepts are required by the understanding for judgements
- The understanding is a 'faculty for judging'
- Judgements are 'functions of unity among our representations' (A69/B94), which enable us to think abstractly
- Unity is key: a judgement combines representations into relation and identifies a unity, or propositional form

Metaphysical deduction: synthesis

- Concepts are a priori forms of thought that enable us to structure our experience of objects
- The 'manifold' (multiple intuitions) of sensibility presented by space and time is *combined* or *synthesised* by the understanding
- The mind is therefore active and spontaneous in applying concepts to intuitions (A77/B102), and putting different representations together
- 'Only the spontaneity of our thought requires that this manifold first be gone through, taken up, and combined in a certain way in order for a cognition to be made out of it. I call this action synthesis' (A78/B103)

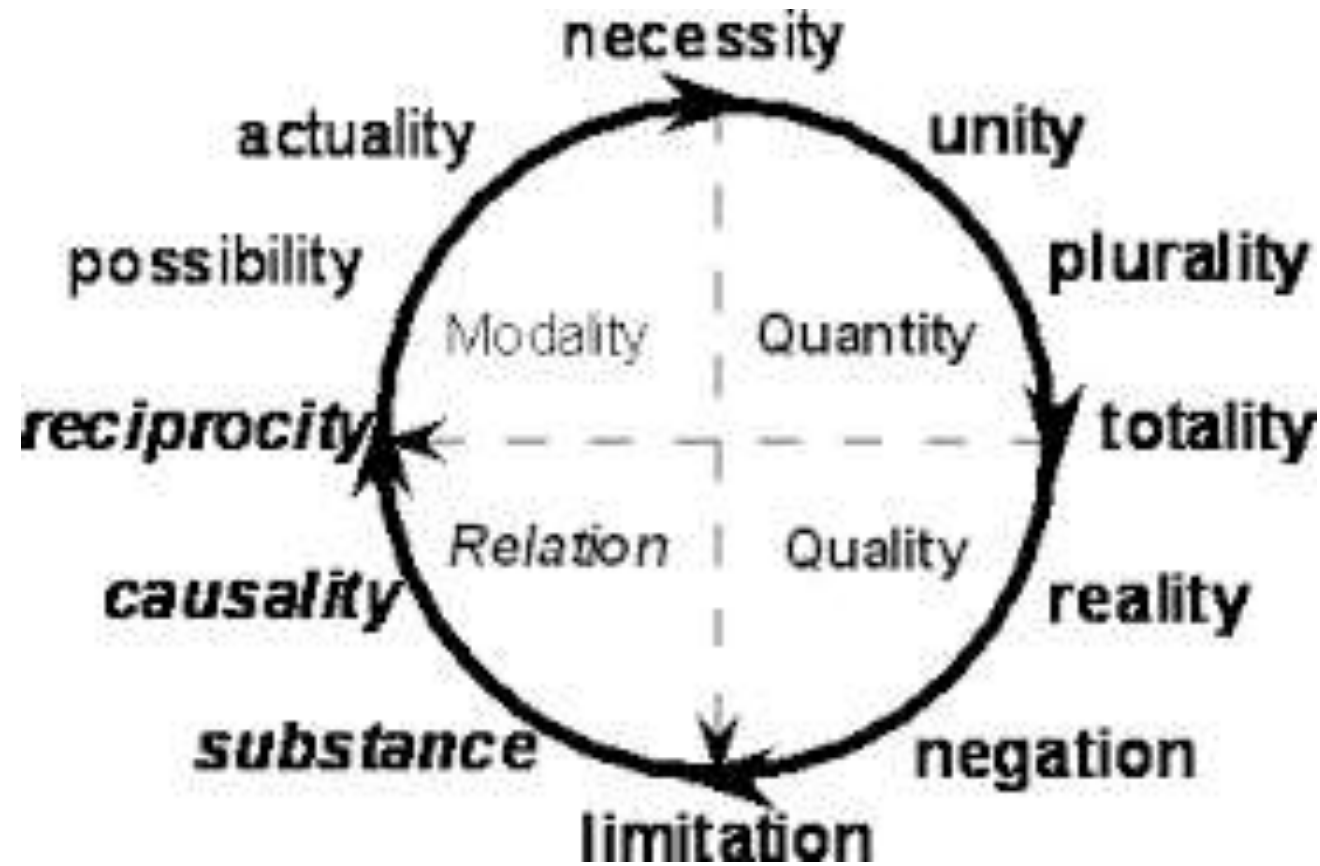
Metaphysical deduction: categories

- Among the concepts are twelve elementary or pure concepts of the understanding, called *categories*
- These are the rules for how we synthesise or combine different representations into one cognition
- They apply to objects of intuition in general a priori – they are concepts through which certain objects are determined
- In order for the understanding to think an object, it requires at least one of the categories (A81/B107)
- These enable it to apprehend or perceive a unity between the object and its representation

Metaphysical deduction: categories

- Unlike the empiricists, Kant does not grant that seeing the object itself gives us enough information for a perception
- Rather, our mind is active or *spontaneous* in producing the perception, through the categories used in judgements.
- Kant wants to demonstrate the conceptual form shared by thought and intuition which makes both possible
- Categories are therefore the concepts which provide the a priori conceptual conditions of objects.

Metaphysical deduction: categories



Judgments	Categories	Principles
Quantity	Quantity	Quantity
Universal: all X is Y	Unity	Axioms of Intuition
Particular: some X is Y	Plurality	
Singular: this X is Y	Totality (plurality as unity)	
Quality	Quality	Quality
Affirmative: X is Y	Reality	Anticipations of
Negative: X is not Y	Negation	Perception
Infinite: X is (not Y)	Limitation	
Relation	Relation	Relation
Categorical: all X is Y	Substance / accident	Analogies of Experience
Hypothetical: if X, then Y	Cause / effect	
Disjunctive: X or Y	Reciprocity: agent / patient	
Modality	Modality	Modality
Problematic	Possibility / impossibility	Postulates of Empirical
Assertoric:	Existence / non-existence	Thought in General
Apodictic:	Necessity / contingency	

Metaphysical deduction: why?

- The 'clue' here is that the function of judgements provides evidence for the pure concepts of the understanding: *if* we are to conceive of objects at all, we must use at least some of the categories
- Yet whilst Kant criticises Aristotle for giving an arbitrary list, is his '12' better? He gives no account of its method or central principle
- Hegel criticised the lack of *genuine* deduction: 'Kant, it is well known, did not put himself to much trouble in discovering the categories'
- Gardner (133-4) contrasts 'modest' and 'ambitious' interpretations: *modest*, Kant only takes the categories as givens to show how our most basic concepts correspond to judgements; *ambitious*, that the categories and no others are the only pure concepts of understanding

What do you think?

Transcendental Deduction: introduction

- Second chapter of the Transcendental Analytic, titled “On the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding”
- One of the most important and difficult parts of Kant’s philosophy: ‘the investigations that have cost me the most, but I hope not unrewarded, effort’ (A xvi)
- He significantly revises it in the second edition, writing in 1786: ‘the very part of the *Critique* that ought to be precisely the most clear’ was ‘rather the most obscure’, at times circular
- The first version ‘A Deduction’ is focused on the subjective conceptual conditions of knowledge; the second ‘B Deduction’ the objective
- Differences between the two add even more interpretative challenges...

Transcendental Deduction: summary

- Goal: to demonstrate the objective a priori validity of the categories, used by our understanding to construct experience
- These forms of thought are the rules of synthesis which enable an object of knowledge
- Kant wants to demonstrate how this synthesis works, by reference to sensibility, imagination and apperception, and the centrality of synthesis or combining representations into a unity
- The “Deduction” of the title refers to a legal entitlement:
What gives subjective experience objective validity?

Transcendental Deduction: First Section

- What entitles us to use a priori concepts?
- Kant seeks a grounding for objective knowledge: Whilst someone wouldn't disagree with another's perceptual judgement e.g. Sally cycles very fast, they could disagree with a judgement that Sally cycles 100 miles per hour, which is based on the category of substance/accident
- How then do individual perceptions lead to or involve objective judgments?
- *Read sections A86-A87 and A90-1 and discuss in groups:*
 - *why does Kant criticise Locke's 'physiological derivation'?*
 - *how does he differ from Hume on causality?*
 - *where might his argument be leading?*

Transcendental Deduction: First Section

- Whilst Locke explains how individual perceptions lead to general concepts, he doesn't explain how the possibility of how a possession of a pure cognition itself arises – only its occasioning causes (A88)
- Thus 'matter' via senses (intuition, external) + 'form' (conceptual thinking, internal) are used and bring forward concepts
- Only by turning to the concept can we establish what follows 'necessarily and in accordance with an absolutely universal rule' (A90)
- Hume's causality illustrates the problem for empiricism: subjective experience cannot explain why appearances wouldn't merely be a confused heap of impressions – *what orders them instead?*

A93/B126 – what is Kant arguing?

‘all experience contains in addition to the intuition of the senses, through which something is given, a concept of an object that is given in intuition, or appears; hence concepts of objects in general lie at the ground of all experiential cognition as *a priori* conditions; consequently the objective validity of the categories, as *a priori* concepts, rests on the fact that through them alone is experience possible (as far as the form of thinking is concerned). For they then are related necessarily and *a priori* to objects of experience, since only by means of them can any object of experience be thought at all.’

Three sources of experience

- Kant first argues in the “Transition” that the representation makes the object possible a priori, not vice-versa (his Copernicanism)
- Through it alone one can cognise something as an object
- But how does this synthesis function? In the A Deduction he will give three sources of experience: sense, imagination, and apperception
- In these distinct faculties, representations are empirically combined by synopsis (sense), synthesis (imagination) and unity (apperception)
- The understanding is ultimately the originator of the objective experience which the subject encounters

A Deduction: syntheses

- Subjective focus: a priori concepts are the conditions for possible experience, on which objective reality rests (A95)
- They enable the mind to synthesise a confused manifold of representations into a unity, as before...
- The *synthesis of apprehension* (A99) groups sensibility into a coherent picture, giving a transcendental ground for cognition in general
- The *synthesis of imagination* (A100) enables the mind to actively intuit and reproduce its representations into a continuous narrative e.g. we can imagine and recognise the same place 'covered now with fruits, now with ice and snow'
- The *synthesis of recognition* (A103) enables us to connect more abstract representations e.g. number when counting, giving it a unity of rule
- In each case these syntheses are a priori and transcendental: the concept makes necessary its representation, and is a transcendental ground for it

B Deduction: combination

- Whilst abandoning much of the subjective psychology of A, Kant gives a more sophisticated argument in the B Deduction for *combination*
- How do I know *X* ? Whilst a manifold of representations is given to us through receptivity, the combination isn't merely by the senses
- Combination occurs as 'an action of the understanding' (B130) which he terms synthesis
- Combination is key: we cannot represent something as combined with an object *until* we have combined it ourselves
- It is our self-activity, this spontaneity – and through this unity Kant discovers a new argument for the self and self-consciousness

Categories: round-up

- Synthesis is the mind's activity or spontaneity, combining representations into judgements, using the ground of categories
- The categories are therefore the a priori conditions of thought
- Subject and object make each other possible: my representations require sensible intuitions of objects, whose unity is grounded on my apperception
- Yet what about experiences e.g. hallucinations, dreams or non a priori forms of association – what categories do they involve?
- *Is Kant's account of the categories safe?*
No... next week he will explain how the understanding and sensibility are mediated through schematism...

Class recap

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- Familiarity with Kant’s account of knowledge, and the role of the senses, imagination and the understanding in thought
- Recognise the fundamental importance of *synthesis*
- Discuss Kant’s solution to the problem of subject-object relations in the “Transcendental Deduction”
- Grasp why apperception (self-consciousness) is so fundamental to human knowledge for Kant – *to be covered next week*

Reading for next week

Please aim to read:

- Schematism (“On the schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding”, Ch. 1 of the Analytic of Principles), A137-147/B176-187, pp. 271-277.
- Analogies of Experience (Ch.2, section III of Analytic of Principles), A176-218/B218-265, pp. 295-321.
- Refutation of Idealism, B275-279 pp. 326-29, and General Note on the System of Principles, B288-294 pp. 344-347.
- In class we will discuss excerpts from the Refutation of Idealism and the General Note on the System of Principles.