

## **The Third Analogy**

Kant's Third Analogy can be seen as a response to the theories of causal interaction provided by Leibniz and Malebranche. In the first edition the principle is entitled a principle "of community" and is stated as follows: "All substances, so far as they coexist, stand in thoroughgoing community, that is, in mutual interaction" (A211). Here it is clear that Kant is schematising the category of community and in doing so he states a universal condition of substances having any possibility of existing at the same time as each other, which is that they must be involved in mutual interaction, precisely the thesis that was denied by both Leibniz and Malebranche. Both the title of the principle and its formulation alters in the second edition. Here Kant terms the principle one of "coexistence, in accordance with the Law of Reciprocity or Community". This new title keeps the clear statement that the Third Analogy is the schematisation of the category of Community but adds the means by which this schematisation will be demonstrated to operate, viz. by reference to a law. The principle is given in the second edition as follows: "All substances, in so as they can be perceived to coexist in space, are in thoroughgoing reciprocity" (B256). The second edition formula, like the first, states a universal condition. Here however the universal condition is specified to a greater degree than in the first edition formula. Now the basis of the claim that substances must be involved in mutual interaction is made clear which is that if they are stated to coexist then this is because they are being *perceived* as doing so. Building

in this reference to perception allows Kant to make clear its condition which is that the substances are related to each other *in space*. These references to perception and space indicate an increase in precision on Kant's part and are evidence of the superiority of the second edition formula.

The first paragraph of the argument of the Third Analogy is added in the second edition and opens with a description of what is meant by "coexistence" or "simultaneity". What we mean when we refer to things being in this relation is that we have an empirical intuition that the perceptions of them can follow upon each other in ways that are reversible. Interestingly Kant illustrates this in a cosmological way, by referring to perceptions of the earth and the moon. The formal definition of simultaneity then follows which is that it the existence of the manifold (i.e. of the combined elements of the synthesis) in one and the same time. Given that time itself is not an element of perception we cannot have arrived at this view merely by reading it off the perceptions themselves. Since the synthesis of apprehension is always successive we also cannot have got this notion simply from imagination. Hence we need the category to bring us to this recognition of simultaneity. Having gone this far Kant introduces, for the first time in the argument, reference to substances. The relationship between them in which one contains determinations of the ground of the other is what he terms "influence" of one over the other and it is this "influence" of substances on each other that was basically denied by Leibniz and Malebranche. Having stated that this determination of the grounds of one substance on that of another would be the "influence" of one

on the other Kant goes on to suggest that such influence could not be given in experience save on the assumption that there was a reciprocal interaction between the substances and ends by claiming that this would be “the condition of the possibility of the things themselves as objects of experience” (B258).

This first paragraph is somewhat oddly constructed and can hardly have been taken to be a decisive argument by Kant, not least because the opening discussion of the ground of the view that there are things given as existing simultaneously turns, without clear explanation, into an account of substances interacting with each as the ground of the possibility of simultaneous substances being given in space. The peculiarity of this paragraph is that it appears that we begin with a discussion of “objects” of experience, albeit ones illustrated cosmologically, and end with an account of substances and their relation in space without it being clear how we have moved from one to the other though, if we remember the argument of the First Analogy, we do have grounds on its basis for thinking in terms of substance when dealing with the permanence that is the condition of objects themselves being experienced.

The next stages of the discussion help to clarify the assumed links of the opening paragraph. First, Kant explicates the sense of things being given as existing simultaneously by asking how we are aware of things existing together at one and the same time. In addressing this question Kant invokes order-indifference of the synthesis as a basis for stating that things are given simultaneously. This draws on the point of the Second Analogy’s view of

“objective succession” since when Kant states that the order of successive apprehension is not indifferent he must be referring to this (since it is indifferent in subjective succession). Having made this point that order-indifference is essential to the perception of simultaneity Kant now regresses from such order-indifference to probe the conditions of its being given to our perception. In doing so Kant employs a brief *reductio* argument opening by imagining that in the manifold the substances were completely isolated from each other, that is, not involved in any reciprocal influence. In such a situation, Kant suggests, we could not, on the basis of the data of perception, move from the sense that one substance was given to the view that another substance was also given. The basis for this claim is that without such influence of one substance on the other it should follow that there is an empty space between the substances and if there were such an empty space then, whilst our perception of one substance would stand in a temporal relation to that of the other we would have no way of determining what type of temporal relation this was.

So for us to have not just the sense that there is a temporal relationship between the substances but for us to be able to tell what type of temporal relationship this was there must be something else given other than the mere existence of the two substances. This something else is what is at work in our claim that they both exist simultaneously. At this point Kant then introduces the crucial claim: “Now only that which is the cause of another, or of its determinations, determines the position of the other in time” (A212/B259). Back in the first paragraph Kant had described

influence as the determination of the ground of one thing by another and now he is filling in what such influence involves, namely, the determination of the position of something in time, just as he had suggested in the Second Analogy. Now, for this claim to be matched to the problem concerning simultaneity we have to add that the relation of influence has to be mutual since such mutuality of influence is what enables order-indifference to emerge as a condition, unlike in the case of the Second Analogy where a difference in the order of the perceptions was essential to the notion of the causal rule. As with the Second Analogy Kant also does not just present causal community between the substances as the basis of the empirical perception of simultaneity but goes on to add that, since without this condition the empirical perception would not be given at all, it is *necessary* for it. Finally, as with the question concerning the range and scope of the principle of the Second Analogy, one that we saw did require universal connection, so here there is reference to a “thoroughgoing community of mutual interaction” (A213/B260).

As we noted the difference between stronger and weaker interpretations of the principle of the Second Analogy so also this notion of “throughgoing community” can be understood in stronger and weaker senses. In the “strong” sense it suggests that each simultaneous substance is acting on each other one one directly though a “weaker” interpretation could be that not all such are directly influencing each other as some may be doing so indirectly.

A paragraph that helps us to comprehend the view of community in question in this argument occurs next. Here Kant contrasts two different senses of “community”, that which is “dynamical” and that which is only “local”. The latter is something like the sense we have in perception that some things are given in the same locality or that they are externally shown to be related to each other. However, this local sense is one that Kant now suggests is derivative of the primary dynamical sense in which there is not just an external connection but also a relationship of influence of one on the other. To support the claim for the primacy of dynamical community over that which is merely local Kant claims that the continuous influences present in all the parts of space are what enable us to perceptually move between objects. Light is here mentioned as that which produces a mediated community between us and the objects but it should be clear that this light is not thereby declared by Kant to be the basis of the interaction. This is clear when he declares: “We cannot empirically change our position, and perceive the change, unless matter in all parts of space makes perception of our position possible to us” (A213/B260).

The reciprocal influence of the parts of matter establishes the simultaneity of even the most remote objects. Kant here suggests that this coexistence of objects even of the most remote sort is only mediately so shown but this is surely not meant to imply that the connection is only indirect for the substances but that it is so for our perception of them. The community of connection between the appearances is what gives the sense to “experience” in the now ultimate Kantian sense of a dynamical world-

whole with the point being that if this connection was not given then perception would have to start anew with each object so that there would be continuity of experience. However, the conclusion of this consideration is that Kant has not here shown in any definitive sense that there is no such thing as an area of space that includes no matter but that it is clear that it could not be, for us, an object of any possible experience.

The final paragraph of the argument then connects these claims back to the general emphasis, from the Transcendental Deduction, on the transcendental unity of apperception. This is done by suggestion that appearances, to stand in a relation of dynamical community for cognition must be related to the transcendental unity of apperception in order for all elements of our perception to be given as parts of the same unitary time. For this community to be shown as objective is for it to be the case that perceptions mutually influence each other, a condition that enables us to perceive real community between substances.

Kant now summarizes the argument of all three analogies and links them together. They are all, as he puts it, “principles of the determination of the existence of appearances in time” (A215/B262), as followed from his original description of the distinction between mathematical and dynamical principles. In making this summary Kant also makes further clear one of the bases of his reiteration of the view that time itself is not perceived when he declares that “absolute time” is not an object of perception, a declaration making manifest that for time itself to be perceived would, on his view, require that there was such an object for perception as absolute time. What

has become clear from the general argument of the analogies and, most particularly from that of the Third Analogy, is Kant's suggestion that such absolute conditions of time and space would splinter perception itself rendering, on his argument the coherence of experience impossible. Intriguingly, the discussion empty space in the Third Analogy also suggests that whilst Leibniz stood in opposition to the Newtonian view of absolute space that his monadology really requires itself metaphysically. The result of the argument of the analogies is summarized neatly when Kant declares that, taken together, they show that appearances lie and must lie "in *one* nature, because without this *a priori* unity no unity of experience, and therefore no determination of objects in it, would be possible" (A216/B263).