

of things in space is entailed by our “inner experience”. As with Descartes, I doubt that Kant thought that nobody knew that there were things in space before they had such a proof. But Kant plausibly took the *conclusion* of the proof—the alleged entailment—to be a requirement on our having knowledge of things in space.⁶⁸ If the proof is successful, then our “inner experience”—which he presumably takes to be discernible—is a mark of the existence of things in space. In order to secure it, however, Kant claims that that “things in space” are just sensations with a spatial “form”.⁶⁹

The Infallibilist motivation of Idealism—and its later cousin, Verificationism—could be followed up to the mid-twentieth century. For instance, what allows Moore to hope that wakeful experiences are “logically incompatible” with dreaming is his project of reducing ordinary objects to sense-data. Here we will simply note a final sign of that motivation: the almost complete disappearance of Idealism after the fall Classical Infallibilism.

4.5 Probabilist Scepticism

Throughout history we find philosophers who acknowledge the lack of discernible marks of truth while overtly rejecting Scepticism. They are not counterexamples to the New Story. They are Probabilist Sceptics. Their view has Hellenistic origins as well.

In reply to the Dogmatic objection that life without assent is impossible, Carneades—at least dialectically—argued that one could be guided by *convincing* impressions. Translated by Cicero as *probabile* (“acceptable”, “that can be approved”), the notion was destined to have lasting influence. It is worth quoting the passage that sets it out in full:

Of the apparently true impressions, one kind is dim, *e.g.* in the case of those whose apprehension of something is confused and not distinct, owing to the smallness of the thing observed or the length of distance or even the weakness of their vision; the other kind, along with appearing true, is additionally characterised by the intensity of its appearing true. [...] the impression which appears true and

⁶⁸Kant says that the Idealist’s claim is that the existence of things outside us is “doubtful” or “false” (B274). Since he takes knowledge to require certainty (A822/B850) and (arguably) truth, he takes the Idealist view to entail that we lack knowledge of things in space. Hence he takes the Idealist view to deny that we satisfy some necessary condition on knowledge, and he plausibly takes the conclusion of his refutation to state that we do satisfy that condition.

⁶⁹Kant undoubtedly took his view to allow a distinction between *subjective* space, in which sensations are received, and *objective* space, in which the “understanding” somehow locates them. What is important to him—and what he takes to distinguish him from Berkeley—is that his *Refutation* proves the existence of things in *objective* space. But he takes objective space to be somehow a “form” of our sensations as well. Kant’s doctrine is intricate; what matters for our purposes is only that he assumed that knowledge of things in space had to satisfy Classical Infallibilist standards, which is plausibly one of the motivations for his brand of Idealism.