

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

SCHEMATISM  
& THE SECOND ANALOGY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR PHIL 526: KANT  
THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

BY  
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DEKALB, IL  
3 NOVEMBER 2009

## SCHEMATISM & THE SECOND ANALOGY

### The Schematism

Throughout his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant seeks to emphasize the proper limits of the mind's faculties in their employment toward the acquisition of knowledge. What all along motivates this project is the conviction that, when the employment of each faculty is properly restricted to its respective domain, we will finally, and for the first time, be able to claim scientific validity for their products.<sup>1</sup> In his effort, then, to discover those boundaries of our faculties outside of which the pursuit of knowledge becomes futile, Kant isolates precisely three faculties – sensibility (corresponding to perceptions), the understanding (...to concepts), and reason (...to ideas) – to which all possible knowledge corresponds. Later sections of the *Critique* are devoted to the task of delineating precisely where these natural boundaries lie which separate our faculties, and determining the particular field of knowledge to which each specifically relates.

But from this segregated model of the mind's faculties, however, arises a practical dilemma: If every field of possible knowledge is the exclusive domain of a single faculty, how do any two faculties cooperate to yield a single unified experience? In regard to the faculties of

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<sup>1</sup> See preface to second edition.

sensibility and the understanding, the question may be posed, ‘How is the subsumption of perceptions under pure concepts, the application of a category to appearances, possible?’<sup>2</sup>

The Schematism is Kant’s response to this particular formulation of the dilemma, in which he discusses how the sensible and the conceptual relate to one another.<sup>3</sup> One commentary presents the situation as follows:

In order for a concept to get a grip on an object given in intuition, there must be something in the concept which is capable of being represented in intuition – concepts must be such that it is possible for intuitions to conform to them. And the problem is that the categories, as they stand, are too abstract for this condition to be met: they are ‘quite heterogeneous’ from sensible intuition... [So] far in our transcendental theory of experience, we have no idea of what it would be for our experience to exhibit ‘becauseness’: it is not yet intelligible that this purely intellectual relation should be sensibly intuited, or contained in appearance... [We] have as yet no notion of what the sensible instantiation of a pure concept could amount to. Concepts must, therefore, be brought somehow closer to intuition, if objects of intuition are to be able to assume conceptual form... The solution, Kant suggests, is to assume ‘some third thing’, which is homogenous with both the categories and intuition or appearance. This ‘mediating representation’ must be in one respect intellectual, and in another sensible.<sup>4</sup>

There are, of course, difficulties involved in introducing a not-wholly-sensible, not-wholly-intellectual entity to bridge the gap between the two respective faculties, and the discussion over precisely how the schemata are supposed to fit within the larger framework of Kant’s system remains a controversial one.<sup>5</sup> The most immediate obstacle for Kant in the

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<sup>2</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, unabridged ed., translated by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1929), 180.

<sup>3</sup> “Schematism is the process by which schemata are generated and conjoined with concepts. We may consequently speak of schematised and unschematised versions of concepts, i.e., concepts considered respectively in relation to, and apart from their schemata.” Sebastian Gardner, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to: Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 168.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 167.

<sup>5</sup> i.e. “Is a transcendental schema a *thought* about time, or is it *time* as thought in a certain way?...The cost of assimilation...in either direction, is to make [the schemata] apparently unfit for the designated mediating role: if they are either concepts with a special relation to intuition, or intuitions as formed conceptually, then they seem to

development of this element of the *Critique*, however, is identifying that particular feature of his system which might potentially serve this mediating function. It is ultimately by a process of elimination that Kant settles on *time* - i.e., thoughts about time, or time as thought in certain ways<sup>6</sup> - to occupy this privileged position.

### Transcendental Schemata as Determinations of Time

For Kant, time alone is of the appropriate nature to serve as mediator between the faculties of sensibility and the understanding, for time, as the dimension in which all our representations exist, is “the most general unifying condition of intuitions and concepts: all sensible objects are intuited in time, and all conceptual activity stands under the condition of self-consciousness, the objects of which are temporal.”<sup>7</sup> But, time is merely formal and cannot itself be perceived. “Something is needed, then, simply to make it *thinkable* that objects, as opposed to our representations, are in time.”<sup>8</sup> What is needed, in short, is an *image*: ‘a presentation of a concept to intuition’; and principles to govern the procedure such that it is consistent.<sup>9</sup> Such a function is performed, says Kant, through the cooperative effort the faculties of imagination and judgment.<sup>10</sup>

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presuppose the very possibility of connecting the sensible and the conceptual which transcendental Schematism is invoked to explain” (ibid, 170).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 168-69. “A transcendental schema, Kant proposes, consists in a ‘transcendental determination of time’, i.e., way of conceptualizing time. Kant’s claim, then, is that the categories gain application through being equated with, or realized in, thoughts about time, or time as thought in certain ways” (ibid, 168).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>9</sup> Howard Caygill, *The Blackwell Philosopher Dictionaries: A Kant Dictionary*, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1995), 245.

<sup>10</sup> “What is crucial here is that the productive imagination produces *original* representations, i.e. they are not derived from experience but provide conditions of experience, and they are furthermore not willful or accidental

The image is provided, specifically, by the *productive* imagination, a faculty of intuition which is capable of producing an original representation of an object prior to experience.

Curiously, this capacity to produce objectual representations is conceived by Kant to extend even to pure perceptions of space and time.<sup>11</sup> But what might a representation of pure space and time, which are merely *formal* conditions of possible experience, look like? Kant analyzes these two varieties of imaginative productions in terms of *pictorial representation* in space and *associative perception* in time.<sup>12</sup>

But schemata, as introduced in the previous section, differ from mere images in certain essential regards. As one point of distinction, by Kant's account, the schemata are *presupposed* for the generation of images. As he writes, "The schema of sensible concepts, such as figures in space, is a product and, as it were, a monogram, of pure a priori imagination, through which, and in accordance with which, images themselves first become possible."<sup>13</sup> Furthermore,

Kant characterizes [the schemata] as methods or procedures, in opposition to the empiricist tendency to model concept application in pictorial [terms, and it] is they, not images, which facilitate the subsumption of objects under concepts...Thus on Kant's account, concept application in general, inclusive of empirical concepts, rest on schemata.<sup>14</sup>

The schemata which concern our present discussion are those specifically associated with the categories: those which Kant terms *transcendental schemata*. It is these which Kant relates in

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(this constitutes 'fantasy') but ordered" (ibid, 248). Judgment, respectively, is 'the faculty of subsuming under rules', and cooperates with the imagination in the relating of image to concept (ibid, 268).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 247-48.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 248.

<sup>13</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, 183.

<sup>14</sup> *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook*, 168.

terms of determinations of time, i.e. ways of conceptualizing time.<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, this idea will be explicated in the Analogies, where Kant applies his notion of transcendental schemata to deal with the question: “How is it possible for us to represent objects as being in time, in a sense which transcends the temporality of our representations?”<sup>16</sup>

### **The Second Analogy**

The analogies are a group of three principles which govern the objective employment of the three categories of relation: substance, causality, and community. Kant’s purpose in this section of the *Critique*, then, is to demonstrate how these relational categories (substance, causality, and community) relate to natural correlates in the temporal schema (namely, duration, succession, and simultaneity, respectively) to serve a transcendental function (i.e., enable experience).<sup>17</sup> The schemata derived from each conjunction are as follows:

The schema of substance is permanence of the real in time, that is, the representation of the real as a substrate of empirical determination of time in general, and so as abiding while all else changes...The schema of cause, and of the causality of a thing in general, is the real upon which, whenever posited, something else always follows. It consists, therefore, in the succession of the manifold, in so far as that succession is subject to a rule. The schema of community or reciprocity, the reciprocal causality of substances in respect of their accidents, is the co-existence, according to a universal rule, or the determinations of the one substance with those of the other.<sup>18</sup>

Equipped with these definitions, Kant proceeds to provide illustrations of these principles in experience. To demonstrate this point, I will focus on the second of the three analogies, which

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 171.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, 184-85.

aims to establish the principle of causality: “all alterations take place in conformity with the law of connection of cause and effect – i.e., every event must have a cause.”<sup>19</sup>

The purpose of the schemata being to demonstrate how it might be possible to represent *objects* in time (that is, in a sense which goes beyond the mere temporality of our representations), Kant endeavors in the second analogy to show how a distinction can be made between the temporal order of our representations and the temporal order of objects.<sup>20</sup> Such a distinction would allow us to think of objects as distinct from our representations of them.<sup>21</sup> In his first illustration, then, of a stationary house (the representation of which in apprehension is nonetheless successive), Kant is demonstrating how the mere succession of perceptions upon one another is insufficient to establish the principle of causality.<sup>22</sup>

This segues into a second illustration, in which Kant describes the experience of watching a ship moving down a stream. In this instance, in contrast to the former, Kant notes that the order in which his perceptions succeed one another in apprehension is determined, and that ‘to this order apprehension is bound’.<sup>23</sup> Such experiences are termed *happenings*, or *events*, and are

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<sup>19</sup> *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook*, 174.

<sup>20</sup> “[We] need to be able to form the idea of an objective time-order, in which objects exist with determinate temporal locations, as distinct from the merely subjective time order in which our representations succeed one another...Experience of objective change, i.e. of the world as changing, as opposed merely to merely oneself or one’s representations changing, is necessary for experience of an objective time-order, and...the distinction between change occurring in our representations, and change occurring in an objective world, can be made only by employing the concept or causality” (*Routledge Philosophy Guidebook*, 172, 175).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 171-72.

<sup>22</sup> “Since truth consists in the agreement of knowledge with the object, it will at once be seen that we here enquire only regarding the formal conditions of empirical truth, and that appearance, in contradistinction to the representations of apprehension, can be represented as an object distinct from them only if it stands under a rule which distinguishes it from every other apprehension and necessitates some one particular mode of connection of the manifold. The object is *that* in the appearance which contains the condition of this necessary rule of apprehension” (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 220).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 221.

distinguished from other apprehensions in that they stand under rules which necessitate some one particular mode of connection of their manifold.<sup>24</sup> As he explains,

[In] an appearance which contains a happening (the preceding state of the perception we may entitle A, and the succeeding B) B can be apprehended only as following upon A; the perception A cannot follow upon B but only precede it. For instance, I see a ship move down a stream. My perception of its lower position follows upon the perception of its position higher up in the stream, and it is impossible that in the apprehension of this appearance the ship should first be perceived lower down in the stream and afterwards higher up...In the previous example of a house my perceptions could begin with the apprehension of the roof and end with the basement, or could begin from below and end above...In the series of these perceptions there was thus no determinate order specifying at what point I must begin in order to connect the manifold empirically. But in the perception of an event there is always a rule that makes the order in which the perceptions (in the apprehension of this appearance) follow upon one another a *necessary* order.<sup>25</sup>

The concept of a necessary and irreversible succession is, on Kant's account, the very concept of a causal relation. The ship illustration, then, "exemplifies causality in so far as [its] state at one moment is causally dependent on its state at the immediately preceding moment."<sup>26</sup>

Kant opened the Analogies with the following declaration as to their general principle: "Experience is possible only through the representation of a necessary connection of perceptions."<sup>27</sup> Having thus discovered to the reader the principles by which the categories of the understanding (in particular, the three relational categories of substance, causality, and community) can be employed objectively in experience, Kant feels he has accomplished what he set out to establish regarding the transcendental function of the schemata.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 220.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 221.

<sup>26</sup> *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook*, 175.

<sup>27</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, 208.



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