

calls a ground “objectively sufficient” only if it is truth-entailing.⁶⁰ Kant’s definition would otherwise fail to secure the claim that knowledge entails truth.⁶¹ Nothing more is required.⁶² Thus it is at least open whether Kant’s view is an instance of Classical Infallibilism. As we see below, the reading also fits well with Kant’s treatment of external-world scepticism.

4.4 Idealist Dogmatism

A striking feature of Western philosophy from the eighteenth to mid-twentieth century is the predominance of Idealist views. What the New Story suggests is that Idealism was an attempt to rescue Dogmatism in a Classical Infallibilist framework. For a variety of reasons, sceptical arguments came to the fore again in modern times. Philosophers increasingly doubted that there were any discernible class of true sense-impressions. The natural conclusion for Classical Infallibilists is Scepticism—and many embraced it, as we will see. However,

⁶⁰Chignell (2007b, 42) denies it. He takes objective sufficiency to consist in *sufficiently high objective probability*. That clashes with Kant’s definition of probability as “assent based on insufficient grounds” (AA 9:80, Kant, 1992, 583). As Chignell (2007b, 60n19, 61n31) concedes, Kant normally associates sufficient grounds with “certainty”. So Chignell should rather say that Kant’s “certainty” is not truth-entailing. However, Kant distinguishes “I am certain” from “the object is certain” and uses the latter for objectively sufficient grounds (A822/B850, AA 9:72). While the personal construction is compatible with falsehood, the impersonal one is not: “it is not raining and it is certain that it rains” is contradictory. If Kant departed from ordinary and philosophical usage so much as to call objectively “certain” things that are false it is surprising that he never mentioned it. Now Chignell’s (2007b, 42) claim that Kant’s objectively sufficient grounds are not truth-entailing rests on two passages of Kant’s lectures on logic in which it is said that when one’s grounds are objectively sufficient, there may still be grounds for the opposite (AA 9:72, Kant, 1992, 576; AA 24:160, Kant, 1992, 126). But the fact that sufficient grounds may coexist with grounds for the opposite does not entail that there are sufficient objective grounds for false claims. Like Descartes, Kant may have thought that having a discernible mark of truth for something is compatible with having (insufficient) grounds for doubting it. Note in particular that a ground’s being truth-entailing and discernible does *not* entail that it is discernible or antecedently known that the ground is truth-entailing. Thus a subject with objectively sufficient grounds may doubt that they are objectively sufficient. A further discussion of these issues would require a close examination of Kant’s discussion of doubt, how it is removed, and how to ascertain whether one’s grounds of assent are objective or subjective (e.g. AA: 9:83, 9:73). For present purposes it is enough to show that a Classical Infallibilist reading of Kant is a live option.

⁶¹Thus Chignell (2007a, 330), denying that objective sufficiency is truth-entailing, supplements the definition with a truth clause and suggests that Kant, “operating in the Platonic tradition”, has left it implicit. The New Story casts doubt on the existence of such a tradition. While in the *Critique* Kant is admittedly brief on knowledge and related concepts (“I will not pause for the exposition of such readily grasped concepts”, A822/B850), it is worth noting that his much more detailed lectures on logic give the very same definition, without truth clause (quoted above). Earlier lectures (Blomberg’s notes) give the following instead: “To know is to judge something and hold it to be true with certainty.” (AA 24:148). Again, no truth clause is added. The textbook Kant was relying on (G.F. Meier’s *Excerpt from the Doctrine of Reason*, §§155-167) does not provide the alleged implicit clause either—it does not define *Wissen* at all. If so it would be peculiar for Kant to leave his students in the dark about it.

⁶²In particular, as Chignell (2007b, 49) stresses, “some of the facts on which an assent’s objective sufficiency supervenes—and in particular facts about its objective probability—will typically be inaccessible to a normal subject.” Knowledge requires an objectively sufficient ground, not that it be discernible or antecedently known that that ground is objectively sufficient. That fits with the Classical Infallibilist picture, on which knowledge requires discernible marks that are in fact truth-entailing, not that one discerns or antecedently knows that the marks are truth-entailing.