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## The Foundational Importance of The Number 2

Knowledge is only possible when we reach the number 2.



(1) René Descartes. (2) Discours de la Methode. (3) Immanuel Kant.

### The Most Fundamental Things for Descartes and Kant

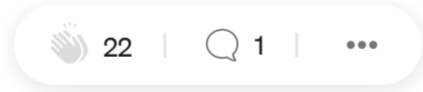
Kant considered space and time to be the most fundamental categories, and, indeed, nothing makes sense in modern physics without a clock and a ruler. But for Kant, nothing at all makes sense unless these categories are taken into account.

However, what is space? What is time? Since Einstein's relativity, 'time' has been considered a limited, arbitrary concept. As a result, Kant's ideas are now considered out of date. That is due to Einstein's and to many other's advanced concepts in contemporary physics.

Surely, Kant had promising ideas, but philosophers failed to match them with contemporary physics, although it would be interesting to develop ways to save, or recreate, his notions of space and time.

And something similar happened to Descartes as well. When Descartes said: *I think therefore I am*, it's like he said: *look, I'm thinking! Therefore, I can prove I exist!*

But what does it mean to exist? Only things that think exist? That's what Bertrand Russell and Nietzsche noticed about Descartes — i.e., that he didn't say much . . .



Even so, both Kant and Descartes followed an extreme clever, secure way of reasoning. For them,

there must be a world of differences, or of movement, before we can extract anything (ideas, laws, concepts, etc.) from the world.

For Kant, these "changes" that secure the possibility of knowledge were the ones we can measure with the categories of space and time. While, for Descartes, since there exist two things: "me" and "the world", we can say knowledge is possible.

But I think we can extract a more abstract, general principle from the similarities between both Descartes and Kant's mobilist tendency. Let's see.

### Why Is the Number 2 so Important?

No mathematical relation can be discovered about the number "one" alone, or zero alone. Zero and 1, by themselves, are completely solipsist ideas (we can't deduce anything from each of them alone).



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M.A. in Philosophy. Fritz Lang's Metropolis, and a King Kong graphic novel got me into science fiction when I was a kid.

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Only when we are able to count to two an entire universe of mathematical relations can be discovered: the division operation, sum operation, and so many others. Even basic notions are consequences of the idea of the number two, like “similar” and “different.”

The very process of thinking itself, as Descartes taught us, presupposes that there is something to be thought about, and something that thinks (so it presupposes *two* things too).

The progression from number 1 to zero, as well, also falls under the concept of two, since they are *two* concepts.

So note that the existence of at least two different things is crucial to all areas of knowledge. Comparisons and explanations can only occur due to sets of different elements. You can't, for example, explain what mud is by repeating the word mud over and over and over.

This means “differences,” more than similarities, are crucial to knowledge. Without them, movement and knowledge are not even possible, thinkable.

But isn't a principle of 2 a fake principle? Shouldn't things begin with 1 or zero? Not necessarily... Math, as said above, for example, is only possible when we reach the number 2.

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