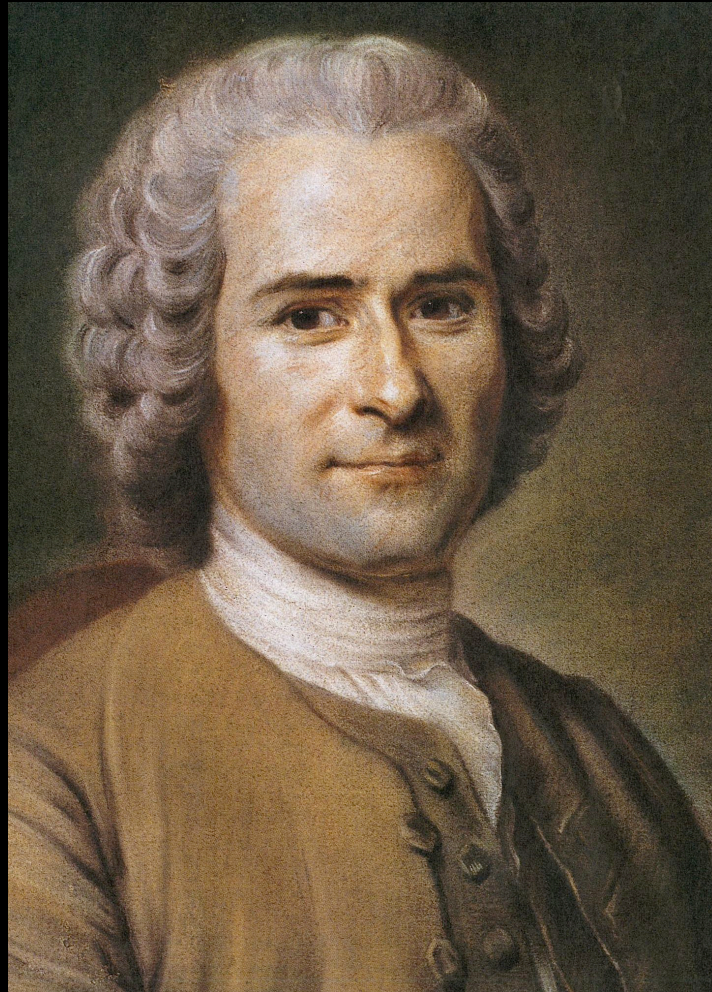


Immanuel Kant

1724 – 1804 CE



Kant: “I learned to honor mankind from reading Rousseau.”

# Key Similarities

(Do not write these down, please.)

Both take the analysis of **human nature** to be fundamental for practical considerations: ethics, politics, the proper role of government, etc.

Both take **freedom**, not happiness, to be the central ordering concept of practical philosophy.

Both emphasize **individualism** and **self-determination**.

Both criticize basing one's **self-conception**, beliefs, and behaviors on **others**.

# Key Differences (1)

Rousseau holds that reason is a **derivative capacity** necessitated by society; and he criticizes **reason**, **society**, and **progress**.

“Meditating on the first and most simple operations of the human soul, I believe I perceive in it **two principles that are prior to reason**, of which one **[love of self]** makes us ardently interested in our well-being and our self-preservation, and the other **[compassion]** inspires in us a natural repugnance to seeing any sentient being, especially our fellow**man**, perish or suffer.”

—Preface to *Second Discourse*, 42.

## Key Differences (2)

**Society**, not the individual, is responsible for the fundamental vice of vanity or **self-love**: a corrupt, competitive desire to be perceived as being better than others and envied.

Kant disagrees. **Individuals**, not society, are responsible for the fundamental vice of **minority**: lacking the ability to use reason independently of others.

# “What is Enlightenment?” (1784)

*Enlightenment* is the human being's emergence from his [sic] *self-incurred minority* [Unmündigkeit].

*Minority* is inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another.

This minority is *self-incurred* when its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another.

*Sapere aude!* [Horace: “Dare to be wise!”]

Have the courage to make use of your *own* understanding!  
is *thus* the motto of enlightenment.

# Alternative Formulations

“What is Orientation in Thinking?” (1786)

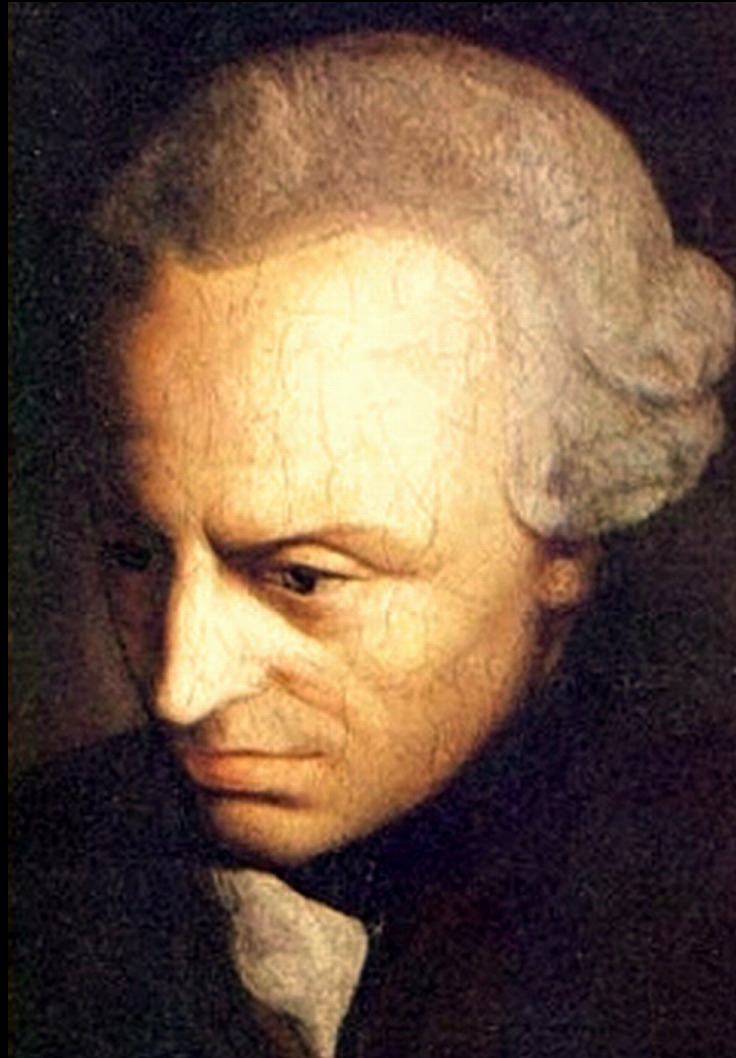
Enlightenment is the maxim of **always thinking for oneself**.

*Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790)

Enlightenment is the **liberation** from **superstition** and **prejudice** (!)  
generally.

Enlightenment concerns *how*, meaning the *way* one thinks [*Denkungsart*].





“**Bro**’, do you even ‘lighten?’”



“[Woman’s] philosophy is not to reason, but to sense”

*(Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful  
and Sublime)*

“A woman is embarrassed little that she does not possess certain high insights; that she is timid, and not fit for serious employment . . . . She is beautiful and captivates, and that is enough.”

*(Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful  
and Sublime)*

“Man should become more perfect as a man,  
and the woman as a wife”

*(Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful  
and Sublime)*

“In the hot countries the human being matures in all aspects earlier, but does not, however, reach the perfection of the whites. Humanity is at its greatest perfection in the race of the whites.”

*(Physical Geography)*

“The white race possesses *all* motivating forces and talents *in itself*; therefore we must examine it somewhat more closely.”

*(Lectures on Anthropology)*

“The inhabitant of the temperate parts of the world, above all the central part, has a more beautiful body, works harder, is more jocular, more controlled in his passions, more intelligent than any other race of people in the world. That is why at all points in time these peoples [...] have all amazed the southern lands with their arts and weapons.”

(Physical Geography)