

Causality and Objectivity: The Arguments in Kant's Second Analogy

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Of the philosophical problems that Kant sets out to resolve in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, one of the foremost is how to justify the principle that, necessarily and universally, all events in the world occur because of an antecedent cause.¹ This problem was, after all, the focal point of Kant's intellectual engagement with Hume, and it served as an impetus for his transcendental idealist system. But while the importance of the problem of causality in the *Critique* is widely acknowledged, there is little agreement over either what the main threads of Kant's arguments on causality are or how successful they are. In this paper, I will address both of these questions. I will first exposit and then critically examine the arguments for the objectivity of causality that Kant employs in the Second Analogy of Experience, the section of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in which he gives his most thorough and explicit treatment of causality.

Two distinct lines of argument in the Second Analogy will serve as the focus of this inquiry, and I will explicate each in turn. In the first argument, Kant contends that any notion of objective perception presupposes objective causality. Although this argument has the advantage of resting on only minimal presuppositions, I will show that its premises nevertheless underdetermine its conclusion. Having explored this first argument, I will then turn to the second, which holds that, to account for the features of our ordinary understanding of causality, causality must be a priori, universal, and necessary—that is, it must be objective. But while this argument has

¹ Or antecedent *causes*. There are always, of course, a tremendous number of causal threads that run together to produce any single event.

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the upside of involving few logical steps, I will argue that it is problematic because it depends upon controversial premises. From these examinations, I will conclude that Kant's arguments for objective causality fail to demonstrate their conclusions adequately; more philosophical work would need to be done in order for Kant's claims to be justified. Before turning to these arguments, however, it will be useful first to consider briefly how Kant's account of causality in the Second Analogy integrates into the broader aim and structure of the *Critique* as a whole.

I. Aims of the First *Critique*

As Kant makes clear from the outset, his central and overarching aim in the *Critique* is to justify our use of synthetic a priori judgments. To use examples that Kant himself gives, an instance of this sort of judgment in mathematics is " $7 + 5 = 12$ "; in the natural sciences, an example is "all bodies are heavy." Such judgments are a priori because they possess the characteristic of necessity: the truths that they express must be the case. This fact, Kant believes, could not obtain if these judgments were merely a posteriori. Similarly, such judgments are synthetic because their predicates are not contained in their subjects (for example, the predicate "heavy" is not contained in the concept of "body"; the definition of "body" does not include the notion of heaviness). Synthetic judgments are derived not from analysis of concepts or words, but rather, to put it broadly, from our contact with the world. It is through this contact with the world, Kant thinks, that we receive "intuitions"—that is, immediate representations of singular, concrete objects.

These distinctions are important to Kant's justificatory project because, he believes, all mathematical and geometrical knowledge, as well as knowledge of the laws of nature, is synthetic a priori in form. Therefore, to legitimate the use of synthetic a priori judgments is to legitimate the claims of scientific knowledge. In order to achieve such a justification of synthetic a priori judgments, Kant expounds and defends his system of transcendental idealism. Under this system, to put it succinctly, we cannot know things as they are in themselves (*noumena*), but only as they appear to us (*phenomena*). These appearances, moreover, are not simply given to us, but instead receive their structure and form from the constitution of the mind. Our representations do not conform to objects; objects conform to our concepts, which structure our representations. This means that, as Kant writes in the preface, "we can cognize of things *a priori* only what we ourselves have put into them" (111). Consequently, the scientific advances of Galileo, Newton, and others were possible only because the laws of nature are

ultimately laws imposed upon the world by the mind. In Kant's view, then, "insofar as there is to be reason in these sciences, something in them must be cognized *a priori*" (107). Physical laws are largely the results of the mental categories through which we structure our experience. And indeed, more fundamentally, it is only on account of such *a priori* structural principles that we are capable of having objective experiences of the world at all.

For Kant, one of the most basic elements of objective experience is that we be able to determine objectively the temporal sequence of our perceptions.² Considered by themselves, writes Kant, "perceptions come together only contingently, so that no necessity of their connection is or can become evident in the perceptions themselves" (296). In other words, although our subjective perceptions may come in succession or be juxtaposed together in certain ways, that *de facto* succession or juxtaposition indicates nothing about how the order of our perceptions *ought* to be arranged in order to constitute objective experience. For example, if I perceive an object A' as being in location X at time t_1 and that same object A' as being in location Y at time t_2 , it is true that my *perception* of the object follows the order X at t_1 , Y at t_2 . In other words, I perceive object A' as moving from X to Y in the time interval from t_1 to t_2 . But what reason do I have for thinking that this order of perception *must* have been so? Without such a reason, Kant suggests, object A' might have moved in reality not from X to Y, but in some way not represented by our experience: from Y to X, perhaps, or not at all. Our perceptual ordering of events might not represent the way things really are in the world. Since this possibility of faulty perception exists, therefore, we cannot conclude merely from the fact that we seem to have perceptions in a certain temporal order that what we perceive actually does follow this order. But if the merely subjective sequence of perceptions cannot ground experience as objective, then what can? It is in answer to this question that Kant introduces the Analogies of Experience in the *Transcendental Analytic*.

II. The Analogies of Experience

In essence, the Analogies of Experience are principles that establish objective time-determinations, enabling us to make valid judgments about the relations between various temporal states. The general principle of the Analogies is, as Kant puts it in the first edition of the *Critique*, that "all appearances stand *a priori* under rules of the determination of their relation to each other in one time"; or, as expressed in the second edition, that

² In this paper, I will treat "experience" and "objective experience" as synonyms. This is because, for Kant, experience as such already is objective.

“experience is possible only through the representation of a necessary connection of perceptions” (295). In other words, the Analogies are a priori principles that determine the necessary connection between perceptions in a temporal sequence. What this means, moreover, is that the Analogies “do not concern the appearance and synthesis of their empirical intuition, but merely their existence and their relation to one another with regard to this their existence” (*Critique* 297). The Analogies thus concern only the formal structure of the relations between temporal states, and not the content of those states. For this reason, in contrast to “constitutive” principles like those of logic or mathematics, Kant calls the Analogies “regulative”: they regulate how any objective experience must be structured, but they do not constitute the content of such experience (297–98). They are analogies, then, in the sense that they apply analogously to various concrete situations.

According to Kant, relations between temporal states can be of three different varieties. The three modes of time, as he calls them, are “persistence, succession, and simultaneity” (*Critique* 296). Since they ground and validate our judgments concerning time-determinations, the Analogies are likewise threefold.³ It is in the second of these three Analogies that Kant formulates his famous argument for the objectivity of causality. The Second Analogy focuses on how to justify the objective succession of appearances in time. As formulated in the second edition, the principle of the Second Analogy is that “all alterations occur in accordance with the law of the connection of cause and effect” (304). This is the principle that Kant seeks to demonstrate: all experience, to be determinate and objective, must accord with the rule of causality. The principle of causality therefore structures our experience and legitimates our judgments of appearances as objectively successive. As we shall see, Kant primarily attempts to derive the objectivity of causality from our temporal determinations of perceptions. Having set forth the aim and purpose of the Second Analogy in the *Critique*, then, let us now attend to Kant’s argument. There are two central and distinct lines of argument in the Second Analogy, and I will examine each of these in turn.⁴

³ In the First Analogy, Kant states that the principle that substance persists grounds the judgment of an object persisting through time (299); in the Second Analogy (which is our concern here), he states that the principle of cause and effect grounds the judgment of an objective order of temporal successions (304); and in the Third Analogy, he maintains that the principle that “all substances, insofar as they can be perceived in space as simultaneous, are in thoroughgoing interaction” grounds the judgment of simultaneity (316).

⁴ I follow Paul Guyer in holding that the putative (up to six) distinct arguments that N. Kemp Smith, H. J. Paton, and Robert Wolff seem to find in the Second Analogy are in fact simply clarifications of and variations on Kant’s central argument, which is the first argument I discuss in this paper. Nevertheless, unlike Guyer, I do not think that the second line of argument I present here is reducible to the first. See Guyer, *Kant* 390.

III. The First Argument

At the outset of his exposition of the Second Analogy, Kant begins by pointing out that in perception, “I am . . . only conscious that my imagination places one state before and the other after, not that the one state precedes the other in the object” (304–5). In other words, in merely subjective perception, one may experience appearance A as preceding appearance B in time, but one cannot be certain that this is *objectively* so, or that this relation between appearances is anything more than the product of one’s imagination. One may experience appearance A as preceding appearance B, but how does one really know that the actual object A’ of which A is an appearance precedes the actual object B’ of which B is an appearance? Rather than offering an epistemological argument in answer to this question, Kant simply asserts that we do in fact distinguish between objective and merely subjective successions, and that such assertions are valid. For him, it is simply a phenomenological fact that we attribute objectivity to some perceptions (i.e., successions) and not to others. But while this assertion is no argument, it is not for that reason vitiated. Indeed, Kant is on solid dialectical ground; to deny this assertion would involve fashioning an argument that did not hold to a distinction between objective and subjective experience (even as it pertains to the experience of one’s own subjectivity, or “inner” appearances, as Kant would call them). Such an argument would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to make.

To illustrate the fact that we make, and seem justified in making, everyday distinctions between subjective and objective perceptions, Kant provides two examples. On the one hand, Kant considers what takes place when we observe a house. It is quite certain, he writes, that “the manifold in the appearance of a house that stands before me is successive” (*Critique* 306). As one observes the house, one’s perceptions are successive: one may look first at the roof, then at the walls, and so on. Nevertheless, Kant contends that “certainly no one will concede” that the house itself, considered as an object, is successive (306). Rather, we know that the roof and walls exist simultaneously, and that it is simply one’s subjective perceptions that are successive. On the other hand, if one watches a ship sail down a river, one’s judgment is different. Taking note of this, Kant writes:

I see a ship downstream. My perception of its position downstream follows the perception of its position upstream, and it is impossible that in the apprehension of this appearance the ship should first be perceived downstream and afterwards upstream. The order in the sequence of the perceptions . . . is therefore here deter-

mined . . . In the previous example of a house my perceptions could have begun at its rooftop and ended at the ground, but could also have begun below and ended above. (307)

According to Kant, when one sees a ship first at point X and then at point Y, we judge that there was an actual succession *in the ship as an object*, and that the succession was not due merely to the subjective play of our perceptions. Such a judgment is therefore objective, making a claim about the object itself. As the passage above indicates, what differentiates objective from subjective successions of perceptions is that the former have the mark of irreversibility: while we may perceive the house in whatever order we like, we must represent the ship as being first upstream and then downstream.

But whence comes this feature of irreversibility? It is clear, in the first place, that it is not immediately given to us; it is not an intuition in the Kantian sense. Similarly, it cannot be derived from the objects that we perceive, for, as Kant states, the only way in which we receive objects is through our representations of them. Neither can such irreversibility be derived from our representations of objects. As Guyer remarks, our representations do not bear within themselves any “internal sign of their objective temporal significance” (*Kant* 110). As we noted above, any two perceptions can be combined in different orders: A-then-B, or B-then-A. There is nothing within the representations themselves that tell us which way the perceptions should be arranged for them to be objective. But if this character of irreversibility is not given immediately, through objects, or through representations, then how do we derive it? If irreversibility is the mark of objectivity, then what, in Kant’s view, grounds objective judgments of this sort? And indeed, more broadly, what can objectivity *mean* in a transcendental idealist system in which the mind (at least partly) structures objects?

In reply to this last question, Kant remarks that judging our perceptions to be objective “does nothing beyond making the combination of representations necessary in a certain way, and subjecting them to a rule; and conversely . . . objective significance is conferred on our representations only insofar as a certain order in their temporal relation is necessary” (309). What Kant makes plain here (and elsewhere) is that objective judgments are those that accord with some rule or principle. For reasons articulated in the preceding paragraph, objectivity (or irreversibility) cannot be inferred from our experience itself; it is rather a regulative principle that we bring to experience. With this conception of objectivity, then, it becomes clear why Kant says that the objective connection between perceptions “must therefore consist in the order of the manifold of appearance . . . in accordance with a rule” (307). Giving our perceptions a determinate and objective order

means doing so by a rule or principle. Only in this way can we ascribe irreversibility to our objective judgments.

But while the order of perceptions in objective judgments must certainly be irreversible, what these passages on objectivity also show is that this order of perceptions must be *necessary* as well. In other words, perceptions in objective judgments must exist in a certain (irreversible) order and must be such that, when the first perception in that order occurs, the other perceptions must necessarily follow. This follows from the notion that objectivity consists in determination according to rules. A rule that structures our perceptions “makes the order of perceptions that follow one another (in the apprehension of this appearance) necessary” (*Critique* 307). This necessity means not merely that the order of appearances must be A-then-B, but also that, once A is posited, B must necessarily follow. Kant therefore holds that “the progress from a given time to the determinately following one is necessary” (307). In other words, one temporal state must determine or necessitate the following state. This is simply what the ordering of perceptions according to a rule entails: if A, then B.

At this point in the argument, Kant makes a crucial move. To establish the necessary and objective advance of temporal states, there must be some means of determining the position of such states in time. In attempting to do so, one might be tempted to establish this objective advance by relating the perceived temporal states to some broader notion of absolute time, much as one might, like Newton, determine the movement of a given object by relating it to some broader notion of absolute space. However, Kant thinks that this attempt is bound to fail. The reason for its failure is, as he writes, that “this determination of position [of appearances] cannot be borrowed from the relation of the appearances to absolute time (for that is not an object of perception), but, conversely, the appearances themselves must determine their positions in time for each other, and make this determination in the temporal order necessary” (*Critique* 310–11). Similarly, Kant also writes in the First Analogy that “[absolute] time . . . lasts and does not change; since it is that in which succession or simultaneity can be represented only as determinations of it” (300).

What Kant is saying in these passages is that because absolute time cannot be perceived, it cannot ground the relations among specific temporal states. Since experience itself is temporal, the determination of time cannot be known directly by means of our experience (Wood 59). Furthermore, the temporal states that we perceive are grounded in states of appearances: temporal succession is rooted in the actual objects of that succession. For Kant, then, time-determination must be thought of as appearance-determination; time-states cannot be divorced from the perceptions that they accompany. Since this is so, a necessary and objective temporal se-

quence consists not in times necessitating times, but in appearances necessitating appearances. But for Kant, this notion of appearances necessitating or determining further appearance simply is the law of causality. To determine the position of appearances in time, a rule is required; but this rule, Kant argues, “is that in what precedes, the condition is to be encountered under which the occurrence always (i.e., necessarily) follows” (311). Thus Kant reaches the terminus of his argument: the idea of objective temporal succession requires the principle that every occurrence be the effect of some antecedent cause. And since this principle of causality is applied a priori to experience, it is therefore a universal and necessary condition of experience. Hence Kant concludes that “the principle of sufficient reason is the ground of possible experience, namely the objective cognition of appearances with regard to their relation in the successive series of time” (311).

At this point, however, we encounter a difficulty. Kant’s argument proceeds by describing features of time-determination and then collapsing those features into appearance-determination, meaning that appearances determine appearances, thereby justifying the principle of causality. But Kant jumps from this fact about appearances determining appearance to a claim about objects determining objects. At first glance, this logical leap would seem to be unjustified, as Strawson and others have suggested (85). But what must be borne in mind here is the extent of Kant’s transcendental idealism. For Kant, objects are in part constituted by our mental faculties; the intuitions that we receive are structured according to particular concepts to form objects of experience. To perceive some object A’ is not to perceive the thing in itself, neither is to think about the nature of object B’ to think about the nature of the thing in itself. For, in a strict sense, there is no such thing as an object in itself. Almost by definition for Kant, objects—those entities that we perceive—receive their formal structure from the subject, and hence there is no question of, or need for, transcending the world of appearances to apprehend things in themselves. Universal and necessary conclusions reached about the nature of appearances, therefore, are also conclusions reached about the nature of objects. When Kant proceeds from appearance-determination in time to object-determination in time, he is thus at least not guilty of logical sloppiness. Only if one takes a realist approach to the *Critique* does such a problem seem to arise.

It is useful here to explicate more clearly Kant’s point about causality being a universal and necessary facet of experience. As stated earlier, the Second Analogy (like all the Analogies) is a purely regulative principle: it can specify only the form that experience must take, not the content of that experience. The principle that everything happens by the law of cause and effect thus means only that there must be *some* cause for any

given occurrence, not that we will always know precisely what the cause is; indeed, some causes may be so complex or subtle that we may never discover them. Hence Kant writes that appearances are “related merely to some preceding point or other,” and not to any definite cause knowable a priori (307). Similarly, Kant does not hold that saying “B follows A” means that A caused B, but simply that B’s following A must be accounted for causally (Guyer, *Claims of Knowledge* 240). In other words, B follows A only because there is something that causes B to follow A (this cause may or may not have been A; however, this is a matter for empirical investigation). Moreover, as Arthur Melnick notes, what also follows from Kant’s argument is that since every event must result from some cause, “the position of any event [must] be determinable with respect to any other event . . . Given any two events x, y, we can trace the connection between them in terms of causal rules” (92–93). Because the law of causality is necessary and universal, we can determine any event in relation to other events by means of causal connections; this is so in principle, even if it is seldom true in practice.

But if Kant’s claim about the universality and necessity of causality is indeed only regulative and general, how are we to judge its success as a response to Hume? For Hume’s point about causality concerned particular causal laws, not causality as a universal principle. He argued, for example, that there is nothing in the concept of a billiard ball such that, when it hits another billiard ball, the latter should move (Hume 162). Consequently, it would seem reasonable to conclude that one could subscribe to Kant’s argument about general causality while also accepting Hume’s criticisms of our ability to identify particular causal laws in operation. But this is not the case. Far from having nothing to say about our ability to discern particular causal laws at work, Kant’s treatment of causality in the Second Analogy in fact presupposes our ability to accurately identify such laws. The reason lies in the distinction between objective and subjective successions of perceptions. In order to determine that our perception of, say, a ball rolling down a hill is an instance of objective succession (and not merely a subjective concatenation of appearances), we must presuppose, and have familiarity with, certain causal laws operating in nature: in this case, laws concerning friction, mass, gravity, angles, surfaces, etc. (Guyer, *Kant* 112). Were one not in possession of at least a rudimentary awareness of such laws, one would have no reason to take this experience of the ball rolling down the hill to be objective and the successive perception of various sides of a house to be subjective. In this sense, then, Kant’s arguments can be seen as responding to Hume’s skeptical theses about localized causality, even if they fall short of providing a more detailed account of how we identify particular causal laws.

IV. Problems with the First Argument

Having now fully explicated Kant's first argument in the Second Analogy, then, what remains is to examine it critically. Just how successful is the argument? In the first place, it is, of course, one great advantage of this argument that it begins from the rather minimal (and hence strong) starting point that we do in fact make judgments that certain successions of perceptions are objective, and then shows that the principle of causality is a transcendental condition of such judgments. But while this minimality is philosophically advantageous, the argument nevertheless faces at least one serious difficulty.⁵ The problem with Kant's argument is that it is unclear that the fact that one appearance necessarily follows another means that causality must be posited. His arguments for the universality and necessity of causality are underdetermined and consequently admit of counter-conclusions. For instance, instead of invoking the law of causality to ground the objective sequence of perceptions, it seems that one could just as easily posit an alternative principle, such as "perceptions experienced before later perceptions must be regarded as objectively prior." This principle, too, would appear to justify objective experience.

Of course, in response, Kant might contend that this new principle effectively tries to determine the temporal relation of perceptions by reference to absolute time—an attempt that is destined to fail, as we have seen. But this response falls flat. For we could very well follow Kant in saying that the determination of temporal states must be on the basis of appearances themselves, but then argue that we can ground this determination of perceptions not on external appearances, but rather on internal ones. One might simply consider one's subjective perceptions (apart from their real-world objects) as internal appearances, and then, on the basis of those appearances, determine the objective sequence of perceptions. Kant provides no answer to such an objection—at least within the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

But even if someone were to argue in defense of Kant that, since all perceptions (for Kant) involve intuitions, and since intuitions seems to require contact with some extra-mental "world-stuff," perceptions cannot be regarded as mere "internal appearances," the argument would not be rescued. For intuitions on the Kantian model do not, as such, imply contact with mind-independent reality. It is not as though intuitions are world-dependent whereas concepts (or thoughts) are mind-dependent: that is the wrong distinction to make. Rather, for Kant, intuitions are simply *nonconceptual*; they are the matter of which concepts provide the form,

⁵ There are, of course, other problems that beset both Kant's arguments on causality and his arguments in the *Critique* generally. But for the sake of concision, I shall treat only one such here.

a matter that may be either mind-related or world-related. Therefore, when Kant talks of internal appearances (say, the representation or awareness of one's own mind), these do involve intuitions, but they are simply intuitions of one's own mental states. What is more, when Kant writes that space and time are (pure) intuitions, he clearly does not mean that, by having intuitions of space and time, we perceive some extramental realities. Space and time are, to be sure, intuitions for Kant; but they are also, in another sense, "forms of sensibility." They are not in themselves perceived; we perceive through them. In the final analysis, then, this line of defense fails to overcome the problem of underdetermination.

V. The Second Argument

So far, we have explored the first and primary argument of the Second Analogy and have seen how Kant attempts to derive the idea of objective causality from the features of everyday experience. At this point, however, let us attend briefly to the second argument that Kant employs. Unlike the first argument, which starts from the notion of objective time-determination, Kant's second argument begins from the idea of causality itself. Kant believes that in our everyday practice, we take causality to be a necessary and universal feature of experience; this is simply part of our ordinary phenomenology. Given this view of causality to which we ordinarily adhere, Kant asks, how must causality be rationally derived or grounded in order to account for such a view? Referring to empiricists such as Hume, Kant writes that one might be tempted to think that

it is only through the perception and comparison of sequences of many occurrences on preceding appearances that we are led to discover a rule, in accordance with which certain occurrences always follow certain appearances, and are thereby first prompted to form the concept of cause. (308)

Such empiricists would, in other words, contend that we form the concept of causality based upon the constant conjunction of objects: we perceive that X always follows Y, and so we come to believe that Y must cause X. But, as Kant continues to say, on such an empirical footing "this concept [of cause] would be merely empirical . . . Its universality and necessity would then be merely feigned, and would have no true universal validity, since they would not be grounded *a priori* but only on induction" (308). Here Kant makes two points. First, causality that is empirically derived would not be necessary, but at most only probabilistic. Second, if it were not necessary, then causality could not be universal. Even if we could know (*per*

impossibile) that A caused B in the past, we would have no reason (other than the force of habit) for thinking that A would do so in the future.

In contrast to this empirical view, Kant maintains that only by taking causality as something that is applied to perception a priori can we make sense of causality as necessary and universal. For only what is a priori can be necessary (and not simply contingent or probabilistic), and only that which structures experience itself can be universal: what structures experience must structure *every* experience. This line of thought leads Kant to write in the introduction to the *Critique* that “necessity and strict universality are therefore secure indications of an *a priori* cognition” (137). Since our everyday conception of causality is necessary and universal, and since such necessity and universality are signs of the a priori, causality must logically be a priori. To say that causality is merely an empirically derived notion would be to falsify our actual understanding and use of the notion of causality—that is, to deny that it is necessary and universal. Causality must therefore be a priori. But if it is indeed a priori, causality can for that reason be justified and knowable. We can therefore be certain that we are employing causality legitimately in describing objects of experience. This is, in brief, Kant’s second argument. But what are we to make of it?

VI. Problems with the Second Argument

To be sure, one upside of this argument is that it does not rely on as lengthy a chain of inferences as Kant’s first argument in the Second Analogy. The transcendental argument involved here is succinct. Nevertheless, at least two problems arise. First, while Kant simply assumes that our ordinary idea of causality possesses the qualities of necessity and universality, a skeptical empiricist like Hume might call this assumption into question. Such a skeptic could contend either that our notion of causality is not necessary but rather probabilistic, or, more minimally, that we each have different and conflicting ideas of what causality is (some taking it to be necessary, others contingent, and so on). It is a challenging task for Kant to demonstrate conclusively that our concept of causality is as he thinks it is. And in regards to this task, it is not so much that Kant goes awry or gives a patently false answer; it is rather that he simply fails to undertake the task at all. He furnishes little reason for why his conception of causality is superior to other (say, more probabilistic) conceptions.

Second, even if our notion of causality were universal and necessary, Kant does not offer any reason for believing why necessity is always the sign of the a priori. On the contrary, we could quite easily assert, with Hume, that our common idea of causality is, in fact, the product of habit and custom rather than the product of reason. It is difficult to see how we

could derive the objective nature of causality merely from our subjective conception of it other than by means of “a *non sequitur* of numbing grossness,” to borrow Strawson’s phrase (85). Indeed, in this second argument, Kant gives little indication of how he might resolve this issue. His first argument, however, does seem to provide a way in which to stave off the threat of Humean skepticism. For according to that argument, his response to Hume would be that, since to speak of any objective succession of events at all (even to call such events’ natures or relationships into question, as Hume does with the causal relations of billiard balls) already presupposes the notion of objective causality (as was shown earlier), causality *ex hypothesi* cannot be merely probabilistic. However successful this first line of reasoning is, however, it is clear that Kant’s second argument for causality proves to be quite groundless. It establishes its conclusion only on the basis of several highly controversial and contentious premises that the skeptic might simply reject.

VII. Conclusion

From the philosophical considerations in this paper, the scope and structure of Kant’s arguments in the Second Analogy have become clear. Having outlined the way in which the arguments on causality cohere with the rest of the first *Critique*, we have seen how Kant attempts to use two distinct arguments to ground the objectivity of experience in the law of causality. While these arguments each have strengths, what have also emerged in the course of this paper are the deep problems that beset Kant’s reasoning. In light of these problems, it has become evident that Kant ultimately fails to ground the objectivity of experience in the principle of cause and effect. The problem with Kant’s arguments is not so much that they are incorrect or rest upon demonstrably false claims, but rather that they underdetermine their conclusions. Had Kant perhaps written more in the *Critique*, or had he elaborated upon and clarified his unique positions, we might justifiably say that he had secured the objectivity of causality against the skeptics. But as it stands, it seems that despite his impressive efforts, Kant did not achieve the aims that he set out to accomplish in the Second Analogy.

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