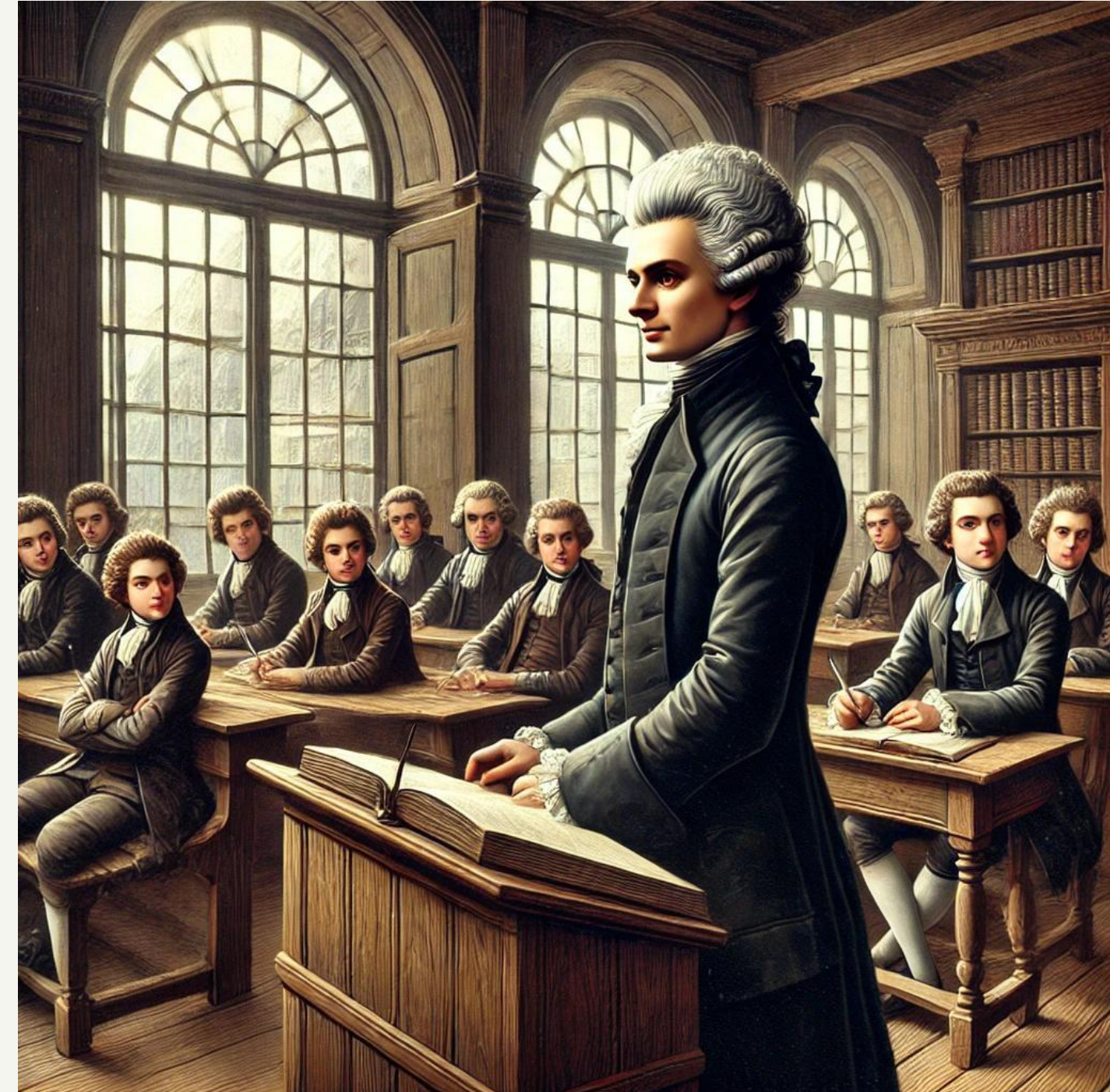


The Enlightenment Meeting 2024



Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

- Reputable lecturer on logic, physical geography, natural history, anthropology, mathematics and physics.
- Popular figure in Königsberg society.
- Famous philosopher



Kant's influence on modern western society

Kant's ideas resonate through various aspects of modern western society, including:

- **epistemology** (how do we obtain knowledge)
- **aesthetics** (what is aesthetic value and how do we experience it)
- **ethics and morality** (what is a good life and what we ought to do)
- **political theory and human rights** (what is freedom and how can it be realised)

Kant's epistemology

What is the fundamental basis of knowledge (if there is one)?

Rationalists: pure reason

Empiricists: sense impression

Kant: neither.

Kant's epistemology

What is the fundamental basis of knowledge (if there is one)?

“If we will call the receptivity of our mind to receive representations insofar as it is affected in some way sensibility, then on the contrary the faculty for bringing forth representations itself, or the spontaneity of cognition, is the understanding

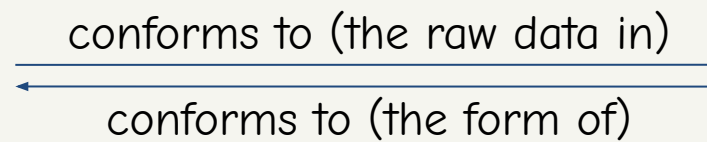
...

Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.” (A51/B75)

Kant's epistemology

Kant's "Copernican revolution": there is no world independent of the character of experience

Mind

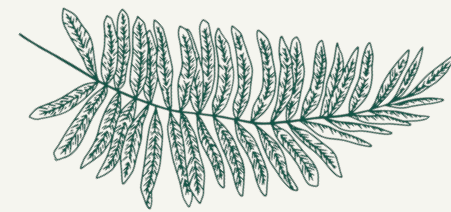


World

Kant's epistemology

Objectivity and experience

- Things in itself (the noumenal) can never be known, and we always know things through our experience with them (the phenomenal)
- The distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal is not one between the objective and the subjective



CLEAR SO FAR?

Transition to Kant's aesthetics

Objectivity and subjectivity

- Knowledge can be objective yet at the same time relational to the knowing subject (epistemic agent)
- Beauty is not in the world to be discovered. Instead, aesthetics should be concerned with judgements regarding the beautiful.
- Aesthetic judgements must be subjectively valid to the subject of aesthetic experience, but are at the same time universally objective

Kant's aesthetics

Four moments in the analytic of the beautiful

1. Taste and pleasure/displeasure
2. The beautiful pleases universally
3. Purposiveness
4. a priori necessity of pleasure

Kant's aesthetics

Aesthetic judgements, made through the faculty of taste, are

- relevant to the feeling of pleasure/displeasure
- different from cognitive judgement: subjective and without concepts
- without interest and personal preference (pure contemplation)
- three relations between representations and the feeling of pleasure/displeasure: the agreeable, the good, and the beautiful

Kant's aesthetics

The universality of the beautiful

- Since aesthetic judgements are without interest, there is no private condition for the satisfaction
- Aesthetic judgements presupposes its common validity, but subjectively
- The confirmation of an aesthetic judgement expected from others are not from concepts but only from consent (but without interest)

Kant's aesthetics

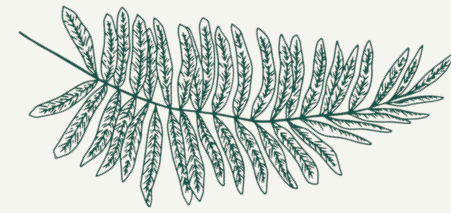
Purely formal purposiveness: a purposiveness without purpose

“Every end, if it is regarded as a ground of satisfaction, always brings an interest with it, as the determining ground of the judgment about the object of the pleasure. Thus no subjective end can ground the judgment of taste. But further no representation of an objective end, i.e., of the possibility of the object itself in accordance with principles of purposive connection, hence no concept of the good, can determine the judgment of taste, because it is an aesthetic judgment and not a cognitive judgment, which thus does not concern any concept of the constitution and internal or external possibility of the object, through this or that cause, but concerns only the relation of the powers of representation to each other insofar as they are determined by a representation.” (5: 221)

Kant's aesthetics

a priori necessity of pleasure

- There's no need for an actual pleasure produced by the beautiful in the subject of aesthetic experience
- The subjective necessity of the assent of all



Q & A

Ethics and moral theory

The difference between ethics and morality

- Ethics is concerned with ways of living or forms of life
“What is a good way of living?” “How do we characterise our way of living?”
- Morality is concerned with right and wrong actions
“What ought we do?”

Kant's moral theory

Situating Kant's moral theory

- Contrasting with the Humean view
- Contrasting with consequentialism
- inheriting from Stoicism (duty and "the divine thought")

Kant's moral theory

Hypothetical vs Categorical imperatives

- Hypothetical imperatives are conditional
"If Y , do X "
- Categorical imperatives are unconditional
"Do X "

In the language of the Stoics: there is a difference between acting according to the divine thought and acting from the divine thought

Kant's moral theory

Intention and consequence

For Kant, the moral value of an action lies entirely in whether it's conducted from duty, i.e., out of a good will

In contrast, consequentialists see the moral value entirely in the consequence derived from the action

Transition to Kant's ethics and political theory

Formulations of the categorical imperative

1. The principle of universality
2. Humanity as an end in itself
3. Autonomy
4. Kingdom of ends

Kant's political theory meets 2024

The kingdom of ends is a kingdom of free, autonomous beings

- Positive freedom and the capacity of conceptual reasoning
Kant's distinction between *person* and *thing*
- Negative freedom and Kant's cosmopolitanism
Kant's distinction between *progressive wars* and *destructive wars*