

The First Antinomy — focusing on Time (B454, K, pp. 396-397)

Thesis: The world has a beginning in time

Antithesis: The world has no beginning in time

ARGUMENT FOR THE THESIS (HIGHLIGHTS):

1. Assume the opposite: the world has no beginning in time
2. It follows that up to any given moment, including up to the present, an eternity has elapsed.
3. This means that an infinite number of successive changes in states of things (an infinite number of successive events) has actually occurred; that is, an infinite series has been completed.
4. But, according to the “true transcendental concept of infinitude” (K, p. 401a.1), the infinity of a series consists in the fact that it can never be completed through a series of successive changes.
5. Therefore, (3) is impossible.
6. So, there must be a beginning of the world in time.

ARGUMENT FOR THE ANTITHESIS (HIGHLIGHTS):

1. Assume the opposite: the world has a beginning in time
2. But a beginning requires “an existence which is preceded by a time in which the thing is not.”
3. So, if one is to speak of the whole world as beginning, it is necessary to assume this is preceded by an empty time.
4. But, it is impossible for anything to come into being in empty time, because “no part of such a time possesses, as compared with any other, a distinguishing condition of existence rather than of non-existence” 397b.3.
5. So, the world itself cannot have a beginning in time.

Transcendental Idealism (TI), Transcendental Realism (TR), Empirical Idealism (EI), Empirical Realism (ER)

First, two preliminary matters:

1. distinction between two senses of “external” and “outside us” (middle paragraph of p. 348):
(a) “empirically external” objects are things “which are to be found in space”; (b) “transcendentally” external refers to “what as a thing in itself exists apart from us”: the thing as it really is, independent from us.

-if “Neither space nor time...is to be found save in us” (348.3, immediately before the middle paragraph), these two senses turn out to be *very* different

2. Perception, inference, and certainty: (a) Perception for Kant is immediate/non-inferential & (b) knowledge of physical things that could be had by means of an effect-to-cause inference “is always uncertain” – both (a) & (b) are expressed, for instance, at 345.3

“By *transcendental idealism* I mean the doctrine that appearances are to be regarded as being, one and all, representations only, not things in themselves, and that time and space are therefore only sensible forms of our intuition, not determinations given as existing by themselves, nor conditions of objects viewed as things in themselves” (A369; K, p. 345).

TI takes spatial & temporal properties to be only properties of the objects as they appear to us, not as properties of the objects as they are in themselves

“*Transcendental realism*...regards time and space as something given in themselves, independently of our sensibility. The transcendental realist thus interprets outer appearances (their reality being taken as granted) as things-in-themselves, which exist independently of us and of our sensibility, and which are therefore outside us--the phrase ‘outside us’ being interpreted in conformity with the pure concepts of the understanding” (A369; K, p. 346).

TR takes spatial and temporal properties to be had by the objects as they are in themselves (by the transcendently external objects), *if they’re had by anything...*

“It is, in fact, this transcendental realist who afterward plays the part of *empirical idealist*. After wrongly supposing that objects of the senses, if they are to be external, must have an existence by themselves, and independently of the senses, he finds that, judged from this point of view, all our sensuous representations are inadequate to establish their reality” (A369; K, p. 346)

TR → EI

“The term ‘*idealist*’ is not, therefore, to be understood as applying to those who deny the existence of external objects of the senses, but only to those who do not admit that their existence is known through immediate perception, and who therefore conclude that we can never, by way of any possible experience, be completely certain as to their reality” (A368-9; K, p. 345).

EI: objects in space and time have only at most an uncertain / inferred existence, and are not immediately perceived

“The transcendental idealist is, therefore, an *empirical realist*, and allows matter, as appearance, a reality which does not permit of being inferred, but is immediately perceived” (A371; K, p. 347).

ER: We can know / be certain of objects as being in space & time, and we can immediately perceive them as being so