

Kant's Response to the Problem of Induction

by

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A Thesis

In

PHILOSOPHY

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of Texas Tech University in
Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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August 2008

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Abstract

In this paper, I examine Immanuel Kant's response to David Hume's problem of induction. I pay particular attention to Kant's main writings on causation: the Second Analogy in *The Critique of Pure Reason* and the Introduction to *The Critique of Judgment*. I agree with Paul Guyer that Kant does not provide a solution to the problem in the *Critique of Reason*. I disagree with Guyer, however, that Kant also does not provide a solution in the *Critique of Judgment*: whereas Guyer concludes that Kant tells us that we merely *assume* – and cannot prove - that induction is justified, I conclude that Kant argues for an externalist justification of induction.

Chapter I

Introduction

In this paper, I will examine Kant's solution to Hume's problem of induction. In particular, I will examine Kant's treatment of causation, and how it would allow us to be justified in our causal – and hence inductive – inferences. In the first section, I will share Paul Guyer's interpretation of the Second Analogy of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. In that section, I will argue that although Kant was successful in establishing a causal law, he does not yet give a solution to the problem of induction, since he does not tell us how we may know the necessity of particular causal laws. In the second section, I will look at the Introduction to *The Critique of Judgment*. There I will argue that Kant further develops his views on particular causal laws, though he does not – at first glance – seem to explain how we may know the necessity of those laws and so resolve the problem of induction. Finally, in the third section, in order to resolve a paradox in the *Judgment*, I will put forward the controversial thesis that Kant had given an externalist response to the problem of induction. My task in the third section is not to defend an externalist justification of induction as correct, but I only want to defend that such a reading of Kant is plausible as a response to Hume.

Chapter II

The Causal Law in the Second Analogy

Guyer points out that Kant begins with two premises. The first is that we may distinguish between “unchanging objects” and “changes in objects”, or as Guyer puts it again, we may distinguish between objects (that do not change) and events (which involve a change to an object).¹ Kant reveals this assumption in the Second Analogy when he discusses the perceptual experience of a house. We may, for instance, walk around the house so that we see the front, side, back, and other side in that order. Our mind – or in Kant’s language, our “understanding” - puts together this series of perceptions of the house. Kant refers to perceptions as “apprehensions,” and he refers to phenomenal objects – as opposed to noumenal things-in-themselves – as appearances: “the apprehension of the manifold in the appearance of a house which stands before me is successive.” But he states further that, even though our perceptions of the house fall into a sequence, we know that the appearances – the phenomenal house - do not exist in that sort of sequence: “The question then arises, whether the manifold of the house is also in itself successive. This, however, is what no one will grant.”² To say it again: even though we experience the house in a series of perceptions, and those perceptions are changing, we clearly know that the house is not itself changing. We know, in other words, that the house is an object and not an event.

¹ *Knowledge, Reason, and Taste: Kant's Response to Hume*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2008. (Henceforth: *KRT*.) P. 109.

² *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Norman K. Smith. New York: Macmillan P, 1978. (Henceforth: *CPR*.) P. 220. A 190/B 235

We have already alluded to Kant's second premise: in Guyer's language, "we experience the objects by means of a temporally extended sequence of representations of them."³ We do not view the entire house all at once, but rather we perceive different parts of it over time. Kant states this premise clearly, at least for Kant: "The apprehension of the manifold of appearance is always successive."⁴

Guyer shows that Hume would accept Kant's first assumption: that we may distinguish between objects and events. Guyer points us to the following passage: "Suppose a person, though endowed with the strongest faculties of reason and reflection, to be brought on a sudden into this world; he would, indeed, immediately observe a continual succession of *objects*, and one *event* following another."⁵ Guyer could equally have quoted this phrase: "Suppose, again, that [the person who was brought into the world] has acquired more experience, and has lived so long in the world as to have observed familiar *objects* or *events*."⁶

Hume would also appear to accept Kant's second assumption: that we experience objects in a series of representations over time. Hume uses the word 'impressions' instead of representations, and he includes with it any perception, emotion, or desire: "Let us... call them *Impressions*; employing that word in a sense somewhat different from the usual. By the term impression, then, I mean all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will."⁷ We may, for our purposes,

³ *KRT*. P. 109.

⁴ *CPR*. P. 219. A 189/B 234

⁵ Emphasis added. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding. Modern Philosophy*. Ed. Forrest E. Baird and Walter Kaufmann. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003. (Henceforth: *Enquiry*.) P. 367.

⁶ Emphasis added. *Enquiry*. P. 367.

⁷ *Enquiry*. P. 356.

disregard his mention of emotions and desires, and accept that the perceptual aspect of impressions is akin to Kant's representations.

We have seen that Kant assumes that we are able to distinguish between an event and an object, and that we perceive either an event or an object in a series of representations of that object or event. What remains to be shown is how we are actually able to distinguish between events and objects. Kant brings up the notion of irreversibility, and it is tempting – though incorrect- to say that it is this that explains how we differentiate an object and an event: that only an event is irreversible. Our experience of something is irreversible if we could not have that experience in another order of representations. Let us consider Kant's example of an event, where we see a ship move downstream. If we oversimplify and say that we have only two representations of the ship moving downstream, we must experience the ship moving downstream in the order upriver, downriver and not the reverse. Our experience, however, of an object is not irreversible. It matters not whether I first perceive the front of a house or the back of a house: a house may be perceived in any order whatsoever.

As Guyer admonishes us, the purported irreversibility of an experience is itself not enough for us to differentiate objects and events, for we may always conceive of an experience as happening in an order other than it did. We could easily, for instance, think of the ship as having been first downstream and then upstream. We could further illustrate this point by saying that we could imagine a light turning off before we hit the switch or a bullet entering backwards into a gun after it were fired. Even if we were to think of the ship traveling upstream to downstream as one event and downstream to upstream as another event, the original objection still stands: there is nothing inherent in

the experience of any event to prevent us from thinking that it could happen in an order other than it did. Kant himself, as Guyer tells us, acknowledges that we may always conceive of an event as being reversible: “imagination can connect these two states in two ways, so that either the one or the other precedes in time. For time cannot be perceived in itself, and what precedes and what follows cannot, therefore, by relation to it, be empirically determined in the object.”⁸

Guyer also reminds us that we cannot appeal directly to the object or events themselves to determine whether the experience of them would be irreversible. Kant has already postulated that our experience of objects and events is through a series of representations of them stretched out over time. There is no way, then, to talk about the nature of the objects or events themselves as uncolored by our experiences of them.

We need a reason for which the experience of an event is irreversible, aside from either an appeal to the order of our experience of that event or an appeal to the nature of the event in itself. The reason Kant gives us is what he calls a “rule”, and it establishes that our subjective sequence of perceptions – “apprehensions” - actually follows the objective sequence of “appearances” – the constituents of the event: “In this case, therefore, we must derive the *subjective succession* of apprehension from the *objective succession* of appearances.”⁹ And not only do our sequences of perceptions follow the sequences of appearances, but they do so *necessarily*: “in the perception of an event there is always a rule that makes the order in which the perceptions... follow upon one another

⁸ CPR. P. 218-9. B233.

⁹ CPR. P. 221. A 193/ B 238.

a *necessary* order.”¹⁰ This rule is none other than a *causal law*. Kant sums up his rule in this sentence:

Thus the relations of appearances (as possible perceptions) according to which the subsequent event, that which happens, as to its existence, necessarily determined in time by something proceeding in conformity with a rule – in other words, the relation of cause to effect – is the condition of the objective validity of our empirical judgments... that is to say, it is the condition of experience.¹¹

Thus we have seen that this rule makes our sequence of perceptions necessarily follow the sequence of the appearances and that this rule is none other than a causal law, connecting one occurrence to another. But we need to investigate more thoroughly why Kant believes this causal law to be “the condition of experience.” It should at least be clear that it is an alternative to both the irreversibility of experience and an appeal to phenomenal objects *sans* perception. Let us examine Kant’s proof.

Kant gives us a *reductio ad absurdum*: if there were no causal law, it would follow that there would be no coherent experience. We could not, in other words, experience objects or events *at all*. I quote Kant at length:

Let us suppose that there is nothing antecedent to an event, upon which it must follow according to a rule. All succession of perception would then be only in the apprehension, that is, would be merely subjective, and would never enable us to determine objectively which perceptions are those that really precede and which are those that follow. We should then have only a play of representations, relating to no object; that is to say, it would not be possible through our perception to distinguish one appearance from another as regards relations of time. For the succession in our apprehension would always be one and the same, and there would be nothing in the appearance which so determines it that a certain sequence is rendered objectively necessary. I could not then assert that two states follow upon one another in the [field of] appearance, but only that one apprehension follows upon the other. That is something merely

¹⁰ *CPR*. P. 221.

¹¹ *CPR*. P. 227. A 202/ B 247.

subjective, determining no object; and may not, therefore, be regarded as knowledge of any object, not even of an object in the [field of] appearance.¹²

What Kant is saying is this: if there were no necessary causal connections between the appearances that comprise an event, these appearances would seem to us unrelated, and we could not identify them as making up an event. But the problem is even deeper: if we could not identify an event, we could not distinguish it from an object. And so, if we did not have a causal law to give us necessary connections between the appearances of an event, then we could not even really experience an object. Our experience would be unordered.

Finally, I would like to mention one more thing about Kant's causal law before proceeding to the next section. We have already seen that the causal law necessarily connects one appearance to another, so that the succeeding appearance follows the preceding: "the appearances of past time determine all existences in the succeeding time, and... these latter, as events, can take place only in so far as the appearances of past time determine their existence in time, that is, according to a rule."¹³ When Kant says that the "appearances of past time determine all existences in the succeeding time," he is not stating that cause X always results in effect Y, or "same cause, same effect." Rather, he is saying that every appearance is caused by a preceding appearance, or "every event has a cause." As Guyer points out, this causal law is general. According to Guyer, Kant's general causal law, "works by assuming that we can always know whether some particular alteration has occurred [i.e., an event] and then arguing that we can do so only

¹² *CPR*. P. 222-3. A 194-5/ B 239-40.

¹³ *CPR*. P. 225. A 199/ B 244.

by inferring that such an alteration *must* have occurred in accordance with some particular causal law.”¹⁴ Guyer revisits the example of a ship moving downstream¹⁵: we know that an event has occurred, because there was a change in the position of the object, the ship. The causal law allows us to make the determination that there was an event, because the appearance “ship upstream” preceded “ship upstream,” and this sequence of appearances must have occurred in accordance with a rule – the causal law that tells us “ship upstream” somehow causes “ship downstream.” What the causal law does not tell us is exactly how the state of affairs “ship upstream” would cause the state of affairs “ship downstream.” For this, we need to consult particular causal laws, “because particular laws of nature tell us that under the prevailing conditions of wind, current, and so on, [the ship] could have done nothing else.”¹⁶ For Guyer, this proves that Kant, in the Second Analogy, was not able to answer the problem of induction: though Kant has proven that we must have a general causal law to be able to identify an event, Kant does not tell us how we come to knowledge of individual causal laws. Remember, Kant’s general causal law tells us, “every event has a cause,” but it does not tell us, “same effect, same cause.” It falls short of giving us a basis for saying that if X caused Y, X will *always* cause Y.

But though Kant may not solve the problem of induction in the Second Analogy, Kant does again address general laws of nature – such as the causal law – and particular laws of nature, which would include particular causal laws, such as those pertaining to

¹⁴ *KRT*. P. 113.

¹⁵ *KRT*. P. 113.

¹⁶ *KRT*. P. 113.

the effects of wind and current on a ship. I will now turn to Kant's treatment of these laws in the *Critique of Judgment*.

Chapter III

The Causal Law in the *Critique of Judgment*

Unsurprisingly, in the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant discusses the faculty of judgment. He defines it as, “the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the universal.”¹⁷ By ‘universal’, Kant here is referring to universal laws. Kant includes among universal laws the *a priori* laws established by transcendental deduction, or, in other words, the categories without which we could not experience. ‘Particular’, then, refers to particular laws, which are not established *a priori*. Kant marks out two different kinds of judgment: one which deals with universal laws – “determinant judgment”- and one which deals with particular laws – “reflective judgment.” If we know the universal law – that is, if we know the law *a priori* – then we are using our determinant judgment: “If the universal (the rule, principle or law) is given, then the judgment which subsumes the particular under it is determinant.”¹⁸ We are using our determinant judgment, for example, when we are applying the causal law. If we know only the particular law – and not the universal – then we are using our reflective judgment: “If, however, only the particular is given and the universal has to be found for it, then the judgment is simply reflective.”¹⁹ We use our reflective judgment, for example, when we are applying a particular causal law: say, that the wind moves a ship downstream under conditions X, Y, Z.

¹⁷ *The Critique of Judgment*. Trans. James C. Meredith. 2004. EBooks@Adelaide. 25 June 2008 <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/k/kant/immanuel/k16j/>. (Henceforth: *Judgment*.) P. 8.

¹⁸ *Judgment*. P. 8.

¹⁹ *Judgment*. P. 8.

As Guyer mentions, and what should be obvious by now, is that universal laws do not tell us the content of particular laws.²⁰ Another way of putting this is that the determinant judgment tells us nothing about particular laws. For example, when we apply the determinant judgment to the universal law of causation, every event has a cause, it does not tell us anything about particular causal laws such as that wind moves a ship downstream under conditions X, Y, Z. Kant puts it this way: “there are such manifold forms of nature, so many modifications, as it were, of the universal transcendental concepts of nature, left undetermined by the laws furnished by pure understanding *a priori*.”²¹ Since we do not know particular laws *a priori*, we must come to them empirically. But not only do universal laws tell us nothing about particular laws, universal laws tell us nothing about the necessity of particulars: “empirical laws... are contingent so far as our insight goes.”²² The law about the wind’s effects on a ship moving downstream, for example, is only contingent.

Actually, it is an oversimplification to say that particular laws are only contingent. Viewed from the determinant judgment or the understanding, particular laws are not necessary, since they are not *a priori*. However, when viewed from the reflective judgment, these particular laws are given necessity. Our reflective judgment presupposes necessity of particular laws, whereas the determinant judgment does not. Likewise, the understanding, our cognitive faculty which deals with the *a priori* categories, also does not see particular laws as necessary: “This adaptation of nature to our cognitive abilities is presupposed *a priori* by judgment on behalf of its reflection upon it according to

²⁰ *KRT*. P. 117.

²¹ *Judgment*. P. 8.

²² *Judgment*. P. 11.

empirical laws. But understanding all the while recognizes it objectively as contingent, and it is merely judgment that attributes to it [necessity].”²³

But we are not merely living a lie when our reflective judgment gives particular laws a kind of necessity. Kant tells us that there is no way we would be able to have any structured experience about nature without the necessity imparted by our reflective judgment:

let us bethink ourselves the magnitude of the task. We have to form a connected experience from given perceptions of a nature containing a maybe endless multiplicity of empirical laws, and this problem has its seat *a priori* in our understanding. This understanding is no doubt *a priori* in possession of universal laws of nature, apart from which nature would be incapable of being an object of experience at all. But over and above this it needs a certain order of nature in its particular rules which are only capable of being brought to its knowledge empirically, and which, so far as it is concerned are contingent. These rules, without which we would have no means of advance from the universal analogy of a possible experience in general to a particular, must be regarded by understanding as laws, i.e., as necessary – for otherwise they would not form an order of nature – though it be unable to cognize or ever get an insight into their necessity. Albeit, then, it can determine nothing *a priori* in respect of these [objects], it must, in pursuit of such empirical so-called laws, lay at the basis of all reflection upon them an *a priori* principle, to the effect, namely, that a cognizable order of nature is possible according to them.²⁴

The categories in the understanding – the universal *a priori* laws of nature – allow us to have the possibility of experience. We have already seen in the Second Analogy, for example, that it would not be possible to have a coherent experience without the causal law. However, the categories only give us *possible* experience: in order to have actual experience, we need content to that experience. This content is filled in by particular laws of nature: laws of gravity, aerodynamics, etc. But though these particular laws of

²³ *Judgment*. P. 13.

²⁴ *Judgment*. P. 13.

nature are not known to us *a priori*, we nonetheless have to regard them as necessary. Kant continues: “For, were it not for this presupposition, we should have no order of nature in accordance with empirical laws, and, consequently, no guiding-thread for an experience that has to be brought to bear upon these in all their variety, or an investigation of them.”²⁵ Without the “guiding-thread” of an assumed necessity of natural laws, we would not be able to conduct an investigation of nature, if we did not think that particular events behaved according to permanent natural laws that we could extract from the behavior of these particular events.

We have seen Kant’s reasons for which he says the reflective judgment imparts a kind of necessity to particular natural laws. We should mention one more thing about this function of the reflective judgment. Guyer avers that we can think of it as “only a *regulative* principle that we use to guide our investigation of nature, but not a *constitutive* principle that literally structures nature itself.”²⁶ We think of natural laws as necessary in order to investigate. However, we cannot therefore conclude that nature is in fact ordered by necessary natural laws.

This, according to Guyer, is Kant’s failure to resolve the problem of induction: we assume that there are necessary natural laws, but we cannot prove that is the case. Guyer laments,

Kant here, with the idea that the idea of the systematicity of the laws of nature is an idea that we prescribe only to our selves and not to nature, an idea that we use to guide our investigation of nature as it really is, seems instead to give up on the task of answering what he had identified as the most serious problem on Hume’s account.²⁷

²⁵ *Judgment*. P. 13.

²⁶ *KRT*. P. 119.

²⁷ *KRT*. P. 119-20.

On the one hand, we may believe what Guyer's analysis is correct, and even adequately describes what Kant thought about the matter:

So when it is said that nature specifies its universal laws on a principle of finality for our cognitive faculties, i.e., of the suitability for the human understanding and its necessary function of finding the universal for the particular presented to it by perception...we do not thereby either prescribe a law to nature, or learn one from it by observation²⁸

Kant here seems to concede that although our reflective judgment assumes the necessity of particular causal laws, we do not know the necessity of these laws *a priori* or through empirical means. It seems, then, that we have no real knowledge of natural laws at all.

However, Kant adds the following: "we must investigate [nature's] empirical laws throughout on that principle" – the principle being that our reflective judgment imparts necessity to natural laws – "because only so far as that principle applies can we make any headway in the employment of our understanding in experience, *or gain knowledge.*"²⁹

Kant is stating a paradox: on the one hand, we have no *a priori* or empirical knowledge of the necessity of natural laws; but on the other hand, he says that we can gain knowledge – presumably, of natural laws. In the next section, I will argue that Kant is distinguishing between two different kinds of justification. He concedes that we cannot have an internalist justification of induction, but he argues that we can be justified in our inductive inferences from an externalist perspective.

²⁸ *Judgment*. P. 14.

²⁹ Emphasis added. *Judgment*. P. 14.

Chapter IV

Kant's Externalist Solution to the Problem of Induction

Let us look at Hume's problem of induction.³⁰ Hume avers that there are two sorts of reasoning processes: "demonstrative reasoning, or that concerning relations of ideas, and moral reasoning, or that concerning matter of fact and existence."³¹

Demonstrative reasoning concerns itself with abstract ideas, such as that found in mathematics, and is essentially limited to identifying self-evident propositions and deriving theorems from them. Demonstrative reasoning is completely *a priori*, and so it has no true empirical content: "Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe."³² What Hume calls "moral reasoning" is not normative reasoning about the rightness or wrongness of actions, duties, etc. – at least insofar as he is using it here. Rather, moral reasoning refers to *a posteriori* reasoning, or reasoning about the perceivable world – and not unperceivable, abstract ideas.

So here is the problem: let us say that we are making the following simple inductive inference:

1. In the past, all As are Fs.

C. In the future, all As are Fs.

This argument, Hume points out, is invalid without the addition of another premise, something to indicate that the future will resemble the past:

³⁰ The core argument is found in *Enquiry*, Section IV, Part II. P. 364-6.

³¹ *Enquiry*. P. 364.

³² *Enquiry*. P. 359.

2. If in the past, all As are Fs, then in the future, all As are Fs.

But we need to establish this premise somehow. We have two choices, according to Hume: we may make an appeal to *a priori* demonstrative reasoning or to *a posteriori* moral reasoning. The premise cannot be established *a priori* by demonstrative reasoning, for there is nothing about the premise that is self-evident. We turn then to *a posteriori* reasoning, but that cannot give us the premise either. *A posteriori* reasoning relies only on experience, so we would be relying on past experience to establish what the future would be like. An *a posteriori* justification of the second premise would look something like this, where t1 precedes t2:

In the past at t1, an A was F.

And, in the past at t2, an A was F.

Therefore, if in the past, all As were Fs, then in the future, all As are Fs.

This obviously is invalid: the repeated observations of all As as Fs in the past tells us nothing about whether all As are to be Fs in the future. The *a posteriori* justification of our second premise is not altogether different from the original problem: both need the justification of the principle that the future will resemble the past.

It is obviously difficult to resist Hume's claim that we cannot justify induction. However, by focusing on causation, Kant took a different approach to the problem. All forms of inductive reasoning are, at base, arguments concerning causation. We could easily render any of our above statements in our inductive argument to reflect causation:

All As are Fs

could become

All As are the causes of X.

or even

All As are things that are caused by X.

But to further demonstrate that any inductive argument may be turned into a causal argument, consider the following example of a generalization:

In the past, all humans with extra chromosomes are persons with Down syndrome.

Therefore, in the future, all humans with extra chromosomes are persons with Down syndrome.

But since the extra chromosome *causes* Down Syndrome, the argument may be rewritten this way:

In the past, all extra chromosomes are things that cause Down syndrome.

Therefore, in the future, all extra chromosomes are things that cause Down syndrome.

Similar modifications could be made to any inductive inference to reflect its causal nature. If we could be justified in causal inferences, we would be justified in our inductive inferences.

Let us reformulate the problem of induction in causal terms:

1. In the past, all As are things that cause B.

C. Therefore, in the future, all As are things that cause B.

Again, we need a second premise in order for the argument to be valid:

2. If in the past, all As are things that cause B, then in the future, all As are things that cause B.

As we have seen, this is the principle that the future resembles the past – or, since we are dealing with causation, it is the principle of “same cause, same effect”. As we have seen, however, Kant’s general causal law, as stated in the Second Analogy, does not give us the principle of same cause, same effect, but rather, “every event must have a cause.” The principle that every event must have a cause does not necessitate that all As cause B. It only necessitates that *something* causes B. Thus, as far as the Second Analogy goes, Kant does not solve the problem of induction. Kant does resume his discussion of causation in his final *Critique*. In the *Critique of Judgment*, we may have hoped to have found a way by which we were justified in determining that premise 2 was necessary, at least for some given A. Instead, Kant assures us only that we assume the truth of premise 2, because otherwise we could not make inquiries into the natural world. Guyer believes that Kant essentially gives up on trying to solve the problem.

But if Guyer is right, then we have a textual problem in Kant. As quoted before, he says that by the fact that the reflective judgment assumes the necessity of particular causal laws we “do not thereby either prescribe a law to nature, or learn one from it by observation.”³³ Yet he also says that it is the only way by which we “gain knowledge.”³⁴ Either Kant is contradicting himself within the space of a few lines, or he is making a distinction between two kinds of epistemic justification that we may use to gain knowledge about the phenomenal world. I believe that if we make a distinction between internalist and externalist justification, we may show what Kant had in mind.

³³ *Judgment*. P. 14.

³⁴ *Judgment*. P. 14.

Defining the difference between internalist and externalist epistemological views has been a matter of no small controversy in the past.³⁵ However, I believe that the distinction I will make here will be sufficiently broad and uncontroversial enough to be accepted by most contemporary epistemologists. The internalist position argues that in order for a person to have knowledge, that person must know that he knows. ‘Knowing’ here means that he has a justified true belief, so the internalist maintains that someone has knowledge if and only if he has a justified true belief that he has a justified true belief that P. This position may be thought of as requiring two orders of justification: 1) that someone has the justified true belief that P, and 2) that someone has the justified true belief that he has the justified true belief that P. Let us look at an example: someone is driving their car, and he has the belief that his gas tank is half-full, deriving his belief from the fact that the gas gauge indicates that the gas tank is half-full. In this case, he has the belief that the gas tank is half-full. On some internalist accounts, we would say that his belief is justified, since he has evidence from the gas gauge that the gas tank is half-full. However, we do not know whether his justified belief is *true*. To determine whether it is true, he has to make some sort of confirmation: in other words, establish that he has a justified true belief that he has a justified true belief. In this case, he could make this confirmation by actually going out and measuring the gas tank. If it is shown to be half-full, then he has confirmation that he has a justified true belief, and he has knowledge that the gas tank is half-full. This confirmation – the ability to know that one has a justified belief – is always “internal” to the knower on the internalist’s view.

³⁵ See, for instance: Fumerton, Richard. "The Internalism/Externalism Controversy." *Philosophical Perspectives* 2 (1988): 443-459. JSTOR. Texas Tech University Library. 25 June 2008.

“Internal” can mean several different things, but it always means that the confirmation of one’s beliefs as true is *accessible* to the person.

The externalist, on the other hand, dismisses the idea that there are two levels of justification: he need only know in order to have knowledge. For the externalist, a person has knowledge if and only if he has a justified true belief. He does not need to confirm that his belief is indeed true and justified. Take our example of the man who believes that his gas tank is half-full based on what his gas gauge tells him. If the gas gauge correctly indicates the amount of gas in the tank, then he is justified. So as long as the person uses a method – any method – that gives him a true belief, he is justified in that belief. The reason that method gives a true belief is immaterial: it may even be “external” or *inaccessible* to the believer.

I want to argue that when Kant makes the distinction between, on the one hand, not knowing *a priori* or empirically that such-and-such is a law of nature, and on the other hand, assuming the necessity of such a law as the only way to gain knowledge, that he is distinguishing between internalist and externalist forms of justification. When Kant has shown us that we cannot know either *a priori* or empirically that any law of nature is necessary, he is referring to the fact that *from an internalist perspective* we cannot establish the necessity of natural laws. We are not able to confirm, in other words, that our belief is true: we do not know that we know a particular causal law is necessary. The confirmation for the truth of a belief generated by an inductive inference is premise 2 – same cause, same effect. Without such a premise, we do not know when we know. But on the other hand, Kant admits that we can know the necessity of particular causal laws – and not merely assume it – for he states that in the process of assuming the necessity of

causal laws, we are able to “gain knowledge.” On Kant’s view, I aver, we gain knowledge of causal laws through the process of the scientific method. By such a process, we are able to generate true beliefs about causal laws. We have no independent confirmation that our method is correct, as that confirmation is external to us, but, again, that explains why we may gain knowledge about the necessity of particular causes without knowing either *a priori* or empirically.

The view that Kant is an externalist about induction is a view that is likely to face many objections. One objection is this: Kant would surely have known that he could not have made an appeal to experience to justify induction. My reply is that Kant did not make an appeal to experience *per se*. Kant was not begging the question by stating that we could know that the future resembles the past, because in the past, the future resembled the past. Rather, he is saying that by diligent adherence to the scientific method, we are able to come to justified true beliefs. Certainly, the scientific model involves experience, but there is something about the method itself, as determined by factors that are inaccessible to us, that justifies our beliefs in the necessity of particular causal laws.

A second objection is this: Kant would likewise have known that he could not justify induction without first proving the absolute necessity of particular causal laws. Though Kant did not prove that we know *a priori* the necessity of individual causal laws, he did prove something that Hume did not: we know *a priori* that there is a causal law such that every event has a cause. There is, in other words, true causation. The mere fact that there is causation allows it to be *possible* that we correctly identify a necessary causal law – that we have a true belief about a necessary causal relationship. What

makes this true belief *justified* on Kant's view, I have argued, is that we have the scientific method.

A final objection is this: Kant would never have considered an externalist view, because it does not tell us for certain when we have knowledge. This, as I have said, is the nature of externalism: we do not know that we know. There is no confirmation that we know – there is only the true belief-producing method: in this case, the scientific method. But an externalist account may actually make more sense for inductive inferences. An inductive inference makes the argument that, if the premises are true, the conclusion is probably – but not certainly – true. In even the best inductive argument, there is always a tiny bit of uncertainty or doubt – the possibility that the conclusion does not follow from the premises. By giving induction an externalist justification, Kant has preserved this doubt, since we do not have any outside confirmation when we possess knowledge. One may counter my response with the reply that my interpretation of Kant leaves *too much* doubt. I would, on the other hand, say that the doubt we experience, on Kant's view, is not all that significant. Kant had already argued that we assume the necessity of particular causal laws. So, even though we may entertain doubts about whether particular causal laws are really necessary, our behavior will reflect the fact that we do not genuinely doubt whether they are so.

My point has not been to defend Kant's externalist view, but only to defend that it is plausible that Kant held such a view. To my thinking, it appears more consistent with Kant's character that he would try to give some justification for inductive inferences than that he would give up on the idea, as Guyer seems to think. Moreover, it seems

consistent with Kant's character that he would have argued for such a justification in a highly unconventional way.

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