



## The second analogy and the kantian answer to Hume: why “cause” has to be an *a priori* concept

*A segunda analogia e a resposta kantiana a Hume: por que “causa”  
tem que ser um conceito a priori*

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### **Abstract**

The main goal of Kant’s Second Analogy of Experience was to answer Humean objections concerning the aprioricity of the principle of “every-event-some-cause”. This paper intends to suggest an interpretation of the Kantian argument that, even though cannot show that Hume should be satisfied with the answer, makes clear Kant’s reasons for that anti-Humean goal. In the first part of this paper, I intend to discuss summarily Hume’s objection against the possibility of a demonstration of the principle “every-event-some-cause” and his thesis concerning its validity. In the second part, it is the turn of the Kantian answer to the same question concerning the validity of the principle of “every-event-some-cause”.

**Keywords:** Hume. Kant. Causality.

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**Resumo**

O principal objetivo da Segunda Analogia da Experiência de Kant era responder às objeções humeanas a respeito da aprioricidade do princípio “todo-evento-alguma-causa”. Este artigo pretende sugerir uma interpretação do argumento kantiano que, embora não possa mostrar que Hume deveria ficar satisfeito com a resposta, torna claras as razões de Kant para esse objetivo anti-humano. Na primeira parte deste artigo, eu pretendo discutir sumariamente a objeção de Hume contra a possibilidade de uma demonstração do princípio “todo-evento-alguma-causa” e sua tese a respeito da validade desse princípio. Na segunda parte, é a vez da resposta kantiana para a mesma questão a respeito da validade do princípio “todo-evento-alguma-causa”.

**Palavras-chave:** Hume. Kant. Causalidade.

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THN, 1.3.3 is the official section devoted to answer that question more general about causality: “*Why a cause is always necessary*”; we read in its title. In this section, Hume defends that the proposition “*whatever begins to exist, must have a cause of existence*” “is neither intuitively nor demonstrably certain” (HUME, 2000, p. 56). Intuitive and demonstrative reasoning are both relations of ideas (HUME, 2000, p. 56). In both cases we can solve the problem by applying the principle of non-contradiction, that is, there is a relation of ideas when the contradictory proposition is self-contradictory.

This being so, one should demonstrate “the impossibility there is, that anything can ever begin to exist without some productive principle” (HUME, 2000, p. 56) in order to demonstrate that a cause is always necessary. At this point, Hume applies an important principle of his philosophy so that he can prove it is not impossible to separate the idea of a new existence from the idea of cause. That very simple principle says that: “all distinct ideas are separable from each other” (HUME, 2000, p. 56). In other words, Hume is saying that everything I can conceive as distinct from anything else may exist without anything else. The idea of a new existence is not distinct from the idea of a previous time when the thing was not existent, but it is distinct from the idea of a productive principle lying in that time. Since we do not need to join

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the idea of a cause to the idea of a new existence in order to conceive or imagine it, they are distinct ideas, therefore, “it is impossible to demonstrate the necessity of a cause” (HUME, 2000, p. 56).

However, we cannot say that Hume was skeptic about the general maxim of causality just because he thought it was not a necessary principle in a logical or metaphysical point of view. In fact, Hume seems to take for granted that we believe in “the necessity of a cause to every new production” (HUME, 2000, p. 58), his concern being, as usual, to explain how that belief would arise from experience instead of suggesting we should not hold such a belief. Nevertheless, at the end of the section 1.3.3, Hume does not believe to be able to answer how we derive our opinion about the principle of “every-event-some-cause” from observation and experience. That is why he is going to sink that question in another one: “*Why we conclude, that such particular causes must necessarily have such particular effects, and why we form an inference from one to another?*” in order to see if “the same answer will serve for both questions” (HUME, 2000, p. 58).

Curiously, Hume will never come back from his account of particular causal relations and our causal inferences with an account of our belief in the general principle of causality. The following passage might be understood this way<sup>2</sup>, but I would like to suggest it should not be. I quote it in full:

We may now be able fully to overcome all that repugnance, which it is so natural for us to entertain against the foregoing reasoning, by which we endeavoured to prove, that the necessity of a cause to every beginning of existence is not founded on any arguments either demonstrative or intuitive. Such an opinion will not appear strange after the foregoing definitions. If we define a cause to be, *An object precedent and contiguous to another, and where all the objects resembling the former are placed in a like relation of priority and contiguity to those objects, that resemble the latter*; we may easily conceive, that there is no absolute nor metaphysical necessity, that every beginning of existence should be attended with such an object. If we define a cause to be, *An object precedent and contiguous to another,*

<sup>2</sup> That is Guyer's thesis, for example (see GUYER, P. *Knowledge, reason and taste: Kant's response to Hume*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2008. p. 83-85).

*and so united with it in the imagination, that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other; we shall make still less difficulty of assenting to this opinion. Such an influence on the mind is in itself perfectly extraordinary and incomprehensible; nor can we be certain of its reality, but from experience and observation (HUME, 2000, p. 115-116).*

The beginning of the passage seems to make clear that Hume's intention is to go back to his original objections against the possibility of demonstration of the necessity of the principle of "every-event-some-cause" in order to make them stronger, since he can count on his definitions of causality by now. This time we are told that the idea of a new existence is distinct from the idea of a precedent and contiguous object that would attend that type of existence always in a like way. More than that, we are told that it is still easier to understand the point when we think about a cause in more "psychological" terms, that is, when that precedent and contiguous object placed in a like relation to the new existence determines the mind to form its idea. After all, we can conceive an event without conceiving that propensity of our mind. By conceiving causality in that way, Hume can say "that there is no absolute nor metaphysical necessity" that a new existence should be attended with a cause and that we cannot find "any arguments either demonstrative or intuitive" to prove that a new existence must have a cause. I emphasize that it is just to make again his initial point on a more solid basis. It is not "to show that we have no basis whatever – neither demonstrative *nor experiential* – for our belief in the general maxim that every event has a cause" (GUYER, 2008, p. 83, emphasis mine), as Guyer says.

By adding something that we cannot find in Hume's text, Guyer defends that: "our particular causal beliefs are always based on repeated past experiences, and we obviously cannot have repeated past experiences of every sort of event we might ever encounter, or that we can imagine existing thus we can have no basis for making a causal inference about every such event" (GUYER, 2008, p. 84). Since Guyer is making a distinction between the operation in particular causal inferences and the operation that would be necessary to explain our belief in the principle

of “every-event-some-cause”<sup>3</sup>, in order to show that experience can give rise to the first type of inferences, but not to the last opinion, we should analyse Hume’s account of particular causal inferences, that is, we should understand the point of sinking a question in the other one.

From the quote of Guyer’s book above, we already know that “repeated past experiences” will be a key point for Hume’s theory of particular causal inference. Before we reach that point, we should start by understanding what Hume calls a cause. According to Hume, the objects we call cause and effect are *contiguous* in time and place, and “the object we call cause *precedes* the other we call effect” (HUME, 2000, p. 105). Nonetheless, those are not the only relevant elements to the semantics of the concept of causality. Above all, the idea of necessary connection between the objects is the essential content in that concept. However, the idea of necessary connection is also the problematic point here, since we cannot find an impression corresponding to that idea when we take a look at the objects we call cause and effect. This being so, according to Hume’s empiricist theory of meaning, we should accept that “causality” is an empty word or try a different approach (See HUME, 2000, p. 109-110).

Hume’s original solution to the problem of the empirical meaning of the concept of necessary connection is to replace the missing impression that would belong to the impressions of the objects in relation of cause and effect with a “psychological” impression in the observer. That means that we do not observe that kind of necessity, we feel that instead (See HUME, 2000, p. 111). Now what kind of observation does Hume have in mind when he tells us necessity is only a feeling that an observation causes in us? This is the point where those “repeated past experiences” become the key to solve the problem.

If we observe only one instance of a particular conjunction of objects, according to Hume, we do not say they are cause and effect. But, on the other hand, if “we observe several instances, in which the same objects are always conjoined together; we immediately conceive

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<sup>3</sup> Beck has formulated the general maxima of causality as the principle of “every-event-some-cause” (BECK, L. W. *Essays on Kant and Hume*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978. p. 120). More recently, Paul Guyer has shown the importance of that formula (GUYER, P. “Kant’s Second Analogy: objects, events and causal laws”. In: KITCHER, P. (Ed.). *Kant’s critique of pure reason: critical essays*. Lanham, Boulder. New York; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998. p. 121).

a connection between them, and begin to draw an inference from one to another” (HUME, 2000, p. 110). Let us concede that Hume is right about that alleged fact. What would it explain such a difference in our behavior towards the objects? After all, as Hume has said (and he seems to be completely right about that): “the repetition of like objects in like relations of succession and contiguity *discovers* nothing new in any of them” (HUME, 2000, p. 110-111). Thus the repetition in itself cannot give rise to the idea of necessary connection. It would be all about an effect that repetition would produce in the observer’s mind.

Since we have learned about that operation of the mind working when we perform a causal inference about a particular relation between objects, we are able to go back to Guyer’s thesis about the impossibility of an empirical answer to Hume’s question about the principle of “every-event-some-cause”. From what we have learned above, Adam would not be able to know that a stone could smash his head from his first moment in this world. But it is in order here to note that it does not mean that Adam would need to observe a stone smashing Eve’s head to be able to know that he should run away from a heavy stone coming towards him. He would come to the right inference just by observing how heavier bodies in general break others into pieces when they hit each other. Well if that is a real Humean scenery then we do not need to have repeated past experiences of every sort of body “we might ever encounter, or that we can imagine existing” thus that we can have basis for making a causal inference about every such body.

Now, I would like to suggest that the same kind of inference should be useful to account for our belief in the principle of “every-event-some-cause”. My point is: a beginning of existence is an object of the same kind of the other ones that we call effects of other events. We cannot discover a relevant difference among them so that we would have a reason to reject the idea of that new existence being the effect of something else. In effect, if we were able to discover why those beginnings of existences that we knew in the past had a cause while the new existence that we come to know does not have one, we would discover what is the causality in the objects themselves after all. To sum up, we would not be talking about the Humean theory at all.

Besides I think there might be an indirect confirmation of that reading in Hume's own words. Let us pay attention to Hume's account for our belief in continued existence of objects which are *new to us*: "If sometimes we ascribe a continued existence to objects, which are perfectly new to us, and of whose constancy and coherence we have no experience, it is because the manner, in which they present themselves to our senses, resembles that of constant and coherent objects; and this resemblance is a source of reasoning and analogy, and lead us to attribute the same qualities to the similar objects" (HUME, 2000, p. 138-139). In other words, we do not need to observe that the new object is constant and coherent in order to ascribe continued existence to it, but since it resembles the constant and coherent objects which we have observed so far, we attribute those qualities to it and then we ascribe continued existence to it. Maybe in the same way, we would not need to observe that a certain type of new beginning of existence is constantly conjoined to other existence in order to insert it in a relation of cause and effect, because, since it resembles other events that we have observed so far, we attribute that relation to it and then we think about it as an effect of something else by analogy. If the reading above is correct, Guyer is wrong and Hume was not skeptic about the general principle of causality. Hence Hume should be taken serious when he says years later: "there be no such thing as *Chance* in the world..." (HUME, 2000, p. 131).

Now, setting aside the historical question of Kant's knowledge of Hume's *Treatise*<sup>4</sup>, it is safe to say that Kant wanted the Second Analogy of Experience to be an *a priori* proof of the principle of "every-event-some-cause"<sup>5</sup>, something that Hume had thought to be impossible. In fact, Kant is explicit about the difference between Hume and himself:

<sup>4</sup> Before the release of the *Critique of pure reason*, Kant could have read at first hand only the translation of *THN*, 1.4.7, by his friend Johann Georg Hamann, that appeared in a paper of Königsberg in 1771. Besides he may have read reviews of the work also in papers and he must have read long quotes from the *Treatise* in James Beattie's *Essays on the nature and immutability of truth*, translated into German in 1772 (see WOLFF, R. P. *Kant's theory of mental activity: a commentary on the transcendental analytic of the Critique of Pure Reason*. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973. p. 25).

<sup>5</sup> In the first edition of the *Critique*, we read in the title of the Second Analogy: "Everything that happens (begins to be) presupposes something which it follows in accordance with a rule" (KANT, I. (*KrV*). *The critique of pure reason*. Edited and translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. p. 304); and in the second edition, we read instead: "All alterations occur in accordance with the law of the connection of cause and effect" (KANT, 1998, p. 304).

The question [for Hume] was not, whether the concept of cause is right, useful, and, with respect to all cognition of nature, indispensable, for this Hume had never put in doubt; it was rather whether it is thought through reason *a priori*, and in this way has an inner truth independent of all experience... (KANT, 2002, p. 56).

To put it in other way, Kant seems to believe that, even though Hume was not inviting us to give up on causal judgments, an empirical proof of the principle of “every-event-some-cause” would worth the same as a skeptical conclusion about that principle<sup>6</sup> thus that he had to provide an *a priori* proof for it.

After Hume’s philosophical works, there were two alternatives available to Kant as for the principle of “every-event-some-cause”: either a) he should show that Hume’s objections against the possibility of a demonstrative reasoning concerning the principle might be dismissed<sup>7</sup>; or b) he should show that a demonstrative reasoning would not be the only kind of *a priori* proof available to us. As everybody knows, Kant chose the second alternative. Since the principle of “every-event-some-cause” is one that Kant calls synthetic *a priori*, it is in need of a proof strategy which would show the necessity of a proposition whose contradictory is not self-contradictory<sup>8</sup>. What kind of strategy

<sup>6</sup> According to Kant, Hume “deposited his ship on the beach (of skepticism)” (KANT, I. (Prol). Prolegomena to any future metaphysics that will be able to come forward as science. Translated by Gary Hatfield. In: KANT, I. *Theoretical philosophy after 1781*. Edited by Henry Allison and Peter Heath. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. p. 58).

<sup>7</sup> In this context, we should keep in mind, a “demonstrative reasoning” is assumed to be an argument that proves a thesis by showing that its opposite involves a contradiction.

<sup>8</sup> As everybody knows, Kant has believed that Hume had discovered the problem of synthetic *a priori* judgments, even though Hume would have believed a solution to that problem to be impossible: “how is it possible, asked the acute man, that when I am given one concept I can go beyond it and connect another one to it that is not contained in it, and can indeed do so, as though the latter necessarily belonged to the former? Only experience can provide us with such connections (so he concluded from this difficulty, which he took for an impossibility) [...]” (KANT, 2002, p. 74). Allison argues that “Kant’s formulation of the issue in these terms is itself a paradigm case of reading another philosopher through distorting spectacles” (2008, p. 6). That would be the case because Hume would not accept something like the analytic-synthetic distinction (which is a propositional distinction), since, according to Hume, a relation of ideas would be only the pre-judgmental apprehension of a connection between images or pictures of impressions. For Allison, Hume has a “perceptual model” of knowledge, that is completely different from the Kantian discursive model (see HUME, 2008, p. 6-10). However, in spite of Hume’s notion of contradiction not being a strictly logical one (see BECK, 1978, p. 66), the fact that Hume distinguishes between relations of ideas and matters of fact by saying that the opposite of a relation of ideas is a contradiction while the opposite of a matter of fact is not (see HUME, 2000, p. 56 and HUME, 1999, p. 108) makes weak Allison’s thesis that Hume would not have worked with something resembling the Kantian conception of analyticity.



could it be? In accordance with Beck's suggestion, one should read the argument in the Second Analogy as an argument proving that the principle of "every-event-some-cause" is a necessary condition of a thesis that Hume defends or at least of one that he would have to accept<sup>9</sup>. This way, Beck's suggestion means that Kant is supposed to use a Humean thesis as a starting point in the Second Analogy.

According to Kant, all the Analogies of Experience are *a priori* conditions of the possibility of empirical knowledge, because: "Experience is possible only through the representation of a necessary connection of perceptions" (KANT, 1998, p. 295). From this, it follows that, in Kant's view, the principle of "every-event-some-cause" should be read as saying that an event<sup>10</sup>, as a type of experience, is possible only through the representation of a cause, as a type of representation of a necessary connection of perceptions. This being so, cause would be an *a priori* concept because it would hold necessarily for every event, since it would represent their necessary condition. But then, it is in order here to note that experience or empirical cognition for Kant, that is, "a cognition which determines an object through perceptions" (KANT, 1998, p. 295) is not equal to that key concept in Hume's philosophy named "belief", that is, "a more vivid and intense conception of an idea, proceeding from its relation to a present impression" (KANT, 1998, p. 295). In effect, Hume seems to concede we make a distinction between perceptions of objects and perceived objects. However, while perceptions of objects are immediately present to us, perceived objects are just existences in which we believe. In fact, the belief in objects distinct from perceptions of them is a natural propension that Hume takes pain to explain. Thus, if it is shown that an objective succession implies the principle of "every-event-some-cause", at the best, Hume would have to concede that the belief in objective successions implies the belief in the principle of "every-event-some-cause" so that the belief in this principle would be another natural propension, but in no way it would be an *a priori* principle. In Hume's view, a belief may be

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<sup>9</sup> I am not going to follow Beck's reading but for his very general suggestion. See BECK, 1978, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> "Event" means here an objective temporal sequence [Zeitfolge] or an alteration [Veränderung] of states of the substance that persists (see KANT, 1998, p. 304).

accounted for by psychological/empirical operations of mind alone (See HUME, 2000, p. 69-74.). That is why it is not that obvious what kind of Humean thesis would have to be accounted for by the principle of “every-event-some-cause” as an *a priori* principle without a gross distortion of Hume’s philosophical commitments.

However, setting aside the question if Hume would accept the starting point of the Second Analogy (a specific type of experience: the experience of objective successions or events)<sup>11</sup>, this paper is going to ask how Kant’s argument in the Second Analogy works once it is conceded that there is experience of events thereby showing an *a priori* argument that is not a demonstrative reasoning, a possibility that Hume does not seem to have considered. In other words, I intend to discover why Kant has thought that the experience of an objective succession is possible only through the principle of “every-event-some-cause” read, against Hume, as an *a priori* principle.

One is able to understand why any category plays its role in Kant’s philosophy if and only if one takes it as a rule for the synthetic unity of the manifold in the appearances. This amounts to say that, for Kant, the manifold of appearances has no unity in itself, that is, unity is not a sensible data, but a product of an intellectual synthesis<sup>12</sup>. Hence, there will be universal validity in the product of the synthesis if and only if the rule of synthesis is universal and necessary, that is, if the rule is subsumed under an *a priori* or pure concept of the understanding. Not by chance, that general thesis is making an appearance in the core of Second Analogy as a condition for Kant’s solution to the problem of the distinction between an objective and a subjective succession.

Since an objective succession or event is a succession in the appearance itself, Kant will ask: “what do I understand by the question,

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<sup>11</sup> It seems that the only way to prove that the Second Analogy would be (at least part of) a successful and complete answer to Hume would be by proving that the distinction between perceptions of objects and perceived objects is in itself a necessary condition for a Humean thesis. To sum up, it is my suggestion that Kant was in need to prove that empirical knowledge or knowledge of (instead of mere belief in) perceived objects as distinct from perceptions of them is a necessary condition for perceptions themselves. But then we should go far away from the Second Analogy. According to a long line of interpreters, to prove that point was exactly the goal of the Transcendental Deductions of the categories.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Kant (1998, p. 211, 216 e 245).

how the manifold may be combined [*verbunden*] in the appearance itself [*Erscheinung selbst*] (which is nothing in itself [*die doch nichts an sich selbst ist*]?)” (KANT, 1998, p. 306). The key point of the question is the meaning of the expression “appearance itself”. If one does not understand that, then one will not understand the meaning of an objective succession that is not a succession in the thing in itself [*Ding an sich selbst*]. Kant is going to point out that it is in order here to understand the object or appearance as something distinct from the thing in itself and, at the same time, distinct from mere apprehension. In other words, one must understand how a sum of representations can be considered as their object that is distinct from them. How is that possible? That is what pure concepts are for, since a pure concept is the condition for a rule that “makes one way of combining the manifold necessary [*eine Art der Verbindung des Mannigfaltigen notwendig macht*]” (KANT, 1998, p. 306), and one necessary way of combining the manifold of a sensible representation amounts to a relation of the representation to its object according to Kant’s Copernican Revolution<sup>13</sup>.

Now let us concede to Kant that 1) there always is a manifold in appearances; 2) there always is synthetic unity in appearances; 3) synthetic unity, unlike the manifold, is not sensible or received; 4) pure concepts are conditions of rules that make a synthetic unity necessary; 5) relation to an object is the same as validity for every subject of a synthesis of the manifold. The conclusion would be that pure concepts turn the sensible manifold of appearances into empirical objects. Nevertheless, one still may ask: why would cause and effect be *the* pure

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<sup>13</sup> See Kant, 1998, p. 309. In the *Prolegomena*, Kant takes the time to explain the relation between an empirical judgment and its object. According to him, when we give our judgments a relation to an object, we intend that those judgments “should also be valid at all times for us and for everyone else” (KANT, 2002: p. 92). Kant is saying here that the relation to an object is in fact a relation among judgments of that object so that “if a judgment agrees with an object, then all judgments of the same object must also agree with one another” (KANT, 2002, p. 92). Because Kant takes objectivity and universality as being the same, he can say that whatever makes a judgment universally valid also defines its relation to an object. Well, for Kant, universal validity is never grounded on perceptions, “but on the pure concept of the understanding under which the perception is subsumed” (KANT, 2002, p. 92). Kant also tells us: “judgments of experience will not derive their objective validity from the immediate cognition of the object (for this is impossible), but merely from the condition for the universal validity of empirical judgments, which [...] never rests on empirical, or indeed sensory conditions at all, but on a pure concept of the understanding” (KANT, 2002, p. 93).

concept that would make a successive order of the manifold necessary or objective? This is the question that Kant intends to answer when he finishes his explanation for the general role of pure concepts regarding objectivity. That is why he says: “Now let us proceed to our problem” (KANT, 1998, p. 309).

The first point made by Kant in that context has to do with the conditions of empirical perception of an occurrence. According to Kant, an occurrence is never preceded by an empty time, but by an existence that does not contain that occurrence in itself. Thus, if it is conceded to Kant that one cannot perceive an empty time, it should be conceded that: “Every apprehension of an occurrence is therefore a perception that follows another one” (KANT, 1998, p. 306). But then, as we know, Kant is going to say that it is the case in any apprehension, that is, it is not only in the apprehension of an occurrence that a perception follows another one. That is why Kant is telling us it is in order here to investigate what is the case *only* in perceptions of something that comes to be or ceases to be. This would be the fact that a perception preceding a perception of an occurrence could never follow it. Let us think about a billiards table and a moving billiards ball. We can perceive the right corner pocket of a billiards table and then perceive its left corner pocket. We will have a perception that follows another one. How do we decide that the pocket in the left corner is not something that comes to be after the right corner pocket? We can perceive a billiards ball at rest and then moving along the table. We will have a perception that follows another one. How do we decide that the ball’s movement is something that comes to be after its rest?

Kant would say that we decide that the ball’s movement is an occurrence, because we judge that, while we would have been able to perceive the left corner pocket in  $t_1$  and the right corner pocket in  $t_2$ , even though we perceived the right corner pocket in  $t_1$  and the left corner pocket in  $t_2$ , we would not have been able to perceive that ball’s movement in  $t_1$  and its rest in  $t_2$ . At least, this is what Kant says: “I call the preceding state of perception *A* and the following one *B*, then *B* can only follow *A* in apprehension, but the perception *A* cannot follow but only precede *B*” (KANT, 1998, p. 306-307).

On one hand, it seems safe to say that any perception that precedes another one cannot follow this one, since a perception itself is always a singular mental occurrence. On the other hand, we can perceive an occurrence of state *A* preceding state *B* and then other occurrence in which state *B* precedes state *A*. On this account, I think the only way to make sense of Kant's statement is by considering that, in perceptions of occurrences, it must be considered that one would not have been able to perceive in  $t_1$  what was perceived in  $t_2$  and vice-versa. That is why the irreversibility of perceptions should be read as a rule to judge occurrences, and not as an empirical data or circumstance in perceptions of occurrences themselves<sup>14</sup>.

If we agree with Kant's point about irreversibility, we should ask now what irreversibility in perception order has to do with causality. There is an easy and wrong way to understand that. Sometimes, unfortunately, Kant seems to say that successive order in perceptions is irreversible if the antecedent is cause of the consequent: "The concept [...] that carries a necessity of synthetic unity with it can only be a pure concept of understanding, which does not lie in the perception, and that is here the concept of the *relation of cause and effect*, the former of which determines the latter in time, as its consequence, and not as something that could merely precede in the imagination (or not even be perceived at all)" (KANT, 1998, p. 305). According to this passage, we might understand that the irreversible succession of states in an occurrence that has to be accounted for is the same as succession between cause and effect, that is, the succession is irreversible, because it is a succession of cause and effect. After all, Hume has told us successive order would be an essential element in cause and effect relations, what Kant would accept.

If that reading makes sense, there will be a serious problem with our example. We have talked about successive states in a billiards ball: 1) rest, and; 2) movement. For sure, rest is not the cause of movement.

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<sup>14</sup> Kant says that "this rule is always to be found in the perception of that which happens" (KANT, 1998, p. 307). As Wolff has noted, that does not mean that irreversibility should be taken as a characteristic of apprehension: "The real point of the argument [...] is not that we must *perceive* B after A, but that we must represent or *think* B after A" (WOLFF, 1973, p. 268)

Have we used an improper example of objective succession? If we have, so has Kant with his ship first being perceived downstream and then upstream (see KANT, 1998, p. 306), since ship's position downstream in  $t_1$  is not the cause of ship's position upstream in  $t_2$ , even though, for Kant, that order is irreversible. In fact, there are many examples in which objective succession is not the same as cause and effect succession and it would not be reasonable to dismiss those examples as improper ones. That is why, in spite of the passage quoted above, one cannot explain irreversibility of perception in an occurrence just by saying that cause and effect are always in irreversible successive order.

Besides, it is very relevant to note here that, according to Kant, it is not true that cause and effect are always successive in time (KANT, 1998, p. 312). In fact, Kant goes so far as to say that most of the causes are simultaneous with their effects and that "in the instant in which the effect first arises, it is always simultaneous with the causality of its cause, since if the cause had ceased to be an instant before then the effect would never have arisen" (KANT, 1998, p. 312). This does not mean that Kant has a concept of causality completely different from the Humean one. After all, Kant points out that "the law still holds" and I believe that is a reference to the fact that we still can talk about a necessary succession between cause and effect. The point is that Kant is making a distinction between a lapse of time and the order of time (see KANT, 1998, p. 312), what makes clear that a succession of states in an occurrence is not the same as a succession of cause and effect.

If one talks about a lapse of time, one talks about something that one perceives in  $t_1$  and something else that one perceives in  $t_2$ . If one talks about the order of time, one talks about determined positions in time. But if one talks about an order of time without elapsed time, one talks about something in time that has a determined position only because it is a condition for something else and not the other way around. The objective successions or occurrences that Kant has to account for are alterations taking place in a lapse of time. They are objective because their order is determined, nevertheless, the first state is not a condition for the second one. Thus we have to understand how their order can be irreversible while one state is not a condition for the other one.

In other words, since cause and effect are not the states in the alteration themselves, we have to understand how an order of cause and effect, that does not need to take place in a lapse of time, determines the order in a lapse of time so that the alteration taking place is objective.

This takes us back to the concept of *rule*. In principle, one could think that Kant might say that the order of states in an occurrence is determined, because a preceding occurrence produces it, that is, a succession would be objective or something that happens because it would be an effect of something else that has happened or happens. There would be a succession of states in a lapse of time (an event or occurrence) and a succession of events with or without a lapse of time between them (cause and effect). The second succession would explain the objectivity of the first one insofar as the first succession would be an element in the second one (the consequent). However, Kant is saying much more than that. He is saying that an event follows the preceding one “*in accordance with a rule*” (KANT, 1998, p. 307). In fact, Kant also qualifies the rule as “general” elsewhere (see KANT, 1998, p. 311).

In the Jäsche *Logic*, a rule is a “universal proposition, from which a particular cognition could be deduced” (KANT, 1992, p. 618). By applying that to the present context, we can say that Kant conceives the objectivity of a succession as requiring the presupposition of a hypothetical syllogism whose major premise is a (general) rule expressing a universally valid sequence of events; while the minor premise affirms one instance of the antecedent of the rule, and; the conclusion affirms one instance of the consequent of the rule. Certainly, only the relation between antecedent and consequent is determined by Kant’s argument. One does not need to know which is the antecedent (or which is the rule) in order to decide that is perceiving an event: the existence that the conclusion of the syllogism affirms (see KANT, 1998, p. 310). In other words, that syllogism would be a possibility that one has to accept in order to decide that something happens. For this reason, Kant is making the universal validity for all the subjects (and thus the objectivity) of the judgment of experience that asserts the existence of an event dependent on the necessity and strict universality of the empirical law which is the major premise in the hypothetical syllogism.

Since, according to Kant, necessity and strict universality is possible if and only if a rule is determined by an *a priori* concept, one is finally able to understand why Kant connects apriorism and objectivity<sup>15</sup>.

At this point, I would like to note that, in order to know where Kant is coming from, it would be useful to take his debate with Hume as serious as himself does. Kant believes that he is making a new point concerning causal rules in the Second Analogy. It seems that, for Kant, Hume's conception of causal rules is equal to a general standpoint that he is going to challenge. That standpoint would say that a causal rule – that is, a rule in accordance with which a type of occurrence always follows another type of occurrence – may be discovered if and only if one is able to perceive and compare preceding sequences of occurrences. Moreover, according to Kant, it is usual to believe that the concept of cause itself is formed through that empirical operation of discovering such rules. Thus, Kant concludes, the principle of “every-event-some-cause” would be merely empirical or grounded only on induction, therefore, it would not have true universal validity, what Kant conceives as the distinctive mark of *a priori* knowledge (see KANT, 1998, p. 308). Kant's account of his opponent suggests that: i) Hume's theory of causality was largely known and apparently accepted in the Prussia of Kant's time<sup>16</sup>; ii) Hume's answer to his question concerning the principle of “every-event-some-cause” was being read by Kant in a like way as it is read in this paper; iii) Kant interprets Hume as a skeptic, not because he thinks Hume's proposal was that the concept of causality and its general principle should be dismissed, but because he believes that skepticism is always the fate of empiricism.

It is possible to understand why Kant is going to reject the idea of causality itself being an empirical concept formed by a second order

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<sup>15</sup> Graciela de Pierris and Michael Friedman do a great job of explaining the relation between *a priori* concepts and the strict universality of judgments of experience in “Kant and Hume on Causality”, section 2. At times Kant speaks as if it was impossible to attribute strict universality to any type of empirical judgment (see KANT, 1998, p. 137). Nonetheless, Kant's considered position seems to be that an empirical judgment must be subsumed under an *a priori* law in order to receive strict universality. Otherwise, empirical causal rules could not express the necessary connection (and thus the strict universality) that, according to Kant, is essential to causality.

<sup>16</sup> What suggests that Kant, who was not a good reader in English, would be able to know the major theses of the *Treatise* before a German translation, what was really missing when Kant worked in *Critique of Pure Reason*.



induction if we assume that, according to Kant and Hume, a cause is an event from what another event *always* follows<sup>17</sup>. Since experience only can provide information about a limited number of cases of sequences between events, from an empiricist point of view, a causal rule would be just a conjecture or what Kant calls a *comparatively universal rule*, that, once used as the major premise in that hypothetical syllogism that we talked about above, would allow us to deduce only *problematic judgments* about the existence of events.

This being so, Kant needs to say that causality is an *a priori* concept, i. e., a concept that holds for the experience of every event, because then, given any event, it is possible conclude that there is another event that it always follows from, even though experience can just provide that a certain event has been observed to be the case always that another event has been observed to be the case too. It amounts to say that, from a Kantian point of view, since one is able to subsume empirical rules under *a priori* concepts, one is also able to hold a judgment like “B is the case always that A is the case” as much more than a conjecture, that is, as a necessary and strictly universal rule that finally allows us to ascribe a succession to the object. In other words, if “B is the case always that A is the case” is read as a necessary and strictly universal rule then, given a minor premise asserting that “A is the case”, one is able to deduce that “B must be the case” (what Kant calls “material necessity”), therefore, “B is the case”<sup>18</sup>. Since B is a sequence between state E in  $t_1$  and state F in  $t_2$ , that syllogism allows us to conclude that the sequence E/F is valid for all the subjects, i. e., that the sequence E/F is a sequence of states in an object or an occurrence.

On the other hand, if “B is the case always that A is the case” is read as a mere conjecture based on the empirical truth of the sentence “B has

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<sup>17</sup> By saying that, I disagree with Eric Watkins, according to who “Kant presupposes a model of causality that is fundamentally different from Hume’s event-event model” (WATKINS, E. *Kant and the metaphysics of causality*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. p. 12). My position here is the same as that of Paul Guyer: (2008, p. 18-19) “Hume and Kant both have very much the same conception of a cause, that of an object’s being in a certain state at a certain time, which is taken to be the condition of another object’s being in a certain state at a certain time”.

<sup>18</sup> For sure, the minor premise asserting that “A is the case” needs to be justified by being the conclusion of another syllogism and so on.

been observed to be the case always that A has been observed to be the case” (a comparatively universal rule), then, given the minor premise “A is the case”, one is able to deduce only that “B may be the case”. Hence, one is unable to decide if the sequence E/F is subjective or objective. This is why, according to Kant, every event should have some cause so that cause is an *a priori* concept: every judgment of experience that asserts “B (E in  $t_1$  and F in  $t_2$ ) is the case” should stand under a necessary and strictly universal rule. To sum up, if there is an assumption of a cause, one would be able to decide that a succession is an event, because that succession must be the case. That is pretty much to put Hume’s theory upside down. After all, according to Hume’s doctrine of causal inference, there are events (or at least there is belief about them), constant conjunctions observed between events, conjectural causal rules determined by those constant conjunctions and then a conjectural concept of causation that tells us more than we can observe in events, while, according to Kant’s doctrine of causal judgments, events are possible at first because we can apply necessary and strictly universal rules based on an *a priori* concept of causation. In fact, the pure concept of cause is the ground of those empirical laws used as major premises in hypothetical syllogisms whose conclusions are existential judgments about events.

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