

The Second Analogy (2)

Last time we looked at some of Kant's discussion of the Second Analogy, including the argument that is discussed most often as Kant's response to Hume's sceptical doubts concerning causation, the "irreversibility argument" (involving a contrast between the perception of a house and that of a ship moving downstream). Whilst the arguments we looked at last time all gave us some reasons for thinking that the causal principle applied to appearances by means of showing how the category of causation connected to our temporal conditions of perception, none of the arguments we looked at last time, in my view, constituted the core of Kant's treatment.

We have been going through Kant's discussion of the Second Analogy paragraph-by-paragraph so far and we will now continue to do this with a description of what is happening in the next four paragraphs from where we left off (from A195/B240 beginning "This may seem to contradict" to A199/B244 concluding with "in the time-series"). Here Kant mentions the Humean view that the concept of causation arises from perception and comparison of events and is thus really arrived at by a process of induction. To this position Kant objects that from such a process there could arise no genuine universality. The causal rule, states Kant, is rather something that applies *a priori* in the sense that it is only due to it that experience itself is possible at all. In order to show that this is the case it is necessary however to demonstrate that it is due to its application to

successive events that we are able to understand that the succession perceived really belongs to the object. The basis for this claim is that the necessitation of time-relations in our perceptions gives objective meaning to the latter and can only arise from the perceptions in question being given in the way they are if they are *of* the things in question.

We can see this point if we attend again to the experience of perceiving succession. From succession alone nothing stable can arise and hence succession alone does not give us the notion of relation to an object. But when we relate to our perception of succession we have to admit that succession is not given purely alone. Rather, what is given in the experience of succession is that one perception comes not merely *after* the other but that its' being *after* is thought to follow from the one that *preceded* it. For this awareness to arise is to relate the perception of succession to that which is perceived as being-in-succession, namely, the object *of* perception. The perception here is that what is presently occurring *was* not previously given but that it is given *now* in accordance with a rule that connects it with what was occurring previously. That one perception *follows-from* the other is a *rule* of temporal determination but not a rule that is arrived at by association as without this rule perception *in general* of succession could *never* have arisen. The rule states that the one that is presently experienced as *following* the other does not follow it due to my wish that this be so. I cannot reverse the order of the perceptions and, if the first perception is given, then the second *has to* follow: this is a general rule of objective succession. As Kant

concludes this part of the argument: “The situation, then, is this: there is an order in our representations in which the present, so far as it has come to be, refers us to some preceding state as a correlate of the event which is given; and though this correlate is, indeed, indeterminate, it none the less stands in a determining relation to the event as its consequence, connecting the event in necessary relation with itself in the time-series” (A198-9/B244).

The rule that applies to events does not merely require succession of moments but that the succession in question has a *necessary* order. There are two elements of necessity here. Firstly, whatever state is given at present, there had to be another state prior to it. Secondly, given that the preceding state was the one that it was, the one presently being experienced had to be the one that *it* is.

This gives us some powerful reasons for thinking that the casual rule applies to appearances and cannot have arisen for us from a process of inductive reasoning. Kant next builds on the considerations we have taken from this part of the argument. The next element of the argument is stated in the next two paragraphs (A199/B244-A201/B246). Kant begins here by drawing out explicitly the consequences of the previous argument stating now that it is a necessary law of our sensibility that the preceding time determines the succeeding one and hence that the “appearances of past time determine all existences in the succeeding time” (A199/B244). The continuity in the connection of times can only be given to us in appearances and yet also appearances can only be given to us by means of this rule of

continuity. So if there is such a thing as empirical intuition then this is the nature of it.

In the next paragraph Kant points out that the primary contribution of understanding in experience is that it makes the representation of objects *possible* and that it does this by bringing the order of time into the appearances that are given to us. All things given to us in perception are given as succeeding each other. This perception of succession cannot however be based on a perception of time itself as we do not perceive time itself. So it must instead be a condition of experience in general that temporal order applies to it which is as much as to say that such order must be *a priori*. The order conforms to the principle of sufficient reason.

Kant opens the next paragraph by reminding us that the basis of all empirical knowledge is the transcendental synthesis of the imagination. Imagination is the means by which we present to ourselves something that *is* not at the moment and is thus the means by which temporally discrete moments are held in relation to each other. Imagination alone however does not require that the order of the moments of succession follow one pattern rather than another. But we have now seen that there is a necessary rule by means of which the moments of time are represented as succeeding one another. Such a determinate order of temporal succession is what enables us to relate to an object. It must therefore involve something more than just imagination. It must also involve a *judgment* “in which we think the sequence as determined” (A201/B246). Where this not so we would not

now be able to say that we experienced objects at all, merely fantasies and dreams. So the rule according to which subsequent events follow preceding ones according to a necessary ordering (the rule of causation) is “the condition of the objective validity of our empirical judgments” or, in other words, “it is the condition of experience” (A202/B247).

All possible perceptions stand in relation to previous perceptions as having been produced by the latter. Each state is a consequence of what preceded it and hence all succession has to follow basic formal rules. The next paragraph contains an amendment to the proof as given up to this point as so far we have always discussed succession whereas now Kant confronts the point that cause and effect can exist simultaneously with each other (as when a stove heats a room or the case of a ball being placed on a cushion). However his principle is primarily concerned with the *order* of perceptions and applies even here (so the ball creates a hollow in the cushion but the appearance of a hollow in the cushion does not create a ball). “The time between the causality of the cause and its immediate effect may be [a] *vanishing* [quantity], and they may thus be simultaneous; but the relation of the one to the other will always still remain determinable in time.” (A203/B248).

The next part of the Second Analogy (A204-11/B249-56) includes another proof of the principle and brings us to a conclusion that also links the proof of the principle again to the proof of the First Analogy. Kant opens this part of the proof by stating that causality leads us to the concept of

action, this in turn to the concept of force and then to the concept of substance. Wherever there is an action there is a substance that is bringing about the action in question. As Kant puts this: “For this reason action is a sufficient empirical criterion to establish the substantiality of a subject” (A205/B250). However the ultimate basis of all changes must be something that is not itself undergoing change and that would be what we term “substance”. The particulars that change in the particular way that they do are following empirical laws but doing so according to an *a priori* rule of determination.

The nature of alteration is described through the continuous action of causality through each moment being linked to every other. This is the law of the continuity of alteration. On the grounds of this point we bring together each force with each moment of time and declare that all that changes is the *form* of what is given, not its *matter* which latter stays constant.