

A Brief History. . . of the History of Ideas

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Introduction

- What this presentation will enable you to do
 - * See the “flow” of ideas over four major epochs of philosophical thought
 - * I’ll try to connect some to issues of importance to theists & Christian theists

Caveat Emptor

- What this presentation is NOT intended to do for you:
 - * be able to converse on equal terms with a specialist in the history of philosophy OR a specialist on a division of the history
 - * give short pat answers to questions
- What is intended is to give you a rough outline from which to expand

Four* Important Periods of Philosophical Thought (preview)

- Ancient Greek and Roman
- Medieval
- Renaissance
- Modern
- *Possible Emerging Postmodernism

Ancient Greek & Roman Period

■ Brief Summary of the Pre-Socratic Issues

* The Problem of the One and Many

- What is the “stuff” of the universe made of?

* The Problem of Appearance & Reality

- Are things as they appear?

* The Problem of Permanence & Change

- Are all things in flux, or are some things permanent and fixed?

Ancient Greek & Roman Period

■ Continuing with **some** of the Pre-Socratics

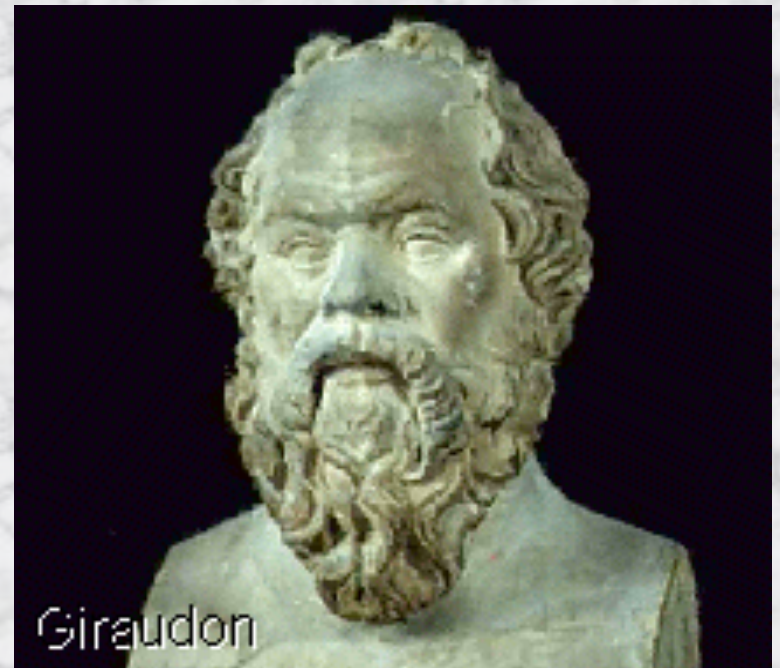
- * Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes
- * The Pythagorean Society
- * Heraclitus
- * Parmenides
- * Protagoras

Greek & Roman (cont.)

- Some important things about the Pre-Socratic philosophers
 - * Emergence of debate between rationalists and empiricists
 - * Ground work laid for the SPA era to follow; SPA takes the discussion to more sophisticated & systematic level
 - * Some skeptics—PM could find its roots here
- The thing to see about pre-Socratics with respect to Christianity
 - * Could be seen as metaphysical speculation darkened by “hardened heart”
 - * Moved from speculation about the gods, to speculation about reality without the gods
 - * Could the proper legacy of pre-Socratics be skepticism?

Greek & Roman (cont.)

- THE SPA (or Socratic, Platonic, & Aristotelian) era
 - * the Sophists
 - * Socrates
 - The Socratic problem
 - Thumbnail sketch



Greek & Roman (cont.)

■ Plato

■ Thumbnail

- Epistemology
- Metaphysics

■ Influence



Greek & Roman (cont.)

■ Aristotle

* Thumbnail

- Epistemology
- Metaphysics

* Influence



Greek & Roman (cont.)

- Summary

- Things to See About the SPA Era

- * SPA era tended to reject radical skepticism
- * More systematic development of ideas
- * Plato & Aristotle left an enormous intellectual legacy to the West

- The Thing to See About the SPA Era With Respect to Christianity

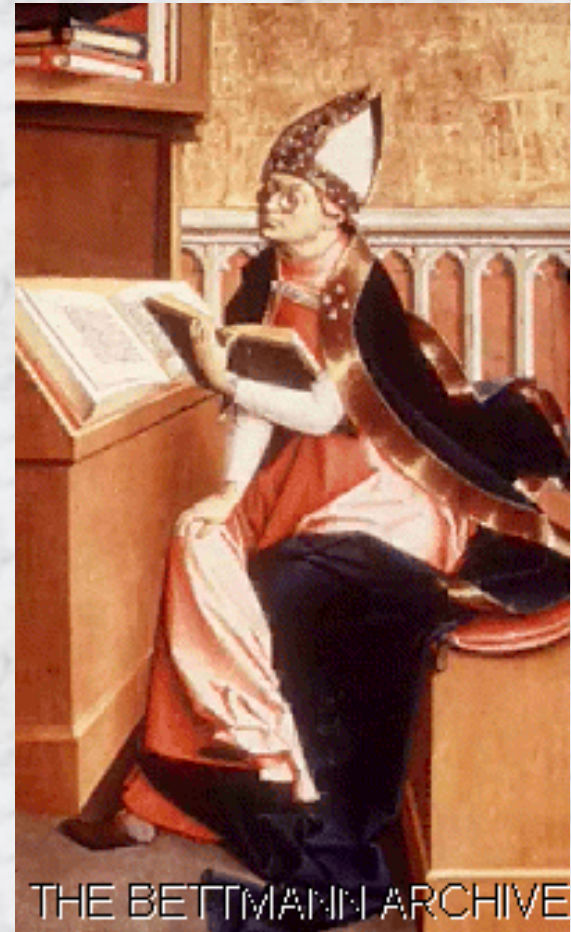
- * general revelation, moral law, culpability
- * Later Christians thinkers felt the need to frame their views in terms of what these people had to say

Medieval (preview)

- Approx. time line...(400-1500 AD)
- Some Key players
 - * Augustine (a transitional figure—**Book End 1**)
 - * Charlemagne & the Carolingian Renaissance
 - * The Scholastics—Duns Scotus & Aquinas (a transitional figure)
 - * Aquinas (**Bookend 2**)
- Christendom & Scholasticism

Medieval (some details)

- Augustine
- Thumbnail
 - * Epistemology
 - * Theological history



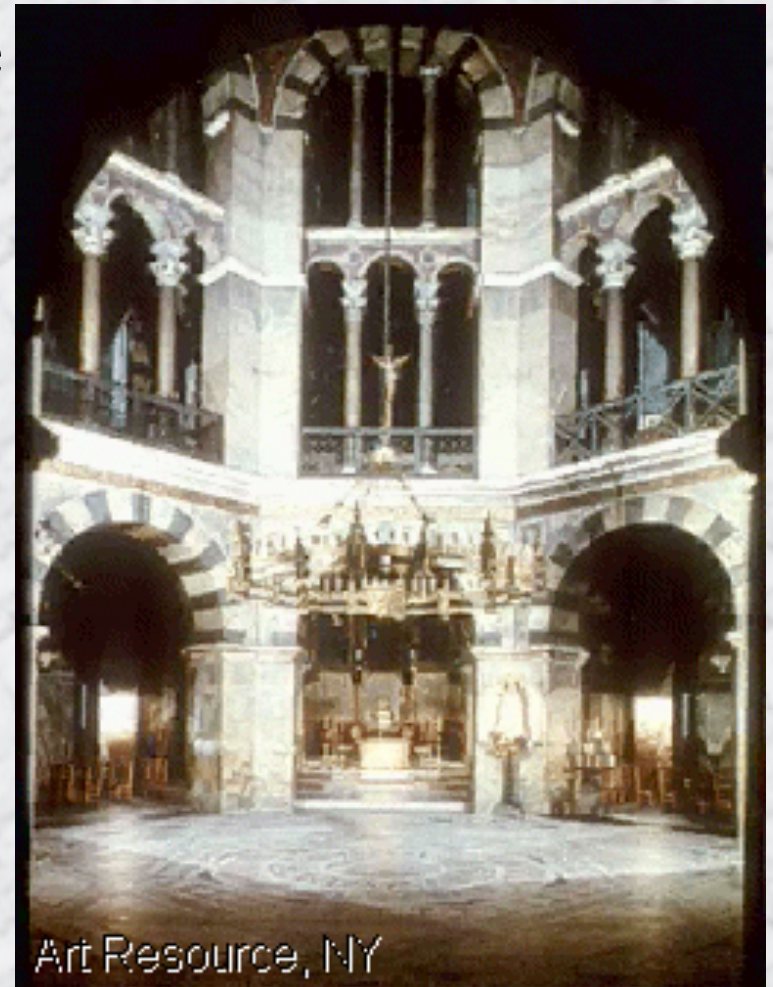
Medieval (some details)

■ Charlemagne & the Carolingian Renaissance



Medieval (cont.)

■ Carolingian Renaissance



Art Resource, NY

Medieval (cont.)

■ Compare to Byzantine art

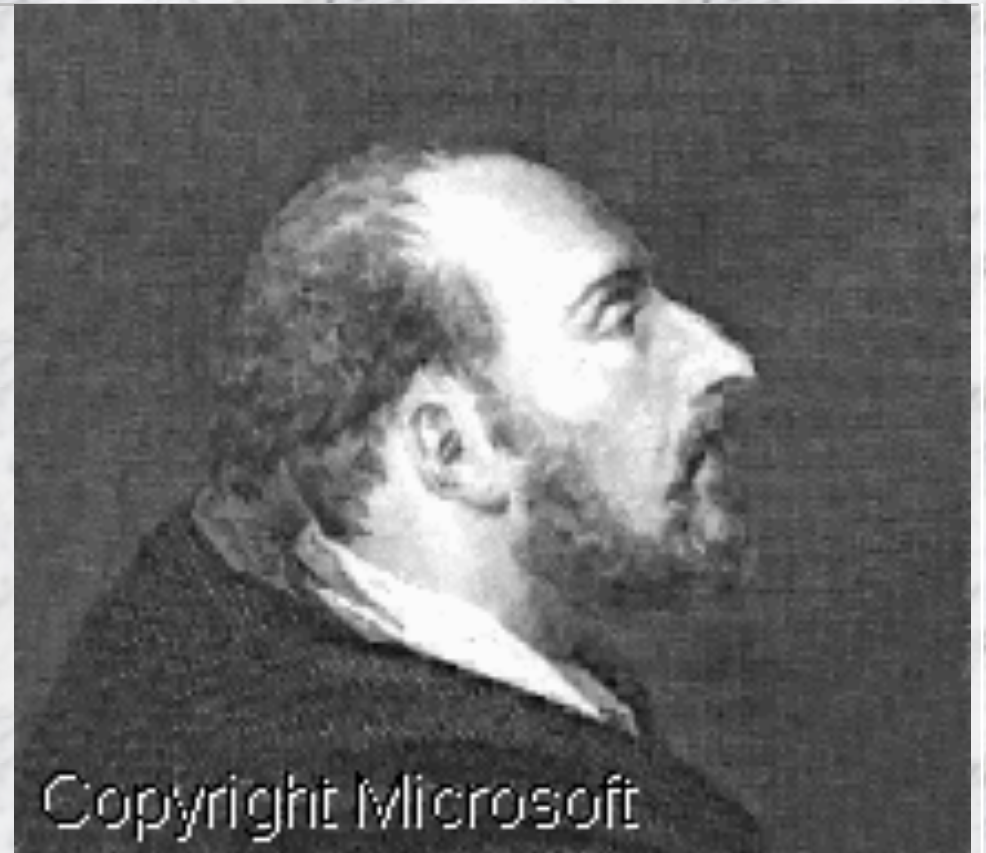


Medieval (cont.)

- Aquinas

- Thumbnail

- * Scholasticism
- * Epistemology
- * Natural theology



Medieval (cont.)

■ Things to See

- * Sophist teaching still not a big factor

■ Things to See With Respect to Christianity

- * 1000 years to get it right--no golden age
- * “forced” to integrate with SPA era thought
- * Church involved in a power struggle with the state

Renaissance (preview & detail)

■ Decline of medieval synthesis

- * Rising national sovereignties (esp. German)
- * The Renaissance papacy (the Medicis)
- * Desire for a knowledge of classical texts (1475)
- * Increase in wealth
- * Advent of humanism
- * The reformation (1500 +)
- * Popularizing technology (1451)

Renaissance

- Rough Dates: (1475) 1500-1725

- Key Players

- * Science

- Galileo Galilei

- Francis Bacon

- Isaac Newton

- * Literature

- Humanists: Erasmus

Renaissance (cont.)

■ The Thing To See About the Renaissance

- * Desire to read literature from the classical age
- * Resurrection of Sophism—skepticism and relativism

■ The Thing To See About the Renaissance with Respect to Christianity

- * Intellectuals Excited About the Secular
- * Beginnings of Natural Science
- * Beginnings of a great cultural shift that has more than one cause

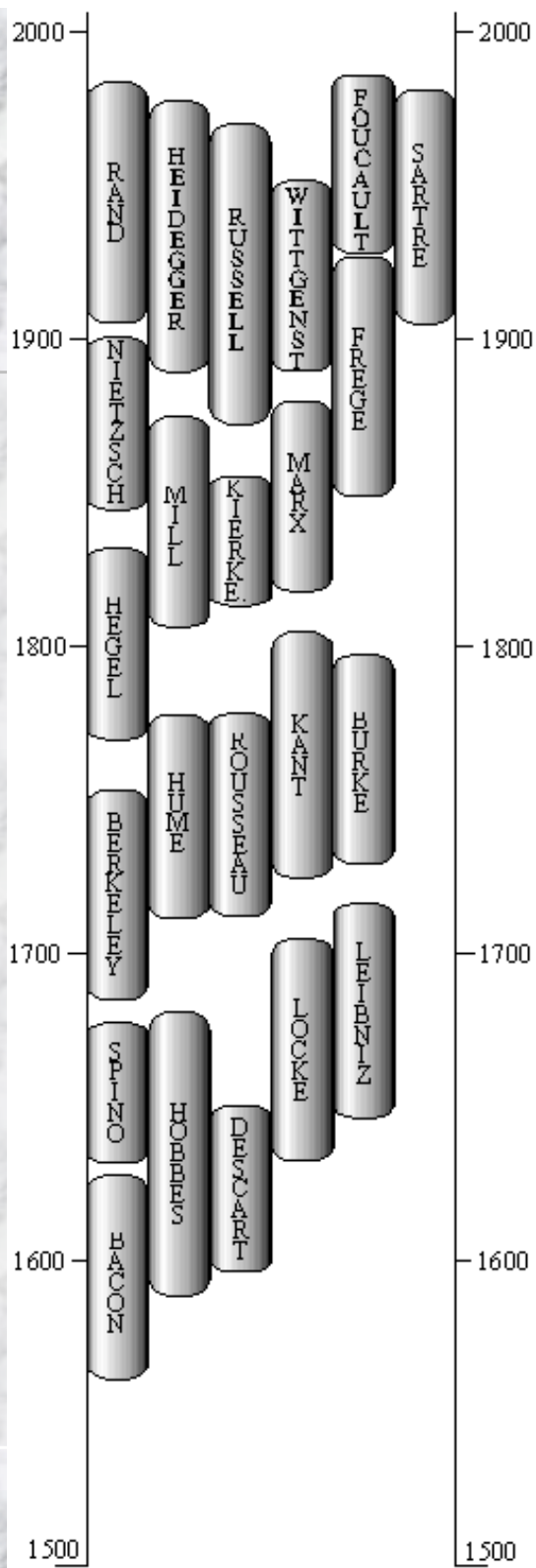
Modern (Preview)

■ Key Players:

- * Bacon, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant
- * Rationalism and Empiricism debate intensifies

■ Rise of Science

- * Galileo
- * Francis Bacon
- * Newton



Modern (some details)

■ Francis Bacon

- * Thumbnail
- * Contribution
- * Influence



Modern (cont.)

■ Rene Descartes

- * Thumbnail
- * Contribution
- * Influence



Modern (cont.)

■ David Hume

- * Thumbnail
- * Contribution
- * Influence



Hume's Epistemology

External World

Distinguished by force or vivacity

Impressions

Ideas

?

Connection between world of objects and impressions is in the mind only;
material objects are “formed” by the mind’s structuring activities: 1) cause & effect
2) resemblance, and 3) contiguity

Modern (cont.)

■ Immanuel Kant

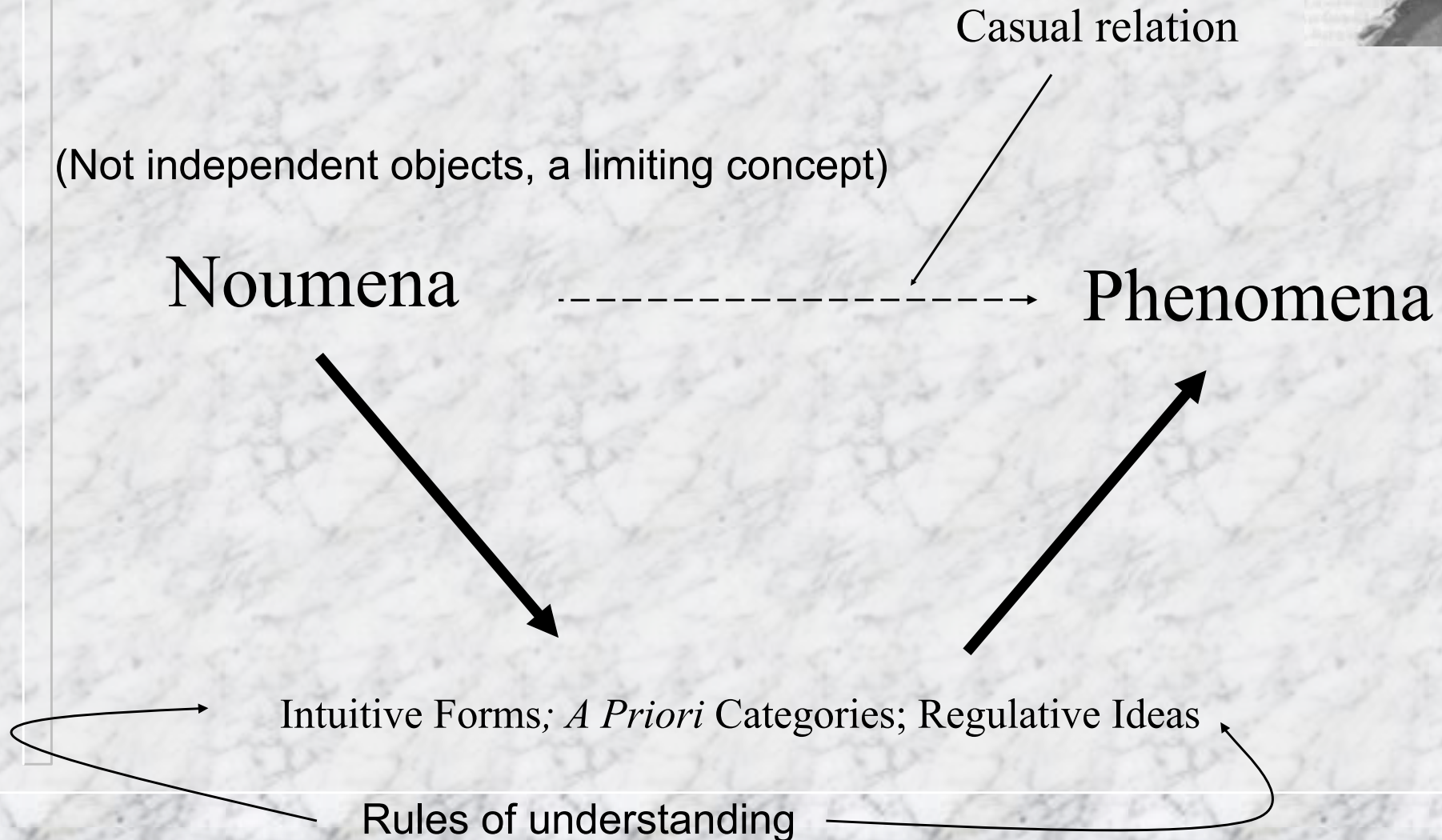
- * Thumbnail
- * Contribution
- * Influence



Rough & Ready

Kant's Revolution:

Things in Themselves; Things to Me



Intuitive forms of
space and time

Categories of the
Understanding

Regulative Ideas

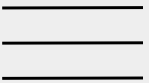
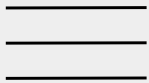
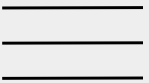
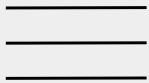
Creates greater unity of reason than just with
the categories of the understanding

Sensations directly shaped
by:

S

T

Imagination



World

Self

God

Noumena

Ding an sich
Things in Themselves
Unknown X

Phenomena

The Synthesizing Activities of the Mind



Intuitive forms of
space and time

Categories of the
Understanding (constitutive)

Regulative Ideas

Creates greater unity of reason than just with
the categories of the understanding; establish
relationships to world, self, God

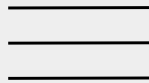
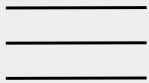
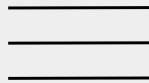
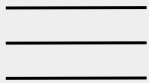
Sensations directly formed
by:

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T



World

Self

God

Imagination

Phenomena

The Synthesizing Activities of the Mind

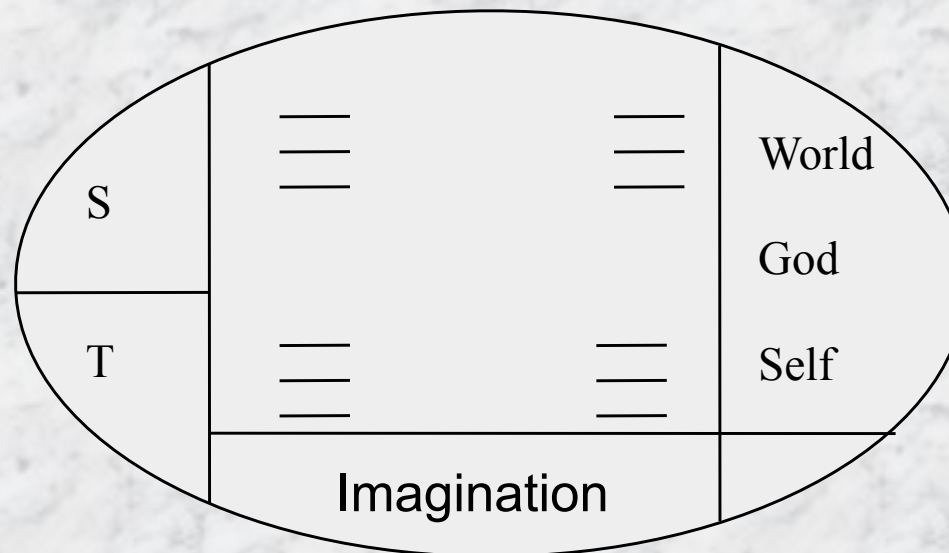


Fichte took Kant's idea a step further by asserting this:
The I or Ego which is the pure original unchangeable consciousness

Kant

Transcendental Unity of Apperception
Or
Transcendental Apperception
(riding "above" the syntheses below)

Sounds like the
glue that holds
self together and
objects together
(Because of the
term "unity")



The Synthesizing Activities of the Mind

Kant's view of propositions

■ Three kinds of propositions

- * Synthetic *a posteriori*—matters of fact (agreeing with Hume)
- * Analytic *a priori*—relation of ideas (agreeing with Hume)
- * Synthetic *a priori*—about the experienced world but they cannot be falsified by the experienced world because they are part of the mind's ordering processes or, said another way, an organizing principle of the mind (his new third kind)

Kant

Idealism

“as if”
phenomenology

What Followed Kant on the Continent

Modern (cont.)

- Developments in more contemporary philosophy
 - * Biblical criticism increases and becomes more sophisticated
 - * Christianity thought to be ideological & political “enemy” by intellectuals
 - * Power as *the* issue
 - Sometimes thought as economic power
 - Sometimes thought of as cultural or political power
 - * Nietzsche
 - * Marx

Modern (Conclusions)

■ Things to See About the Modern Period

- * Two currents in the stream
- * Rationalism: Cartesian → skepticism
- * Empiricism: Locke, Hume → skepticism
- * Kantian alternative → empirical knowledge (knowledge of phenomena); skeptical of knowledge of noumena
- * Will to Power (Greek and German)
- * Some reaction to cold positivism by the romantics and transcendentalists of that era--but a sense among the educated & intellectuals that theism had been undermined

Modern (cont.)

■ Things to See About the Modern Period With Respect to Christianity

- * Death of God
- * 19th century impact on the Academy
- * Impact on Great Awakenings in America
 - Began to move away from intellectual legacy
 - Began to be influenced by results--tendency to become populist
- * Loss of cultural dominance in early 20th

Modern period legacy to Post-Modernism

- Conceptual roots lie in the re-emergent skepticism and sophism; reemergence in the Renaissance & the Enlightenment
- Cultural or community relativism
- Anti-realism
- Marxist Influence
- Politicizing Knowledge
- Changing how people talk

Summary of What We've Learned:

- Four basic periods of thought and a rough picture of their development
- Identified a few influential thinkers and ideas in these periods

Where to get more information

■ PBS educational videos

- * The Western Tradition by Eugene Weber
- * The Hermitage
- * The Louvre
- * The Mechanical Universe and Beyond
- * The Day the Universe Changed
- * Connections
- * Stephen Hawking's Universe

Where to . . .(cont.)

- The Great Books Series
- *History of Philosophy* by Frederick Copleston
- *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ed. Paul Edwards
- *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* ed. Robert Audi

Where to. . .(cont.)

- *Encyclopedia Britanica* ed. Motimer Adler