

## Kant's Reply to Hume

### 1 The elasticity of air

Now before a judgment of experience can arise from a judgment of perception, it is first required: that the perception be subsumed under a concept of the understanding of this kind; e.g., the air belongs under the concept of cause, which determines the judgment about the air as hypothetical with respect to expansion.<sup>1</sup> This expansion is thereby represented not as belonging merely to my perception of the air in my state of perception or in several of my states or in the state of others, but as necessarily belonging to it, and the judgment: the air is elastic, becomes universally valid and thereby for the first time a judgment of experience, because certain judgments occur beforehand, which subsume the intuition of the air under the concept of cause and effect, and thereby determine the perceptions not merely with respect to each other in my subject, but with respect to the form of judging in general (here, the hypothetical), and in this way make the empirical judgment universally valid. (Kant [1783] 2002, 301/95) (page 739 in our textbook)

### 2 The Sun

For having a try at Hume's problematic concept (this, his *crux metaphysicorum*), namely the concept of cause, there is first given to me a priori, by means of logic: the form of a conditioned judgment in general, that is, the use of a given cognition as ground and another as consequent. It is, however, possible that in perception a rule of relation will be found, which says this: that a certain appearance is constantly followed by another (though not the reverse); and this is a case for me to use hypothetical judgment and, e.g., to say: If a body is illuminated by the sun for

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<sup>1</sup> To have a more easily understood example, consider the following: If the sun shines on the stone, it becomes warm. This judgment is a mere judgment of perception and contains no necessity, however often I and others also have perceived this; the perceptions are only usually found so conjoined. But if I say: the sun warms the stone, then beyond the perception is added the understanding's concept of cause, which connects necessarily the concept of sunshine with that of heat, and the synthetic judgment becomes necessarily universally valid, hence objective, and changes from a perception into experience.

long enough, then it becomes warm. Here there is of course not yet a necessity of connection, hence not yet the concept of cause. But I continue on, and say: if the above proposition, which is merely a subjective connection of perceptions, is to be a proposition of experience, then it must be regarded as necessarily and universally valid. But a proposition of this sort would be: The sun through its light is the cause of the warmth. The foregoing empirical rule is now regarded as a law, and indeed as valid not merely of appearances, but of them on behalf of a possible experience, which requires universally and therefore necessarily valid rules. I therefore have quite good insight into the concept of cause, as a concept that necessarily belongs to the mere form of experience, and into its possibility as a synthetic unification of perceptions in a consciousness in general; but I have no insight at all into the possibility of a thing in general as a cause, and that indeed because the concept of cause indicates a condition that in no way attaches to things, but only to experience, namely, that experience can be an objectively valid cognition of appearances and their sequence in time only insofar as the antecedent appearance can be connected with the subsequent one according to the rule of hypothetical judgments. (Kant [1783] 2002, 312/105) (pages 745-46 in our textbook)

## References

- Kant, Immanuel. (1783) 2002. "Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science." In *Theoretical Philosophy After 1781*, edited by Henry Allison and Peter Heath, translated by Gary Hatfield and Michael Friedman, 29-170. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.