

# Kant's Theory of Knowledge

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## 1. Introduction

Among sages in the field of epistemology, Immanuel Kant has been an outstanding expert who contributed most academic capacity and potentiality to discuss about human knowledge so that human beings in later generations who apply his theory of knowledge for qualifying their thoughts able to understand what knowledge is intelligibly; and then they enable to gain benefits from it. Besides, he contributed great examples on application of knowledge in human life earning rationally and morally also. It is unavoidably acceptable that deontological ethics that Kant initiated from his moral philosophy has been effectively influencing within human societies worldwide. It is true that such the ethical viewpoint was derived from Kant's great discussion about knowledge so that he could convince himself on establishing moral principle of deontology. Hence, it is sufficient for me to focuses my philosophical discuss identified as the thesis statement in this paper on Kant's theory of knowledge which should be acknowledged as an empirical-rational pattern in order to supportively prove that it is feasible.

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I firstly make a general elucidation on feasibility of human knowledge according to Kant through Kant's analytic and synthetic reason. And then I do analyze in deep about Kant's theory of knowledge concerning to aspect of noumena and phenomena because they are the necessary factors of human knowledge that human mind approves so that the application of Copernican Revolution will be considered because it is the means that Kant used to attend true knowledge. I finally defend that Kant's theory of knowledge is feasible.

## **2. FEASIBILITY OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE**

Born at Königsberg in East Prussia on April 22, 1724 to a devout Pietism family Immanuel Kant was molded in religious spirit of self-examination and morally good work. This kind of religious environment influenced Kant's philosophical thought so that he contributed most of his academic works on moral philosophy until his death (1804) through necessity of rational verification that each human naturally has as Aristotle did in the past but emphasizes on practical reason that needs knowledge as its fundamental element (Sullivan, 1995, p. 7). Christine M. Korsgaard also generally points out the significance of reason through human knowledge in the form of logic that is prioritized when she makes an introduction to *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* after distinguishing Kant's philosophy into three parts: Part one is logic which concerns about laws of thought; Part two is physics which deals with laws of nature; and Part three is ethics which deals with the laws governing the conduct of free beings (Kant, 1997a, p. ix). In case of logic which concerns about law of thought it is acknowledged as a significant tool for his theory of knowledge. Kant mostly expressed his aspect

about theory of knowledge in Critique of Pure Reason which was published firstly in 1781 and then secondly in 1787. Kant insists the significance of logic for his process of having true knowledge that:

It is a call to reason to undertake anew the most difficult of all its tasks, namely, that of self-knowledge, and to institute a tribunal which will assure to reason its lawful claims, and dismiss all groundless pretensions, not by despotic decrees, but in accordance with its own eternal and unalterable law. This tribunal is no other than the critique of pure reason (Kant, 1929, p. 9).

It is quite agreeable in the case that if human knowledge is derived from nothing but subjective pretension without any supportive ground it is not acceptable knowledge. But if it is derived from evidential source it should be undeniable due to the fact that it provides certainty and clearness (Kant, 1929, p. 11). Yet Kant observed before mentioning the quoted statement that academic knowledge in both physical and meta-physical trend within his period was unserviceable.

Being challenged by two influential schools of philosophy in both empirical and rational domains that contributed illusory knowledge (Kant, 1927, pp. 8-9) Kant established new process of theory of knowledge which, for me, is identified as an empirical-rational pattern in order to, from my viewpoint, compromise the two extreme aspects of rationalism and empiricism. From my viewpoint knowledge should be a verified true belief because knowledge comes from knowing something as true through verified belief. And the procedure of verification should base on both rational and empirical verification that conform the pattern that Kant established.

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Kant after generally distinguishing knowledge into two types: *a priori* and *a posteriori* (Kant, 1929, p. 23) he deeply analyzed to point out that experience is the primary source of human knowledge that can be modified to further understanding which is based on rational faculty of human thought. However, it is noticeable that not all knowledge arises out of sense experience. He writes in the introduction of *Critique of Pure Reason* in the first edition that:

Experience is, beyond all doubt, the first product to which our understanding gives rise, in working up the raw material of sensible impression. Experience is therefore our first instruction, and in its progress is so inexhaustible in new information, that in the interconnected lives of all future generations there will never be any lack of new knowledge that can be thus ingathered (Kant, 1929, p. 41).

It is noticeable that in the statement Kant did not end his conviction about human knowledge only experience which may either true or false subjectively; but he advanced further to elucidate about integrated knowledge that is applied and independent from empirical knowledge in order to have a clear and certain conviction due to human enquiry.

In order to have knowledge in one's thought, Kant elucidated further that human mind must consciously work through sensual organs and human mind must function two duties of sensibility and understanding in order to have knowledge. Kant explanatively writes:

Our knowledge springs from two fundamental sources of the mind; the first is the capacity of receiving representation (receptivity for impressions), the second is the power of

knowing an object through these representations (spontaneity [in the production] of concepts. Through the first an object is given to us, through the second the object is thought in relation to that [given] representation (which is a mere determination of the mind). Intuition and concepts constitutes, therefore the element of all our knowledge, so that neither concepts without an intuition in some way corresponding to them, nor intuition without concept, can yield knowledge. When they contain sensation (which presupposes the actual presence of the object, they are empirical. When there is no mingling of sensation with the representation, they are pure. Sensation may be entitled the material of sensible knowledge. Pure intuition, therefore, contains only the form under which something is intuited; the pure concept only the form of the thought of an object in general (Kant, 1927, p. 92).

This implies that the process of to know which human mind operates its function must concern that faculty of perception and conception. Perception must be the capacity of mind that receive datum from a sense organ and then human mind conceive it in a particular category. However, it is true that without sensibility no object would be given to us, and without understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, perceptions without conceptions are blind. Hence, it is as necessary for the mind to make its conceptions sensuous (i. e. to add to them the object in perception) as to make its perceptions intelligible (i. e. to bring them under conceptions). Neither of these powers or faculties can exchange its function. The understanding cannot perceive, and the senses cannot think. Only by their union can knowledge arise.

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Further, it is true to say that as perceiving something we are passive; we do not do anything. This, as has been pointed out, is the element of truth contained in the statement that objects are given to us. On the other hand, it may be truly said that as conceiving, in the sense of bringing an individual under a universal, we are essentially active. This is presupposed by the notice or attention involved in perception ordinarily so called, that is perception in the full sense in which it includes conceiving as well as perceiving. This is the process of human understanding towards an object through the activity of human thought. Kant, therefore, is justified in referring to the sensibility as a ‘receptivity’ and to the understanding as a ‘spontaneity’ so that intuition is instituted. Kant describes that:

If the receptivity of our mind, its power of receiving representations in so far as it is in any wise affected, is to be entitled sensibility, then the mind’s power of producing presentations from itself, the spontaneity of knowledge, should be called the understanding. Our nature is so constituted that our institution can never be other than sensible; that is it contains only the mode in which we are affected by object. The faculty, on the other hand, which enables us to think the object of sensible intuition is the understanding (Kant, 1927, p. 93).

It implies that human knowledge depends on sensual capacity and faculty of understanding which each human being has similarly and it enables to be developed until it reach metaphysical level for moral practice through practical reason acceptably due to the fact that knowledge that each one has is derived from evidential sources (Guyer, 1989, p. 139).

In addition, if it is a pure intuition or conception it is recognized as a priori knowledge but if it is empirical intuition or conception it is recognized as a posteriori. It follows that there are two basic types of human knowledge. The first one is a posteriori knowledge which arises from and depends on sense experience. The second one is a priori which arises from the operations of the mind and independent of sense experience. Kant described about this characteristics:

...we shall understand by *a priori* knowledge, not knowledge independent of this or that experience. Opposed to it is empirical knowledge, which is knowledge possible only *a posteriori*, that is, through experience. *A priori* modes of knowledge are entitled pure when there is no admixture of anything empirical. Thus, for instance, the proposition 'every alteration has its cause', while an *a priori* proposition, is not pure proposition, because alteration is a concept which can be derived only from experience (Kant, 1927, p. 43).

It is noticeable that *a priori* knowledge is necessary and strictly universal because a human being can use such knowledge any time he wants without any support from experience. But *a posteriori* one is never necessary and universal because it depends on personal experience which is in the scope of structure of understanding based on space and time conditions (Kant, 1929, pp. 65-91).

It is observable that sensibility by itself is not knowledge. Factually knowledge requires a further processing of the material of sensation. Kant indicates that knowledge means science (Kant, 1927, p. 54). And then science is the interpretation of experience according to categories or rules.

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Kant observes that science derives from the law of physics through logic (Kant, 1929, p. 94). It bases on the result of judgements derived from experience. The agent of categorization, classification or objectification to initiate a perception is the understanding. The understanding judges or categorizes what is perceived according to twelve basic concepts. These basic concepts are not thing in themselves any more than space and time are things in themselves; they are forms for organizing experience. They are, according to Kant, ground under four basic headings: (1) quantity which consists of universal, particular and singular, (2) quality which consists of affirmative, negative and infinitive, (3) relation which consists of categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive and (4) modality which consists of problematic, assertoric and Apodeictic (Kant, 1929, p. 107). Form characteristic components of judgement human mind can initiate either *a posteriori* or *a priori* understanding in both physical and transcendental levels through analytic and synthetic processes that make judgement true or false through reason which is the faculty of mind's inference (Kant, 1929, p. 320).

Forms of judgement can be distinguished in various forms based on analytic/synthetic or *a priori/a posteriori* patterns. Christine M. Korsgaard explanatively summarizes in her introduction of Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Moral* that:

A judgement is analytic if the predicate is contained in the concept of the subject; otherwise, the predicate is something new to our conception of the subject and the judgement is synthetic... A judgement is known *a posteriori* if it is known from experience, while it is *a priori* if our knowledge of it is



independent of any particular experience. Putting these two distinctions together yields three possible types of judgement. If a judgement is analytically true, we know this *a priori*, for we do not need experience to tell us what is contained in our concepts... If a judgement is known *a posteriori*, or from experience it must be synthetic, for the subject and the predicate are synthesized in our experience... The remaining kind of judgement, synthetic *a priori*, would be one which tells us something new about its subject, and yet which is known independently of experience- on the basis of reasoning alone. If pure reason tells us anything substantial and important, either about the world or about what we ought to do, then what it tells us will take the form of synthetic *a priori* judgement (Kant, 1997a, pp. viii-ix)

From the summary it should be realized that capacity of human mind to initiate new knowledge is possible. It can be improved from empirical knowledge to transcendental one by the logical nature that human beings have without arbitrariness due to the fact that human mind which perceive any knowledge verifies it from falsity already. Kant describes about the process of having transcendental knowledge that:

I understand by idea a necessary concept of reason to which no corresponding object can be given in sense-experience. Thus the pure concepts of reason, now under consideration, are transcendental ideas. They are concept of pure reason, in that they view all knowledge gained in experience as being determined through an absolute totality of conditions.

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They are not arbitrarily inverted; they are imposed by the very nature of reason itself, and therefore stand in necessary relation to the whole employment of understanding. Finally they are transcendent and overstep the limits of all experience; no object adequate to the transcendental idea can ever be found within experience (Kant, 1929, pp. 318-9).

It implies that empirical data are the primary sources of human knowledge that can be conceived by human understanding which abstracts figure of external object to various modes of ideal knowledge and further are used as means to institute transcendental knowledge for further practice especially in morality (Coffey, 1958, p. 170). So, Andrew Reath mentions the significance of knowledge from the *Critique of Pure Reason* in his introduction of *The Critique of Practical Reason* that:

Because of the systematic nature of Kant’s concerns, it is difficult to appreciate the significance of certain themes in the second Critique with out some familiarity with the Groundwork Critique of Pure Reason (Kant, 1997b, p. viii)

It is observable that Kant’s theory of knowledge tries to integrate empiricism into rationalism because Kant premised his system of experience on the combination of two faculties, sensibility and understanding through natural conditions of human beings which are controlled by space and time.

Kant convinces himself about the theory of knowledge due to the application of Copernican Revolution from which its influence has made an new enquiry of knowledge more feasible than relying on only the

philosophical method of rationalism or that of empiricism which influenced the world of philosophy during that period. It should be observed that this strategy of thinking was not instituted during that period in the field of philosophy. Now it is appropriate time to have a brief understanding about Kant's Copernican Revolution.

### **3. KANT'S COPERNICUS REVOLUTION**

In the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781, there is not a single mention of Copernicus by name (Kant, 1927, pp. 7-15); in the revised, second edition, there are two references to Copernicus (Kant, 1927, pp.22, 25), both contained in the Preface mentioned six times of 'evolution' (Hahn, 1988, p. 27) in order to analogically indicates that traditional metaphysics being concerned at that time made inclination. Kant writes:

There success should incline us, at least by way of experiment, to imitate their procedure, so far as the analogy which, as species of rational knowledge, they bear to metaphysics may permit. Hitherto it has been assumed that all knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them ended in failure (Kant, 1927, pp.22).

Kant's aspect seems to disagree with empiricism whose approach attempt to approve that knowledge from experience. Kant then proposes new process opposite to the traditional one with possible conviction on the past example that Nicholas Copernicus made. He proposes:

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We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the task of metaphysics; if we suppose that object must conform to our knowledge. This would agree better with what is desired, namely, that it should be possible to have knowledge of object *a priori*, determining something in regard to them prior to their being given. We should then be proceeding precisely on the line of Copernicus primarily hypothesis (Kant, 1927, pp.22).

Kant suggests this aspect due to the fact that it is impossible for human beings to apply empirical process to have true knowledge. Human thought factually has no authority to shape and sharpen the existence of other things. Hence, what had been handled in the academic fields was not correct due to the process which enforce external object of mind to be what human mind thought. There should be new method of human thought that comply to contextual reality instead of dogmatic teachings. Due to the fact that the second edition expressed the world ‘revolution’ instead of other appropriate word in academic field there should be a particular intention that Kant wanted to express. However, I will propose later. From this moment onwards in this sub-topic I will discuss about the particular pattern of the revolution. Considering to normal process of human understanding on the one side an outside object of human thought is able to exist unconditionally independent from human thought. On the other side each person has personal attitudes to contact external entities so that the person able to have knowledge about what he wants to know through his faculty of mind for attaining knowledge. In order to have conviction on his proposal Kant sets his explanative argument:

If intuition must conform to the constitution of the objects, I do not see how we could know anything of the later *a priori*; but if the object (as object of the sense) must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, I have no difficulty in conceiving such a possibility. Since I cannot rest in these intuitions if they are to become known, but must relate them as representations to something as their object, and determine this later through them, either I must assume that the concepts, by means of which I obtain this determination, conform to the object, or else I assume that the object, or what is the same thing, that the experience in which alone, as given object, they can be known, conform to the concept. In the former case I am again in the same perplexity as to how I can know anything *a priori* in regard to the objects. In the later case the outlook is more hopeful. For experience is itself a species of knowledge which involves understanding; and understanding has rules which I must presuppose as being in me prior to object being given to me, and therefore as being *a priori*. They find expression in *a priori* concepts to which all objects of experience necessarily conform, and with which they must agree (Kant, 1927, pp.22)

Relying on the capacity of mind to know an object, Kant attempts to emphasize on the process that human mind has to know the object it contact. From this process it can establish confirmation by experiment. From this conviction Kant uses this process to contribute his theory of knowledge as Newton succeeded from applying this process later (Kant, 1927, pp. 27).

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It is observable that Kant's whole critical enterprise as a Copernican Revolution in philosophy; transforming the prevailing and traditional programs in metaphysics, by reversing the order of inquiry, Kant also seeks, not the conditions under which the mind conforms to objects, but rather, the conditions under which an object conforms to the mind. According to Copernicus, he indeed had discovered a fruitful theoretical approach to the motions of the heavenly bodies by relying upon the spectator's or knower's role in the act of observation and then established intuitive understanding of the universe. It was the proper method of enquiry to have true knowledge. Human mind must have experiences with other things it want to know as it is as best as it can; but not in the sense of the expectation that things have to be as human wish that may cause illusions. It follows that human mind must discover the truth of other things as they are but not as what they have to be as traditional metaphysics did.

It is now time to reexamine precisely what Kant did say, and to clarify the analogy that Kant does make between himself and Copernicus. First, Kant acknowledged that both mathematics and natural science achieved their secure status as sciences by a “single” “sudden” revolution from the construction of concepts (Kant, 1929, p. 577). These remarkable results encourage Kant to consider the fundamental feature in the changed point of view by virtue of which they established themselves. Their success Kant regarded as a sufficient reason to at least try to imitate, insofar as such an innovation can be accommodated, in metaphysics the change in point of view that led the way effecting that revolution. Then, Kant simply acknowledges the prevailing point of view in metaphysics that in his estimation has led nowhere, namely the supposition that our knowledge must conform to objects -- the correspondence theory of knowledge

together with the similitude theory of reference. According to Kant this approach could provide the requisite certainty that is a necessary feature of a science. For so long as our knowledge corresponds to objects, our knowledge is at best a series of probable generalizations from the contents of sensation -- the empiricist program -- can be transformed to empirical-rational process that human mind can have appropriate knowledge corresponding to object rationally.

The change in point of view Kant now further requires that the prospect of certainty is first secured: our knowledge must be a priori, and the empiricist program can never attain that infallible status. The proposed change in point of view, in the attempt to imitate the success of natural science, leads him to wonder about the consequences if human beings supposed that the method of inquiry were somehow reversed by insisting that objects correspond to our knowledge -- the coherence theory of truth together with the rejection of a similitude theory of reference. Kant pursues this change in point of view because the prospect of certainty is at least possible if we employ this new method for the reason that it is not derived from pure intuition as rationalism did.

Due to the aspect which Kant proposed about the failing of satisfactory progress in explaining the movements of the heavenly bodies on the supposition that they all revolved around the spectator, then he tried whether he might not have better success if he made the spectator revolve and the stars remain at rest (Kant, 1927, p. 22). It is on analogy with this transformation in point of view that Kant called upon theory of Copernicus Revolution and looked for imitating his efforts so far as he understood them. Copernicus, for Kant, provides a novel hypothesis

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in terms of a changed point of view that he supposed led to the effecting of a revolution in natural science.

It should notice particularly that in a footnote to the Second Preface (Kant, 1927, p.23) Kant also refers to Copernicus while making two points, first with reference to the status of an hypothesis ultimately proved by the articulation of the fundamental laws of motion, and second with a comment on method whereby Copernicus dared to assert what was contradictory to the senses, but nonetheless true, in seeking the observed movements not in the heavenly bodies but in the spectators.

From this point of view the application of Copernican Revolution to derive theory of knowledge for ascertaining himself and others is quite effective because from this view point analytical and hypothetical process of knowledge inquiry has been prosperous in not only scientific, philosophical but also ethical viewpoints.

Summarily, it can be said that Kant's Copernican Revolution points out that the mind does not conform to its object. On the contrary, the objects of consciousness conform to the structure and operation of the mind itself according to faculty of understanding. It is noticeable that the structure of the mind which consists of understanding through categories set and sensibility which contains forms of space and time enable to give knowledge to human beings so that they can establish transcendental ideas and moral postulates through rational capacity in order to form appropriate understanding for further usage. However, it is noticeable that the categories of the understanding are applicable only to phenomena, which will be mentioned later, that appear to us under the form of sensibility. In addition, in an effort to construct a totally unified,



coherent and systematic world view, human reason thinks beyond the phenomenal realm and formulates ideas of realities that transcend the world of experience. In order to have firm conviction on theory of knowledge that Kant contributed there will be another aspect to be considered that is the theme of phenomena and noumena.

#### **4. PHENOMENA AND NOUMENA**

Kant describe his concept of phenomena and noumena in his Critique of Pure Reason in order to support his conviction on theory of knowledge which compromises between rationalism and empiricism. Rather Kant attempted to unfold the factual context of each current situation for handling particular condition as best as he can. This aspect is the consequence of the application that Kant did through using Copernicus' Revolution to explain his theory of knowledge. He identifies phenomena as the knowledge of an object in our understanding through representation. He writes:

The understanding, when it entitles an object in a [certain] relation mere phenomenon, at the same time forms, a part from that relation, a representation of an object in itself, and so come to represent itself as also being able to form concepts of such objects. And since the understanding yields no concept additional to the categories, it also supposes that the object in itself must at least be thought through these pure concept of an intelligible entity, namely, of a something in general outside our sensibility, as being a determinate concept of an entity that allows of being known in a certain [purely intelligible] manner by meaning of the understanding (Kant, 127, p. 268).

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This is the process of understanding which human mind operates itself in order to have knowledge. It is true that an object matter cannot be contained in human mind concretely but by faculty of understanding human mind can have sufficient knowledge. However, it is not illusory knowledge due to the fact that it is derived from an object which is a representation of the object in human mind. However, it is not really the thin-in-itself due to the natural process of human understanding which every normal human being similarly has. Clearly on such a view something needs to be said about the relations of ‘representing’ and ‘belonging to.’ According to Prichard he reintroduces Kant’s problem that:

If a representation is taken to be an appearance, or sensation, the main problem becomes that of explaining how it is that, beginning with the apprehension of mere appearances or sensations, we come to apprehend an object, in the sense of an object in nature, which, as such, is not an appearance or sensation, but a part of the physical world (Prichard, 1909, p. 232).

Besides, it is realized that such the source of knowledge still exists evidentially. It should be noticed that from cumulative reason of previous experiences an inspector knows that the stick immersed in water is not bent even though figurative appearance of such the stick is bent due to the clear understanding of each phenomena. It implies that faculty of understanding can enquire real appearance of each phenomenon.

To put the matter more explicitly, the assertion that something is so and so implies that it is so and so in itself, whether it be perceived or not, and therefore the assertion

that something *is* so and so to us as perceiving, though not in itself, is a contradiction in terms. The phrase 'to us as perceiving', as a restriction upon the word 'is', merely takes back the precise meaning of the word 'is'. That to which the phrase can be added is not the word 'is', but the word 'looks' or 'appears'. We can rightly say that the stick looks or appears bent to us as perceiving. But even then the addition only helps to make explicit the essential meaning of 'appears', for 'appears' really means 'appears to us', and 'as perceiving' only repeats the meaning of 'appears' from the side of the perceiving subject as opposed to that of the object perceived. The essential point, however, is thereby brought out that the phrase 'to us as perceiving' essentially relates not to what a thing is, but to what it looks or appears to us (Prichard, 1909, pp. 72-3).

Prichard implicitly mention that a knower has to conscientize on what he is doing and what he is contacting. Supported by previous scientific knowledge a knower will know what is appearing to his perception so that the representation is transformed to rational understanding.

When Kant mentions about noumena which is thing-in-itself he acknowledges that human mind cannot know what it is exactly because of its nature and human nature. It is not in the sense of extreme empiricism. Kant writes:

If by 'noumenon' we mean a thing so far as it is not an object of our sensible intuition, and so abstract from our mode of intuiting it, this is a noumenon in the negative

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sense of the form. But if we understand by its an object of a non-sensible intuition, we there by presuppose a special mode of intuition, namely, the intellectual which is not that which we possess, and of which we cannot comprehend even the possibility. This would be ‘noumenon in the positive sense of the term (Kant, 1927, p. 168).

The distinction between phenomena and noumena can be best approached by considering Kant’s formulation of the alternative views of the nature of space and time. In order to have a clear understanding about noumenon the following questions should be raised: “What are space and time? Are they real existences? Or are they merely determinations or relations of things, such, however, as would also belong to them in themselves, even if they were not perceived, or are they attached to the form of perception only, and consequently to the subjective nature of our mind, without which these predicates can never be attributed to any thing?”

Of these three alternatives, the first can be ignored. It is opposed to the second, and is the view that space and time are things rather than relations between things. This opposition falls within the first member of the wider opposition between things as they are in themselves and things as they are as perceived, and Kant, and indeed any one, would allow that if space and time belong to things as they are in themselves and not to things only as perceived, they are relations between things rather than things. The real issue, therefore, lies between the second and third alternatives. Are space and time relations between things which belong to them both in themselves and also as perceived by us, or are they relations which belong to things only as perceived?

To this question we may at once reply that, inasmuch as it involves an impossible antithesis, it is wholly unreal. The thought of a property or a relation which belongs to things as perceived involves a contradiction. It will be clear if a figurative example of an unbent stick partly immersed in water is considered. If we have not previously seen the stick, and are ignorant of the laws of refraction, we say that the stick is bent. If, however, we learn the effect of refraction, and observe the stick from several positions, we alter our assertion. We say that the stick is not really bent, but only looks or appears bent to us. But, if we reflect at all, we do not express our meaning by saying that the stick is bent to us as perceiving, though not in reality.

The word 'is' essentially relates to what really is. If, therefore, the phrase 'to us as perceiving' involves an opposition to the phrase 'in reality, as it must if it is to be a real qualification of 'is', it cannot rightly be added to the word 'is'. To put the matter more explicitly, the assertion that something is so and so implies that it is so and so in itself, whether it be perceived or not, and therefore the assertion that something is so and so to us as perceiving, though not in itself, is a contradiction in terms.

The phrase 'to us as perceiving', as a restriction upon the word 'is', merely takes back the precise meaning of the word 'is'. That to which the phrase can be added is not the word 'is', but the word 'looks' or 'appears'. We can rightly say that the stick looks or appears bent to us as perceiving. But even then the addition only helps to make explicit the essential meaning of 'appears', for 'appears' really means 'appears to us', and 'as perceiving' only repeats the meaning of 'appears' from

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the side of the perceiving subject as opposed to that of the object perceived. The essential point, however, is thereby brought out that the phrase ‘to us as perceiving’ essentially relates not to what a thing is, but to what it looks or appears to us.

What, then, is the proper statement of Kant’s view that space is a determination of things only as they appear to us, and not as they are in themselves? It should be said that things are not in reality spatial, but only look or appear spatial to us. It can be said that space and time are real relations of something, though not of things in themselves.

How, then, does Kant obtain something of which space and time can be regarded as really relations? He reaches it by a transition which at first sight seems harmless. In stating the fact of perception he substitutes for the assertion that things appear so and so to us the assertion that things produce appearances in us. In this way, instead of an assertion which relates to the thing and states what it is not but only appears, with a different distinction from that with which he begins. He begins with the distinction between things as they are in themselves and things as they appear to us, distinction relating to one and the same reality regarded from two different points of view. He ends with the distinction between two different realities, things-in-themselves, external to, in the sense of independent of, the mind, and phenomena or appearances within it.

It should be observed that in the context of human life, each human being has to know external matters for his survival. Knowing something should be the means that support life earning so that human being is able to accomplish happiness in each contextual circumstance.

## 5. ARGUMENTATIVE SUMMARY

The long survey of Kant's theory of knowledge comes to an end. It should be noticeable that human knowledge is a significant factor that human being need to understand what he has to contact properly in rational process which need certain conviction on what it has perceived. Kant distinguishes fundamentally between two heterogeneous factors in all human knowledge: concepts and intuitions. These two factors correspond to two distinct faculties of human cognition: the faculty of thought or of the understanding, on the one hand, and the faculty of sensibility, on the other. This distinction in faculties gives expression to the fact that we human beings are both active and passive in our knowledge: active insofar as we think objects, but passive insofar as objects impress themselves upon our sensibility. The faculty of thought (or of the understanding) is spontaneous for Kant in the sense that thought is a faculty for the synthesis of representations into higher, more general representations. Thought, then, is a faculty of concepts since concepts are those representations by means of which we collect many representations under one general representation. Kant distinguishes concepts from intuitions by their generality and by the fact that they relate to objects mediately, through other representations. It should be realized that concepts so understood as functions of unity among other given representations, are, independently of intuition, empty and independently of intuition, concepts are insufficient for knowledge of an object.

Intuitions, in contrast, are singular representations that relate immediately to objects; but like concepts, intuitions alone are not sufficient for knowledge of an object. This follows from the fact that our intuition is sensible and our

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understanding discursive. That our intuition is sensible implies that we are passive with respect to it. The content of intuition arises for us through the object's affection of our sensitive faculty. Our understanding is discursive in the sense that we can know an object only through thinking it, which implies that we must combine representations together as given to the faculty of sensibility; that is, we must bring given representations under concepts. So, neither concepts nor intuitions, neither thought nor sensibility alone, is sufficient for knowledge. But there must be relativity of understanding of presentation and intuition so that what is known is intelligible in human mind as knowledge through logic.

For Kant, human reason cannot “see” supersensible entities; it does not in fact see anything. It merely “thinks” or plays with ideas and then concludes that these “speculations” must correspond to real things. On the other hand, in Kant's view, empiricists, who believed the human mind to be a “blank tablet” (such as John Locke), underestimated the role of reason in the “building” of knowledge. According to Kant, the human mind is not passively formed by objects of perception; it actively “forms” the raw material of objects given in perception. It adds something of its own to knowledge. Kant endeavored to make clear once and for all the precise role the human knower plays in determining the “production” of knowledge.

Kant, factually, is in agreement with Descartes and Hobbes that objects of nature are determined by mechanical laws. But he disagrees with Descartes' claim to prove the existence of a separate realm of mind or absolute freedom, and he disagrees with Hobbes' view that there can be no such thing as spiritual substance if it is considered further. Kant, in case



of soul and freedom, maintains that they do exist, but that their existence can be neither proved nor disproved. The standard fare of metaphysic knowledge is beyond the scope of human experience and is therefore beyond the bounds of knowledge. For proof and disproof apply only to what can be sensibly experienced, and we cannot see the soul. Yet it is presumptuous to assume, because we cannot see something, that it does not exist. According to Kant, there are things that cannot be known acknowledged as noumena. In fact all things, as they are in themselves and not as we reconstruct them in experience, are unknowable. We can only know things as they appear to us and are constituted in our consciousness according to nature of human being which is a kind of natural law. In this way, Kant corrects the error of both dogmatic rational metaphysics (such as in Descartes) and dogmatic scientific determinism (such as Hobbes). Kant confines knowledge to appearances and places things as they really are outside of appearances due to the limit of human nature. Science is not reality; it is simply the best interpretation of reality.

Kant overcomes the dualism which Descartes proposed about inner and outer, mind and body, knowledge and practice with a new dualism -- the dualism of reality and appearance. According to Kant, there is a difference between the way things are in themselves (reality) and the way things appear to us. We cannot know things as they really are in themselves (noumena); we only know them as appearances (phenomena). Knowledge is not the transparent viewing of "concrete facts." The mind is not a window, through which objects pass unaltered. Rather, knowledge is the making of a product. The mind that naturally has faculty to know converts the raw material of beings as they are into the finished product of objects, or beings as they are for us in perception and knowledge. To know is to reconstruct,

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to interpret reality. Knowledge is objective interpretation of reality, but it is not reality itself. According to Kant, human knowledge is a process that includes both sensibility (perception) and understanding (conception).

In case of sensibility, it is not, according to Kant, the same thing as “sensation.” Sensation is the chaotic array of impressions given by the senses. Sensibility gives order to these impressions; it arranges them next to one another in space and before and after one another in time. Sensibility is normally the perception of things in space and time. Space and time are not real things or “noumena” apart from the act of perceiving; they are frameworks or “forms” supplied by the perceiving subject. Space and time are ways we experience reality; they are not reality itself. Besides, Kant maintains that even though space and time are subjective (human) ways of ordering sensations, they are nevertheless “objectively subjective.” Apart from accidental differences, all human perceivers intuit space and time in the same way. To perceive is to perceive spatially and temporally; that is simply the way humans are made. Hence the objection which Wayne Waxman (1995, p. 811) propose that there is incommensurateness between sensibility and understanding is unacceptable.

It can be said on the other part that that the understanding is not tempted to use concepts to go beyond objects of experience. Indeed, one can think independently of sensible experience. One can think -- i.e., put together pure concepts of understanding without reference to perception in space and time; but such thinking does not produce knowledge. It is merely “speculative” or “dialectical”.

From my view point traditional Metaphysics is the illicit use of concepts apart from application to experience due to the fact that there

should be relative connection between represent of experience and understanding. The concepts of the understanding become, in traditional Metaphysics, a playground of idle speculation. One can rearrange the concepts in any way one wishes; one can think whatever one wants. But the result is not knowledge because they are separate from each other. In addition, knowledge requires that theories be verified by sensible experience. Knowledge is always tied to perception; it combines both understanding and sensibility. An object of knowledge is always at the same time an object that can be tied to a sensible intuition: a percept (what is sensed). Traditional Metaphysics thought that the understanding can see things that the senses cannot, that the senses see a visible world whereas the mind sees an intelligible world (such as Plato or Descartes). For example, because it is possible to think of a cause that is not itself an effect of another cause, even though experience of nature reveals no such cause, Metaphysicians thought they had proved “freedom” or “God” and the like by their own pure presumption which is may be illusive if it does not have sufficient reference. But for Kant, all seeing is sensible; the mind does not see apart from the senses; it only makes sense of, categorizes, and interprets what is given through the senses. This is the process of consideration that can relate to primary cause.

It should be realized, according to Kant, that besides sensibility and understanding in the process of knowing, there is a third faculty: the faculty of reason. Reason attempts to unify all objects of knowledge and judgments of experience under general principles or simple ideas. Reason aims at complete knowledge; it runs far ahead of understanding working slowly with sensible intuitions. It anticipates perfect knowledge. It envisions a coherent and orderly whole (a system). Thus, it motivates

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inquiry and investigation. It is able to foresee unity and thereby stimulates the pursuit of knowledge. The ideas or ideals of reason, the unities anticipated by reason, are the idea of the soul (as the completely understood subject), the world (as the completely understood nexus of causes and effects), and God (as absolute perfection). All of these ideas or ideals point beyond experience and stimulate inquiry; they promote life. But they may or may not correspond to things in themselves. The purpose of reason is to assist understanding and perception, by giving them unity; they are projecting and anticipating ideal conditions. But reason can know nothing by itself. It merely brings unity to experience. The soul is the projected point of completion of all psychological inquiry, the idea of the self as a thing in itself. But knowledge never reaches such completion, for knowledge is only a complex product. It never grasps a simple unprocessed essence. Yet the goal of knowledge is precisely the simple and the unprocessed. The same conditions hold for their attempt to understand the world as a whole and to grasp the absolute. The purpose of reason is to dream and to believe in its dreams, but dreaming is not knowing. I would like to say that “rationalism” or the unbridled use of reason fails in its attempt to do the impossible, to link the ideas to real supersensible realities or things in themselves. Knowledge must be the means to support one’s conviction to moralize his will to conduct ethical deeds for accomplishing final approach of life which is happiness. It is not only pure rationalism or empiricism but there must be combination between both of them in order to lead human being attaining their final goal of life. Yirmiyaha Yovel points out that:

It is characteristic of Kant that he interprets pure practical reason as will. He thereby revolutionizes the notions of both reason and the will. Reason (or rationality) is conceived as interest, a motivating power, even a self-sufficient telos. Moreover, the will is understood as a rational power, that is, as initially structured by the form of law, and striving for universality in both its inner operation and the way it ought to shape the outside world. For such a will, being rational also means being self-constituting, or autonomous, and self-willing, that is, seeking rationality as end-in-itself. Thus construed, the immanent human will becomes in Kant the only valid source of norms and values, whether they are moral, political, or religious. The traditional ground, God's will, no longer plays a role in grounding moral precepts, nor political legitimization and institutions, nor even religion itself. In Kant's Copernican Revolution (which concerns the will no less than the intellect) it is the finite-rational (that is, human) being whose will takes over all these roles. Moreover, the human will is capable of assuming those formerly divine tasks because it is now conceived as practical reason (in Kant's sense), namely, as self-guiding and self-motivating rationality, striving to actualize its universal structure in its own actions, and to imprint it on the social and political environment. The practical-rational activity consists in the will assuming

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its own universal structure and projecting it upon objects, values, intentions, and the very shape of the external world -- including social custom, cultural objects, moral awareness, political, and religious institutions. On the one hand, practical rationality is self-directed, because its ultimate goal is to realize itself in all these activities. In order to do so, though, it must, on the other hand, be an outward-going activity, always directed at something else--an action, an intention, a custom, an institution, and so forth--which it must produce or reshape. These two features are not contradictory, because reason's outward self-projecting is performed for reason's own sake. Rationality must realize itself in cultural objects like science, morals, politics, and religion, by imparting its own structure to them. Only thus can human rationality (or more succinctly, humanity) realize its own end, its inherent teleological destiny; and this makes Kant's concept of reason teleological from the start (Yovel, 1998, p. 267).

I finally agree with Kant in the case which he claims that we can have both empirical and transcendental knowledge even though we cannot have concrete knowledge of thing in itself. However, it is the means that supports human being to earn their living happily. Even though there are some experts disagree with him but it has to be observed that they attack Kant only in the details of philosophical discussion but within real situation

each one has to acknowledge natural condition of each individual. Concerning to the aspect on human knowledge Prichard's account of Kant's perceptual terms can be found throughout his book *Kant's Theory of Knowledge*, and is neatly summarized in a passage from pp. 231-235, it has to be observed carefully. In this passage Prichard argues (Prichard, 1909, 231) that the central question of the Transcendental Deduction, which he identifies as 'How does an apprehension become related to an object?', contains absurdity. He claims that Kant manages to conceal this absurdity from himself by supposing that representations, or appearances, or sensations, both 'have a being of their own' and also represent something, namely the thing in itself. This latter point is reinforced by Prichard elsewhere (Prichard, 1909, p.137) through the claim, specifically about appearances, that 'though from the point of view of the thing in itself an appearance is an appearance or perception of it, yet regarded from the standpoint of what it is in itself, an appearance is a reality perceived of the kind called mental.' I would like to argue that human reason has capacity to perceive and understand the relation between apprehension and an object. The theory of knowledge that Kant contributes is the attempt from human capacity of rational intuition to know something. To know something will not necessary to proved empirically. There should be contextual understanding of human nature of capacity to understand other things due to the limit of human nature. I would like to raise a common example. If a man who wears a white shirt goes into the room where an electrical black light is switched on, other people will see the color of his shirt as

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white or not. It is true that everyone will see that his shirt is not white even though they had seen before entering the room that his shirt was white. Another example is a case of color blind man. While everyone see a national Thai flag has three colors but he the colorblind man cannot perceive as other people see. However, through rational procedure of understanding that human being naturally has each one can identify the color of the shirt in the room of black-light electric tube. Every human being has to acknowledge limit of one's nature through rational process accordingly. However, the philosophical process which is appropriate for enhance quality of understanding of human being should be initiated instead of making rival argument to discredit other one. Holistic consideration on what is beneficial for life enhancement is better than partial justification through subjective justification.





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