

Emmanuel kant

Philosophy



For Emmanuel Kant, knowledge (and thus reality) is constructed by the mind, not passively derived through the senses; in other words, the mind shapes the world. One of Kant's works, the Critique of Pure Reason, is an attempt to answer the problems of the nature of knowledge-what it is and how it is obtained. Kant looks at the relationship between a priori knowledge, or knowledge based on reason alone, and a posteriori knowledge, or knowledge gained from the world. (" Critique of Pure Reason", 2006)

According to Kant, we have a priori intuitions and concepts; that is, we have innate, logical knowledge, and this knowledge enables us to grasp a posteriori knowledge, to " understand" the external world. For example, Kant's view is that space and time are also just mental constructs, that space and time are forms of seeing, which serves as a precept to our experiences. Another example is the notion of causality, which in Kant's view is a form of organizing mechanism that we impose upon nature to render it understandable. (" Critique of Pure Reason", 2006)

Kant argued that reality, as we perceive it, cannot be accounted for purely by sense perception. Kant, whose epistemology is a form of idealism, holds that what we refer to and perceive as the external world is an artifice of the mind. (" Immanuel Kant", 2006). His argument is that the mind itself contributes substantially to, and even synthesizes, its own knowledge.

According to Kant, the appearances of things are " objects of intuition", which is one form of (mental) representation. For him this includes physical sensations (such as pain). Kant's view is that appearances do not exist by <https://assignbuster.com/emmanuel-kant/>

themselves, but only relatively to external reality. That is, appearances " must not be taken as objects capable of existing outside our power of representation". (Van Cleve, 1999, p. 27) According to this view, the world, as we perceive it, is not actual reality, but is a phenomenon of actual reality as constructed by the mind. He argues that the shape of an object, for example, does not come from the object itself, but comes from us, as a result of interaction with the object. Sensory input needs to be processed and recognized through the filter of the mind or it would not mean anything to us. (Ross, 2002)

For Kant, there are things-in-themselves, which exist independently of the human mind, and appearances, which exist only in the mind. (Van Cleve, 1999, p. 134) Hence, for him, we can never really know the " true" reality, because this reality is only perceived as it is filtered through our senses, senses that structure reality. we can only gain knowledge of appearances (Collins, 1999, p. 27)

The existence of appearances, according to Kant, entails the existence of things-in-themselves, but not in the way that we know. (Collins, 1999, p. 27) Thus, since the existence of things-in-themselves is just a hypothesis, the relationship of our perceptions to 'actual' reality remains suspect, and we can never really be sure if what we perceive are not just purely constructs of the mind. (Collins, 1999, p. 73)

Works Cited

Collins, A. (1999). Possible Experience: Understanding Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. Berkeley University of California Press.

James, V. C. (1999). Problems From Kant. New York Oxford University Press (US).

Wikipedia contributors (2006). Immanuel Kant. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved May 13, 2006 from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Immanuel_Kant&oldid=53284729.

Wikipedia contributors (2006). Critique of Pure Reason. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved May 13, 2006 from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Critique_of_Pure_Reason&oldid=53296045.

Ross, K. (2002). Immanuel Kant. The Proceedings of the Friesian School, Fourth Series. Retrieved May 13, 2006, from <http://www.friesian.com/kant.htm>.