

What is enlightenment?

[History](#)



If the mind actually makes perception, this brings about the question whether the outcome has anything to do with the world, or if so, what level. The response to the question, vague, confusing or unusual as it was, made for continuous trouble both in Kant's idea and for a posterity trying to figure him out. To the point that knowledge fully depends on the organization of the mind and not on the world, knowledge would have no connection to the world and is not even true representation, just a solipsistic or intersubjective fantasy. Kantianism looks threatened with the doctrine that we know in our own psychology, not external things.

Kant said, in consistent with psychologism that we basically do not know about things as they exist apart from perception. At the same time Kant thought he was trying to defend both a scientific realism, where science really knows the world, and a moral realism, where there is objective moral obligation, for both of which a connection to external existence is essential for enlightenment. Kant believed that rational structure of the mind reflects the rational structure of the world, even of things-in-themselves that the operating system of the processor, through modern analogy, matched the operating system of reality.

But Kant had no real argument for this, that is, the ideas of reason just become postulates of morality as well as his system leaves it as something which is unproved. The paradoxes of the efforts of Kant to reconcile some of his conflicting approaches and requirements made it very difficult for the philosophers who came later to take the overall system seriously.

Nonetheless, Kant does all kinds of things that seem most appropriate for a

non-reductionistic philosophical system and that later philosophy has had trouble doing at all.

Kant was able to provide, in phenomenal reality, for a sphere for science that was distinct and separate from anything that would end up relating to enlightenment. The endless confusion as well as conflict which still results from people trying to figure out whether or enlightenment should fit together is fully avoided by Kant, who can say, for instance, that God and divine creation cannot be part of any truly scientific theory due to the fact both involve unconditioned realities, while science can only deal with conditioned realities.

In the world, everything affects any other thing, but God is free of any external causal influences. At the same time, Kant can be a phenomenal determinist with science and yet simultaneously allow for freedom and that in a way that will not be entirely explicable to us, a virtue when the very idea of a rational and purposive freedom, and not just subjective choices, but also has involved obscurities that no one has been able to enlighten. Kant's theory tries to prevent psychological explanations for behavior, however enlightening, being used to excuse moral responsibility and accountability.

Thus, the disastrous childhood of the defendant, as much as it may be touching and understandable, cannot, to some extent, excuse crimes committed in full knowledge of their significance (Kant 94). The approach used by Kant is also of comparative interest because of the similar ancient Pastors philosophical distinction between conditioned realities, that mostly means that the world of experience, and unconditioned realities, which

interestingly include, not only the sphere of salvation, but also space, which of course for Kant was a form imposed a priori on experience by the mind.

The problems which must be sorted out with Kant are at the same time formidable. Most crucial is the confusion which results from Kant mixing together two entirely different theories in the Critique of Pure Reason. The first theory explains that the fundamental activity of the mind which is referred to as synthesis, is an activity of thought which applies certain concepts to a previously given perceptual datum from experience.