

Kant's Strategy for Defeating Moderate Cartesian Scepticism

First, we need to be clear what "Moderate Cartesian Scepticism" is.

Answer: The Dream Problem, which if not defeated shows that our beliefs based on sense perception could be very different from the way that world and its constituents exist *in themselves* (i.e., as *not dependent on the way it **appears to human perceivers/thinkers***).

Additional (Equivalent) way to establish that kind of scepticism: **Humean subjective idealism** about the source of our ideas about relations between events and/or objects of sense perception, which puts in doubt any attempt to justify the inference from how the world *as perceived appears* to the judgment "The external world exists (or exists in *certain specific, knowable ways*)," since that inference relies on applying the Principle of Sufficient Reason (= "Wherever some X exists [or exists in specific ways], an **existing cause of X** must **itself exist or have existed** that stands as why X exists [or exists in the specific ways it does]")

Why Humean Subjective Idealism undermines the possibility that we can achieve **objective knowledge of the world**: even when our perceptions of the world *appear* to present objects and/or phenomena that seem to be governed by necessary causal principles, it **remains possible that the actual world is not as it appears**.

Stage One of Kant's Solution to Humean Subjective Idealism

Prove that spatial and temporal relations among the contents of sense perception are *a priori* conditions of the possibility of being conscious of the material contents (=sensations) of sense perceptions.

The Transcendental Aesthetic proves that all judgments asserting the existence of spatial and temporal relations among perceived sensations presuppose the Pure Intuitions of Space and Time, and are imposed by the mind itself on whatever is given to it in sensibility.

This sets aside scepticism about the empirical existence of spatial and temporal relations among perceived sensations (since without the pure intuitions of Space and Time, perception of sensations would be impossible).

But there is a price: These necessary relations among sensations are only subjective. As a consequence, our beliefs based on those apparent relations **cannot be objective**.

Stage Two of Kant's Solution to Humean Subjective Idealism

Prove that the relations **between** individual empirical intuitions are *a priori* conditions of the possibility of our **cognition (experience) of an object**.

This is the burden of the Transcendental Analytic. There, Kant establishes the *source of the forms of these relations among individual empirical intuitions*. This requires that he first establish what concepts we use in representing such relations. This is what the **Metaphysical Deduction** does.

Important definition of **Deduction**: A deduction is the proof that the mind has 'rightful possession' of the concepts that represent any possible relations among individual empirical intuitions.

Kant proves that these concepts are generated by means of a process (=acts of judgment) that puts ideas into logical relations. And that requires us to investigate **what a judgment accomplishes**. For Kant, a judgment is an act of that faculty of mind that makes it possible to put ideas into logical relations by **thinking** that an idea falls under (=‘is subsumed by’) another idea. Example: The idea of a part is subsumed by/under the idea of a whole. The idea of an effect is subsumed by/under the idea of a cause. In general logic, this is captured by the relation among ideas represented by the hypothetical conditional (i.e., “If P, then Q”).

It should now be obvious why Kant cannot offer a deduction of the concepts that allow us to think of ways that individual empirical intuitions can stand in logical relations to each other without considering the possible forms of those relations. That means he must first explain what he calls General Logic. That is the science of these forms, and that science *ignores* what sorts of ideas *can stand* in the relations represented by these forms. (Translation: what “P” and “Q” represent is not required for a theory of the possible *forms* of such relations among ideas. All that matters is that the *form* of these relations must be specifiable.

How do we specify (discover and then catalog) what possible such forms are available to our faculty of judgment?

Answer: by considering the kinds of relations among ideas that we are actually able to *grasp/think*. Kant's Table of the Forms of Judgment is the result of investigating the range of ways we can think of two ideas falling in conceptual relations to each other.

I.
Quantity of Judgments
Universal
Particular
Singular

2.
Quality
Affirmative
Negative
Infinite

3.
Relation^b
Categorical
Hypothetical
Disjunctive

4.
Modality
Problematic
Assertoric
Apodictic

This table provides us with the twelve ways that one idea can be subsumed under another. Let's consider examples, using the way of Kant represent the expression of any judgment. All judgments can be represented by the following:

P is Q

When I judge "**P is Q**" I am thinking that this statement is to be subsumed under Affirmation (that the judgment is being asserted [taken to be true]).

When I judge "**P is Q**" as subsumed under the idea of