

Lec 30

pp 459-510

This week we come to one of my personal favorite parts of CPR: the antinomies of pure reason. We will be looking at four pairs of contradictory propositions involving the Rational Cosmology of Nature. Each pair is called an antinomy because each proposition — the thesis and the antithesis — speculative Reason must hold to be true.

This section points out better than any other argument I know Why Science Needs Philosophy. Why do I say this? Because positivism failed to unburden us from these antinomies, and they remain current and alive in science today. Positivism cast out philosophy from science in the 19th century. It was in this revolution that metaphysics was driven from the throne of science, and her position taken by Physics (the self-proclaimed Queen of the Sciences). The many astounding successes enjoyed by physics in the 19th and 20th centuries even demoralized the philosophers, who acceded to the abdication of metaphysics.

Quote Bloom pp 371, 372, 373-4, 377-8

But phenomenal Nature in the 20th century finally got the better of positivism as a doctrine and attitude. Today positivism is dead, and w/o its guiding discipline physics at the frontiers is relapsing into unfounded speculation, giving ammunition to the cults of ignorance, and — should all this continue — these speculative romances threaten to end the Age of Reason and bring back the dark ages of superstition. This is why I think it is the duty of metaphysics to make itself once more into the First Science, reclaim its lost throne, and turn back the shadows of intellectual Night.

Lec 30 (cont)

459-60

The antinomies arise from hypothetical inferences of reason. Their propositions concern world-concepts (hence this metaphysic is called Rational Cosmology).

460-1

Pure speculative Reason regulates the employment of the Organized Being's capacity for understanding. Because Reason has no immediate interest in objects and is not bound to conformity w/ ~~sen~~ the conditions of sensibility, its a priori regulation tends to drive understanding beyond the boundary of possible experience in pursuit of an Idea of the absolutely unconditioned. The General Cosmological Idea is:

Absolute completion in the series of conditions

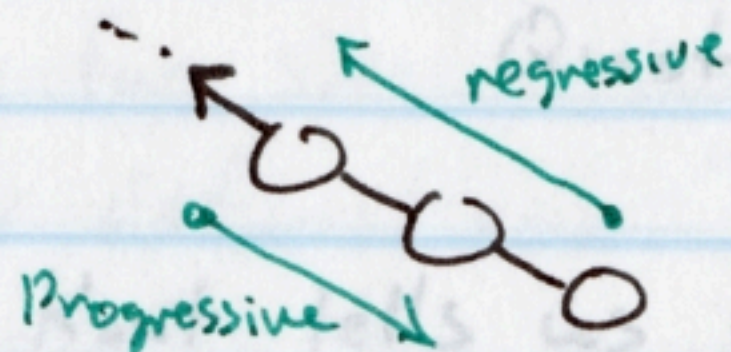
461

If the conditioned is given then the whole sum of conditions is also given (as a necessary presupposition of pure Reason)

The transcendental Ideas push judgment to extend the categories beyond ~~seems~~ the actual in sensibility to pursue concepts of the unconditioned.

462-3

The unconditioned stands (or logically must stand) higher than all conditioned, thus in synthesis it is in the direction a parte priori of a prosyllogism.



Kant calls this regressive synthesis.

Pure Reason, on the other hand, has no interest in the progressive synthesis a parte posteriori (which is within the capacity for understanding). The cosmological Ideas all involve the synthesis of a series, and such a synthesis is not aggregation in coordinate concepts but, rather, antecedent and consequence call upon synthesis in time.

Lec 30 (cont)

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Only those categories that provide a priori rules of concept construction that take the form of a synthesis in a series are involved in the cosmological antinomies. These are:

Quantity: category of totality

Quality: category of limitation

Relation: category of causality & dependency

Modality: category of necessity & contingency.

464

The Cosmological Ideas are presented on pg 464. Here Kant ~~forgets~~ foregoes dazzling us w/ "bad Ideas" but cuts to the chase and gives us the Ideas as proper regulative principles of pure Reason.

464-5

The Ideas all regulate for finding the unconditioned for the exposition of appearances. But there are two ways by which the Idea of the unconditioned may equally well be viewed in an idea of a noumenal object. These two ways lead to the 4 antinomies.

Quote Pg 465

465-6

Here (pp 465-6) Kant gives us a subtle distinction between the terms "World" and "nature"

Quote 465-6

467-8

Kant tells us what he means by an "antinomy of Reason" on pp 467-8. An antinomy is when one pairs a Thesis and its antithesis and manages to "prove" both of them. How does one do this? By attacking the other proposition via the logical principle of the excluded middle. "A leads to contradiction \therefore not-A is true". Of all possible antinomies, there are 4 that illustrate the natural dialectic of Reason (one for each title: Quantity, etc)

Lec 30 (cont)

470-475

First Antinomy (Antinomy of Quantity)

Quote the Thesis and the antithesis (pp 470, 471)

The first Thesis dates back to Aristotle. The "proof" here is "proof by contradiction." We assume the antithesis and bring it to contradiction.

- 1) Assume The world had no beginning in time
- 2) Then \forall moment in time an infinite number of moments preceded it as its conditions
- 3) Quote pg 470
- 4) \therefore time had a beginning

The argument for space on pg 470 is worded in such a technical way that it may not seem to compel assent. A more compelling argument is given on pg 472

Quote 472

As for the antithesis, again use proof by contradiction. If time had a beginning then its antecedent condition was an empty time. In empty time \exists nothing. Something cannot originate from nothing \therefore time had no beginning

As for space, the argument here is that the world is, by definition, "everything." But if space is finite then it has boundaries. But empty space cannot be a boundary unless we made empty space a thing in which ~~non-empty space~~ the world is embedded. But if space is a thing then it is something & \therefore cannot be outside the world. \therefore space is infinite (w/o boundaries).

Read my Einstein comment on pg 473 and Big Bang comment on pg 474.