

	Hume's Division of Claims about Knowledge		
	All purported claims to have knowledge about something can be justified in one of two ways.		
<i>(Kant)</i>	Relations of Ideas	Matters of Fact	<i>(Kant)</i>
<i>analytic</i>	negations are contradictory (“intuitively or demonstrably certain”)	negations not contradictory (not “intuitively or demonstrably certain”)	<i>synthetic</i>
<i>A priori</i>	justifiable by reason alone, without reference to sense experience	not justifiable by reasons alone, but instead requires sense experience	<i>a posteriori</i>

So, Hume's claim that all knowledge is either of Relations of Ideas or Matters of Facts amounts to saying, using Kant's terminology, that all knowledge is either a priori knowledge of analytic statements, or a posteriori knowledge of synthetic statements. In other words, Hume is denying that there is any a posteriori knowledge of analytic claims, and likewise denying that there is any a priori knowledge of synthetic claims. Kant agrees that there is no a posteriori knowledge of analytic claims, but disagrees with Hume about the possibility of a priori knowledge of synthetic claims. Kant claims that we have knowledge of arithmetical and geometrical statements. He claims that these statements are synthetic, and that our knowledge of them is a priori.

Hume's Claim: The only claims we can know without consulting experience are those whose negations are contradictory. (This is just his empiricism. How could we know about matters of fact without consulting experience?) In Kant's terminology, he is claiming that we can have no a priori knowledge of any synthetic statements.

Kant's Reply: The claims of geometry and arithmetic are synthetic (i.e., their negations are not contradictory—their predicates are not "contained" in their subjects). But (assuming that we know these claims), we know these claims a priori, since they are held to be necessarily true, and are universal claims, and experience could never be sufficient to justify any necessary or universal truths. So, it must be possible to have synthetic a priori knowledge, because we actually have some.

(Committed Humean's Retort: If geometry and arithmetic are indeed synthetic and a priori, then we have no knowledge of them either.

Kant's Reply to Committed Humean: See below.)

Kant's Question: How is synthetic a priori knowledge possible in geometry and arithmetic?

Kant's Answer: Geometric and arithmetic truths are the result of something that our minds necessarily contribute to how we experience the world. They are not reflections of the world as it is in itself, independently of how we experience it.

Also: Kant will argue that any conscious experience whatsoever is possible only on the assumption that our minds make this contribution. But since we actually do have conscious experience (and even the committed Humean must allow this), then we know that our minds must actually make this contribution. But if our minds make this contribution, then synthetic a priori knowledge must actually be possible. Therefore, it is possible. (*This is Kant's response to the Committed Humean.*)

Also: This same necessary contribution that our minds make to our experience of the world also explains how it is possible for us to know about causal relations and about laws of nature. Once again, since our minds necessarily make this contribution, we can then justify our claims to know about causality and laws of nature, but only with respect to how things necessarily appear to us, not with respect to how

things may be in themselves, independently of how they appear to us.