

# Dualism in Philosophy

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## WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY?

Psychology's long history began with the questioning of the ancient Greek philosophers. They asked what it is to be human and sought to understand the nature of knowledge. For Plato (c.424-c.347BC), the human mind could glimpse the eternal beyond the earthly. He believed that the body was the tomb of the soul and introduced a dualism into how we think about the relationship between soul and body.



## Dualism

- Plato (427—347 B.C.) was a dualist.
- *Dualism* argues that mind and body are of two different natures; the brain is a physical substance and the mind is a mental substance.
- Plato thought the body resided in a world that is material, extended, and perishable.
- The mind, he believed, resided in an ideal world of forms that was immaterial, non-extended, and eternal.

Aristotle (384-322Bc), in contrast to Plato, looked to the natural world and examined how our human capacities for thought and reason fit into a hierarchy of being from the plants to the gods.

This ordered view of nature, and our place in it, lasted for hundreds of years.



## Three kinds of souls

Soul = form, essence, life force

- Vegetative soul: capable of nutrition and growth
- Sensitive soul: capable of sense perception and movement
- Rational soul: capable of intelligent thought

Plants have only vegetative soul.

Animals have vegetative and sensitive souls.

Only humans have all three.

René Descartes (1596-1650) challenged this view and argued for a new set of dualisms: mind and matter, and mind and body. The implication of his rationalistic philosophy was that knowledge was innate and the body, including the brain, were mechanisms more complex but no different in kind from clockwork toys.



Rene Magritte. *La Decalcomanie*. 1966

Through his *dualism*, René Descartes believes that the world comprises two distinct and incompatible classes of substance:

### The Physical:

res extensa, or extended substance, which extends through space.

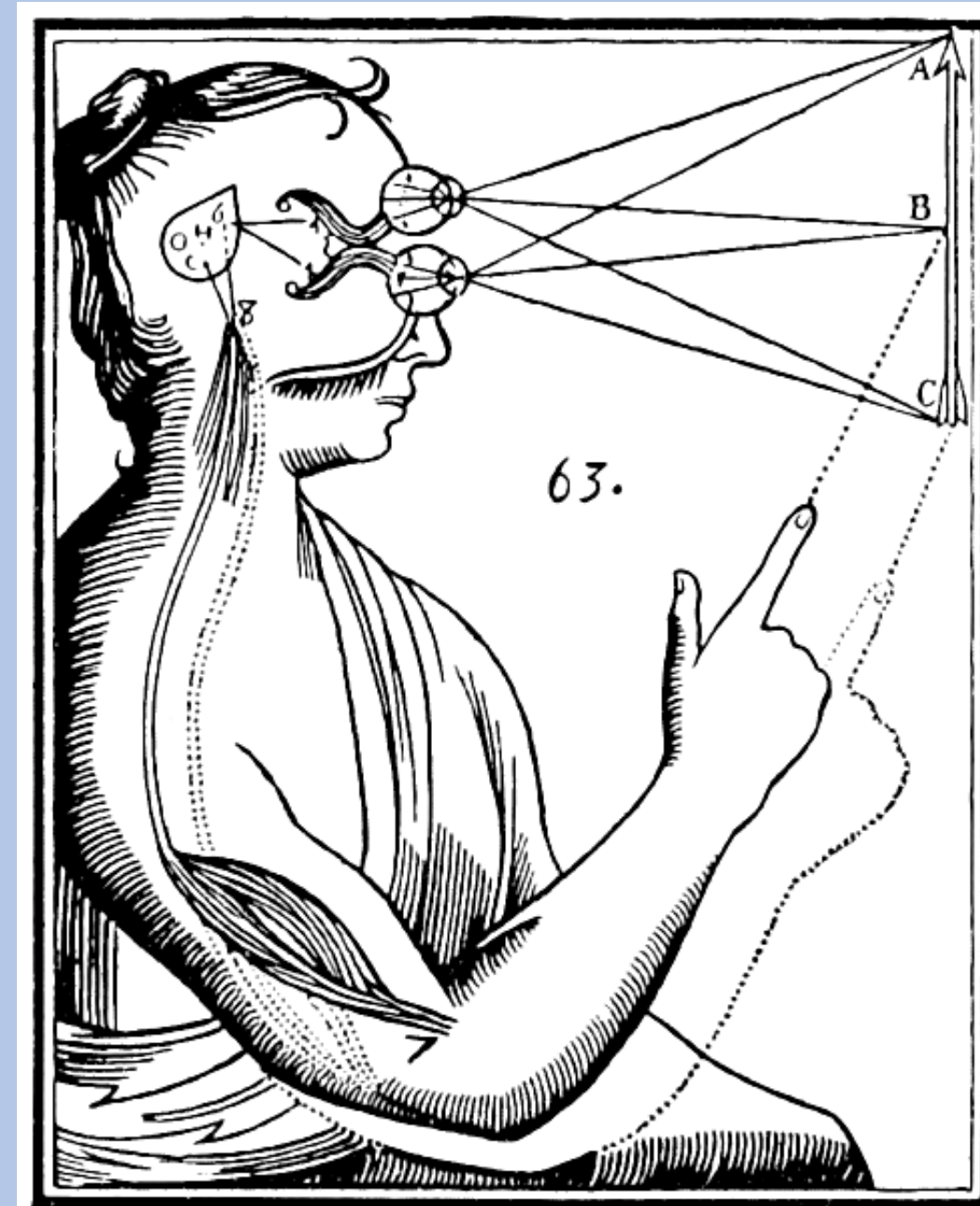
### The Mind:

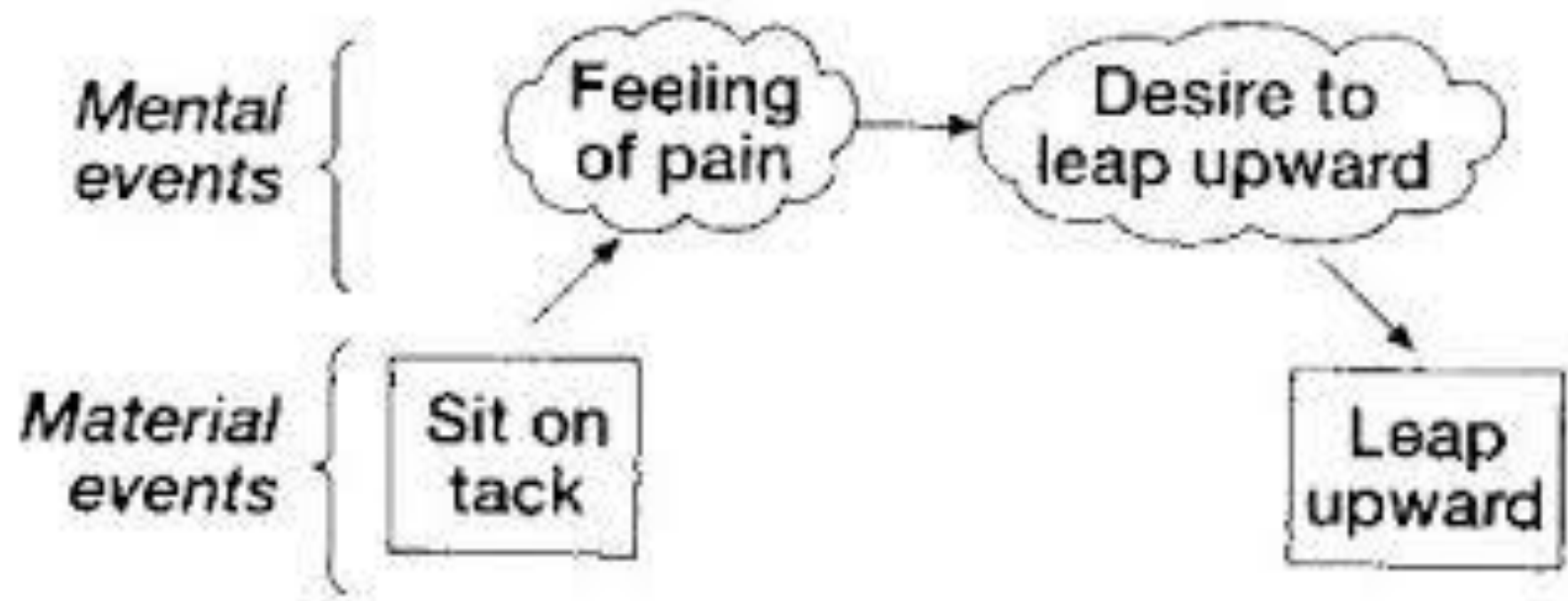
res cogitans, or thinking substance, which has no extension in space.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century philosopher, Gilbert Ryle, who coined the term, "**ghost in the machine**," a term originally used to describe and critique the concept of the mind existing alongside and separate from the body.

The British philosopher Gilbert Ryle introduced the phrase in *The Concept of Mind* (1949).

More recently, the artist—Sting—of the band, "The Police," wrote an album with songs dedicated to this idea. The album, *Spirits in a Material World* includes the title track, *Ghost in the Machine*, and *Spirits in a Material World*.







**New Content**



The British empiricists, John Locke (1632-1704), David Hume (1711-76) and George Berkeley (1685-1753), rejected Descartes' view ('Cartesianism') and argued that the mind was a blank slate and our knowledge of the world was the result of the association of ideas

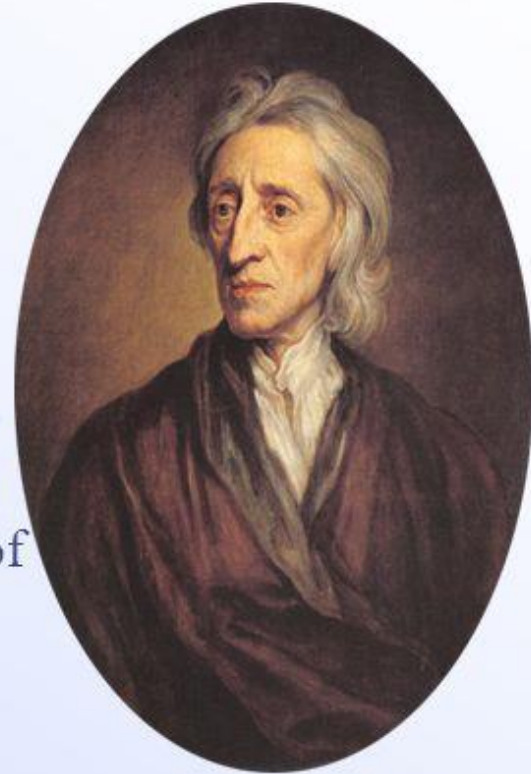
# TABULA RASA

*/ˈtæbyʊələ ˈræsə, ˈræzə/*

An absence of preconceived ideas or predetermined goals. A clean slate.  
The human mind, especially at birth, in its blank or empty state before exposure to outside impressions or social constructs.

# BRITISH EMPIRICISTS

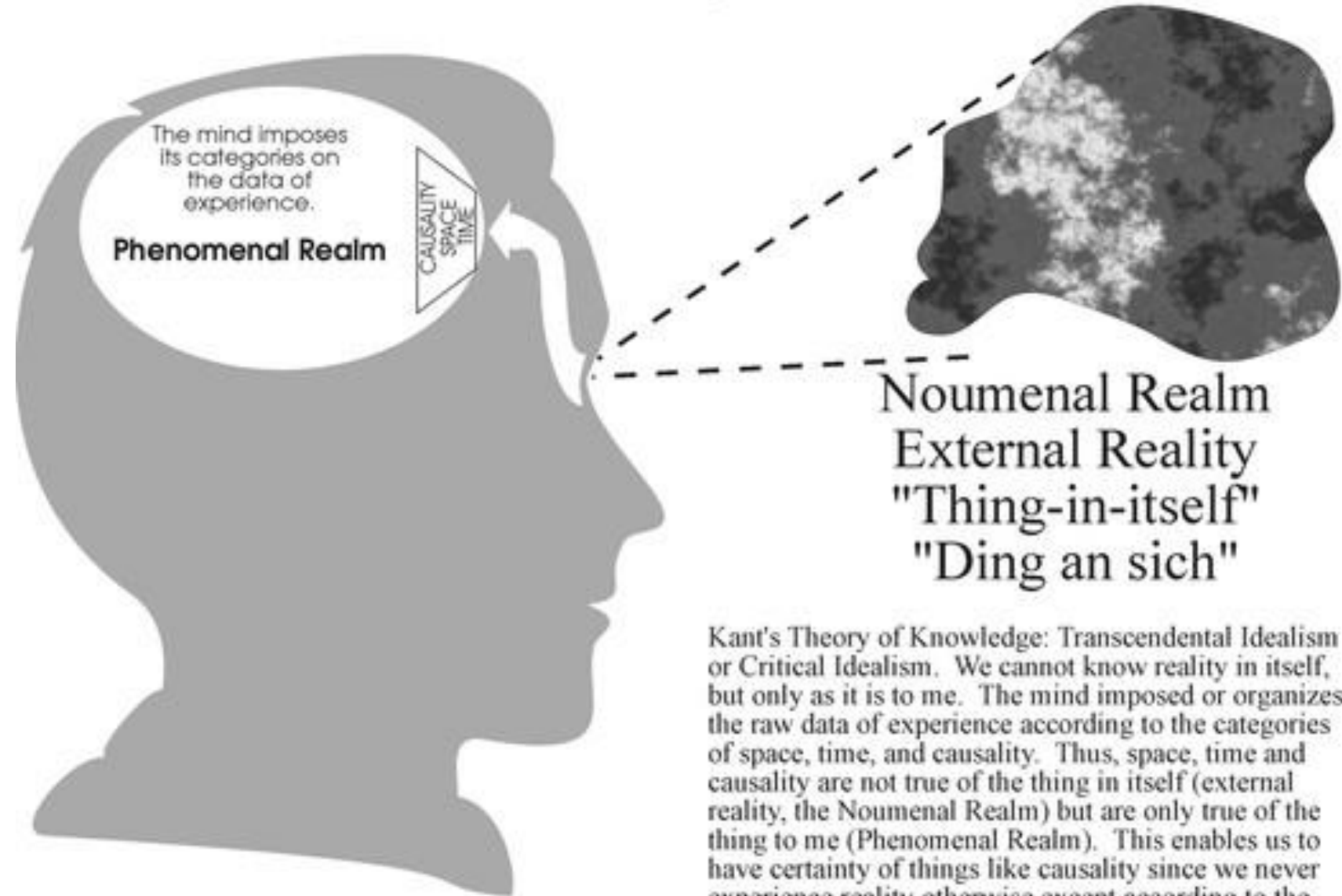
- Regarded as the Enlightenment's most influential thinker.
- All ideas come from sensory experience -- no innate ideas
  - An idea is a mental image employed while thinking and comes from either sensation (direct sensory stimulation) or reflection (reflection on remnants of prior sensory stimulation).
- Sensation is the source of ideas.
  - These ideas can be acted upon by operations of the mind giving rise to new ideas.



Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) attempted to bridge rationalism and empiricism and put in place a model of the mind composed of faculties that integrated sensory information with abstract categories or reason.

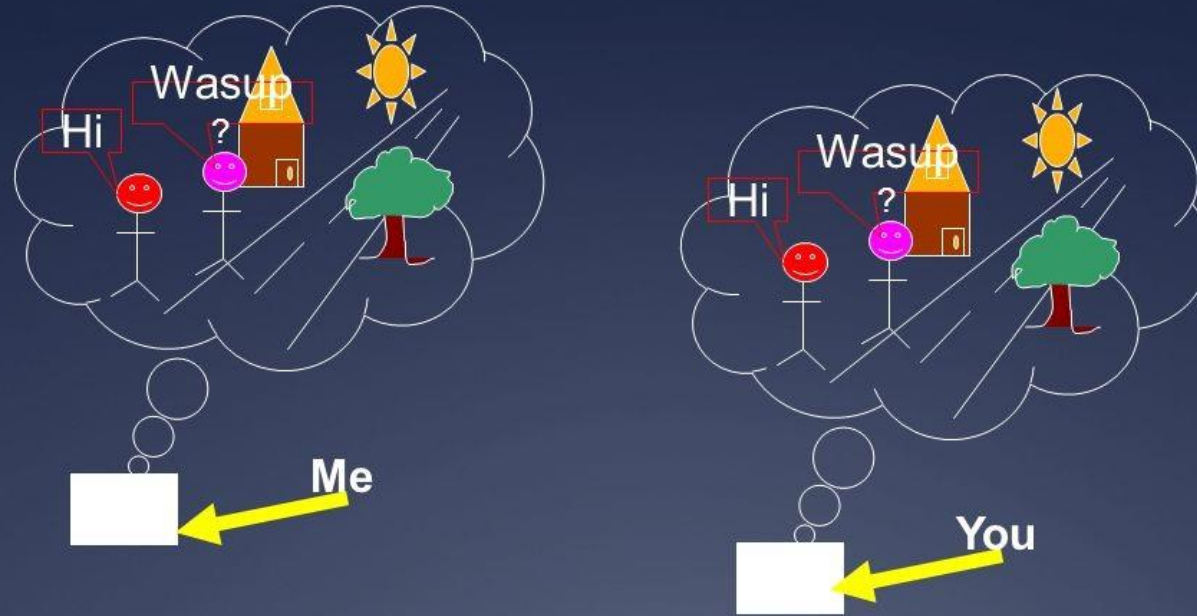
# Kant's Theory of Knowledge

## Transcendental Idealism (Critical Idealism)



Kant's Theory of Knowledge: Transcendental Idealism or Critical Idealism. We cannot know reality in itself, but only as it is to me. The mind imposed or organizes the raw data of experience according to the categories of space, time, and causality. Thus, space, time and causality are not true of the thing in itself (external reality, the Noumenal Realm) but are only true of the thing to me (Phenomenal Realm). This enables us to have certainty of things like causality since we never experience reality otherwise except according to the categories.

# Phenomena v. Noumena



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For Kant, the *noumenon*, plural *noumena*, is the thing-in-itself (das Ding an sich) as opposed to what Kant called the *phenomenon*—the thing as it appears to an observer.

In the nineteenth century, physiologists began to investigate how this might be possible from a biological point of view. Hermann von Helmholtz (1821-94) investigated vision and nerve physiology, measuring the speed of nerve conduction in 1852. Helmholtz's assistant, Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920), proposed that these neurophysiological methods could be adapted to study consciousness. He opened his Institute of Experimental Psychology in Leipzig in 1879, which played a key role in the development of the modern science of psychology.

Wundt had an interest in distinguishing perceptions based on those retrieved from memory, from those immediately experienced at the moment.

... more on this in the text

## Wundt's Methodology

### Experimental introspection

- To do this you must be trained to report observations of mental events presently in consciousness rather than report from memory
- Stimulus error = when perceptions are reported from introspection rather than sensations



“Memory believes before knowing remembers.”

