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Henry Allison on Kant's First Analogy

Gregg Osborne

Washington and Jefferson College
Email: gosborne@washjeff.edu

Abstract

Henry Allison's interpretation of Kant's First Analogy is among the most intriguing in the literature. Its virtues are considerable, but no previous discussion has done full justice to them. Nor has any previous discussion systematically explored the most important challenges to which it seems subject. This paper does both. Early sections provide a more thorough exegesis than is otherwise available and provide stronger textual backing than does Allison himself. Later sections turn to problems, most of which have not been raised by others. These problems, while serious, do not necessarily rule out the interpretation of Allison.

Keywords: objective change; subjective change; substratum; alteration; relatively persistent; absolutely persistent; substance; Andrew Ward

1. Introduction

Kant's First Analogy remains an interpretative battleground. Most recent accounts fall into one of three camps.[1] According to the first, the crux of Kant's argument is that any case of arising *ex nihilo* or perishing *in nihilum* would destroy the empirical unity of time.[2] According to the second, it is an account of conditions under which alone we can *know* (as opposed to merely *believe*) that a change or succession that takes place in apprehension is objective.[3] According to the third, it is an account of conditions under which alone we can so much as *represent* a change or succession that takes place in apprehension *as* objective.[4]

The interpretation of Allison is especially intriguing and falls (at least mainly) into the third camp.[5] To the best of my knowledge, however, no discussion so far has either done justice to its strengths or systematically explored the most crucial objections to which it seems subject. My aim in this paper is to do both. In sections 2–4, I will identify problems with Allison's reading of a crucial paragraph, provide a more thorough exegesis of his interpretation than is otherwise available, and – in response to objections raised by Andrew Ward – provide stronger textual backing for it than he does. In sections 5–7, I will turn to apparent problems with the proof that Allison ascribes to Kant. These concern (a) its compatibility with Kant's subsequent attempt to prove the causal principle, (b) foundational claims about what we must do in order to represent an arising or perishing that takes place in apprehension as objective, (c) the reasoning by means of which Allison takes Kant to get from those claims to a crucial thesis about

objective changes themselves, and (d) the grounds on which Allison takes Kant to move from that thesis to a conclusion involving absolute persistence. The first of these problems has been pointed out by Ward, but Ward was apparently unaware of a possible solution already pioneered by Béatrice Longuenesse. As far as I know, the second, third and fourth have not been identified by others, at least in forms that render them applicable to the interpretation of Allison.

In my view, there is good textual reason to believe that the interpretation in question captures key elements of the argumentation on which Kant relies. My contention here, however, is not that it is correct, or even that it is the best interpretation developed so far. Any such contention would require equally detailed and rigorous examinations of its most impressive competitors.[6] A single paper does not afford scope for their inclusion.

2. Allison and the paragraph added to B

In support of his interpretation, Allison cites a paragraph added to the beginning of the First Analogy in the B edition of Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*.[7] For the sake of convenience, I will follow his procedure in the first edition of *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (*KTI* 1) and number each sentence:

> (1) All appearances are in time, in which, as substrate ... simultaneity as well as succession can alone be represented. (2) Thus the time in which all change of appearances must be thought remains and does not change ... (3) Now time for itself cannot be perceived. (4) Consequently must in the objects of perception, i.e. the appearances, the substrate be to be met with which represents time in general, and in which all change or simultaneity can be perceived only through the relation of appearances to the same in apprehension.[8] (5) But the substrate of everything real ... is substance, in which everything that belongs to existence must be thought as determination. (6) The persistent in relation to which all time relations of appearances can alone be represented is consequently the substance in appearance ... which as substrate of all change remains always the same. (7) Because this cannot change in its existence, so can its quantum in nature neither be increased nor diminished. (B224–5)

According to Allison (2004: 237), the argument of this paragraph falls into four parts. The first consists of (1)–(4) and 'contends that something at least relatively persisting is required as a substratum or backdrop in relation to which change can be experienced'. The second consists of (5) and 'argues that every change of appearances must be regarded as the change of state of this substratum'. The third consists of (6) and 'asserts that this substratum must be absolutely, not simply relatively, persistent'. The fourth consists of (7) and 'maintains that the quantity of this persisting substratum remains constant through all change'.

On this account, *absolute* persistence does not enter until (6). Upon close examination, however, it seems present in (4). Later in the First Analogy, after all, Kant equates change with arising and perishing.[9] Assuming that he does the same here, his meaning in (2) is that the time in which all arising and perishing of appearances must be thought does not arise or perish. The implication of (2), it thus seems, is that

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the time in question has not (ever) arisen and will not (ever) perish. The time in question and time in general are the same. When Kant infers in (4) that there must be a substrate in the appearances which represents time in general, it thus seems, he means that there must be a substrate in the appearances which has not (ever) arisen and will not (ever) perish, i.e. a substrate which is *absolutely* persistent.

On this account, moreover, the meaning of (5) is that every change of appearances must be regarded as the change of state of the backdrop or substrate which represents time in general. This does not seem like a plausible construal of (5). What that sentence states is that 'the substrate of everything real ... is substance, in which everything that belongs to existence must be thought as determination'. It says nothing of change.

Allison's account of the passage on which he professes to base his interpretation is thus problematic. This may not entail, however, that his whole interpretation is off target. As we shall see in section 4, there are major questions with respect to Kant's argument in the paragraph at issue. Even if Allison misconstrues parts of that paragraph, I will suggest there, key elements of his interpretation may allow for answers to those questions and thus for understanding of the relevant argument.

3. The gist of the proof that Allison ascribes to Kant

As we have already seen, Allison takes the proof in the paragraph added to B to consist of four parts. The aim of the first is to establish an initial Backdrop Thesis, he holds, while the aim of the second is to establish that every change is an alteration (1983: 203). The second also presupposes and builds upon the first, he maintains (1983: 201; 2004: 237).

The aim of the second needs further specification. In part, this is due to Allison's account of what Kant means by a *Wechsel* (and thus the English term 'change'). At A187/B230, Kant makes clear that a *Wechsel* (or change) is an arising or perishing. According to Allison, however, '*ein Wechsel* is the kind of change in which one item is replaced by another' (1983: 204; 2004: 240). Even on his own subsequent account of Kant's argument, this cannot be correct.[10] Even on that account, after all, the claim that every *Wechsel* is an alteration is supposed to rule out the possibility of arising *ex nihilo* and/or perishing *in nihilum*. The claim that every change *in which one item is replaced by another* is an alteration would not do so.[11]

Perhaps because of his focus on the distinction between replacement change and change of some other sort(s), Allison does not emphasize the distinction that truly matters in his account of this part.[12] Here is the start of that account:

> Like the argument for the Backdrop Thesis, the present argument requires the premise that time itself cannot be perceived ... Since this is the case, a single observation is never adequate to determine that a change ... has taken place ... Any such experience requires two successive observations and the noticing of some difference between what is observed in each case. One cannot, however, infer from a difference in two successive observations that a ... change has ... occurred. Despite all that can be determined from the two observations alone, one could simply be having successive observations of co-existing states of affairs. (1983: 206)

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If one has successive observations between which one notices some difference, a change takes place in apprehension. From the mere fact that a change takes place *in apprehension*, Allison thus takes Kant to hold, one cannot infer that a change *of the sort with which Kant is concerned* has occurred. A change that does not take place merely in apprehension is a change that takes place 'in the object'. A change of the first sort is merely subjective, one might say, while a change of the second sort is objective. The distinction that truly matters, on Allison's account of Kant's proof, is that between *these* two sorts of change: *subjective* on the one hand and *objective* on the other. Kant's aim in this part, Allison thus actually holds, is to establish that every *objective* change is an alteration.

Despite all that can be determined from two successive observations between which one has noticed some difference, Allison has just emphasized, one could simply be having successive representations of coexisting states of affairs. His account continues so:

> If, by contrast, I experience or believe that I experience a genuine ... change ... then I am constrained to refer the successive states of affairs to some common subject and view this occurrence as an alteration in this subject. Only by doing so can I represent through my successive ... observations the replacement of one state of affairs ... by its contrary. (1983: 206)

If I experience or so much as *believe* that I experience the genuine arising or perishing of some *x*, Allison here takes Kant to hold, the arising or perishing of that *x* must take place in apprehension and I must represent it as objective. In apprehension, for instance, a house of the sort children build out of blocks is present in apprehension at time t_2 but was not present in apprehension at t_1 (or any earlier time).[13] At least in apprehension, this entails, the house in question has arisen. By itself, however, the fact that the house in question was not present *in apprehension* at t_1 (or any earlier time) does not entail that it was not *in existence* at t_1 (or any earlier time) and thus that the arising that has taken place in apprehension was *genuine* or *objective*. In order to represent it as such, Allison takes Kant to hold, I must refer the house and something else that was present in apprehension at t_1 (or some earlier time) to some common subject. In order to represent it as such, in other words, I must take the house and something else that was present in apprehension at t_1 (or some earlier time) to be the same subject with different determinations or in different forms. If I do this, however, I perforce view the arising as a mere alteration of something that existed prior to it and still exists when it has taken place.

According to Allison, consequently, Kant subscribes to these claims:

> **Rep-Change-as-Objective$_1$**: In order to represent a change that takes place in apprehension as objective, one must refer something that is now present in apprehension and something else that is no longer present in apprehension to some common subject.

> **Rep-Change-as-Objective$_2$**: In order to represent a change that takes place in apprehension as objective, one must view it as a mere alteration of something that existed prior to it and still exists when it has taken place.

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How does Kant get from here to the claim that every objective change is (in fact) an alteration? Allison does not explain but would surely answer on the basis of materials in chapter 2 of *KTI* 1.[14] 'It is an analytic truth that any object represented must conform to the conditions under which alone it can be represented as an object', he asserts there (1983: 29). There is a changed point of view involved in the recognition that 'the cognitive structure of the human mind is the source of certain conditions which must be met by anything that is to be represented as an object by such a mind', he also claims there (ibid.). This changed point of view brings with it a radically new conception of an object, he then infers: 'An object is now to be understood as whatever ... conforms to the mind's conditions for the representation of it as an object' (p. 30). An objective change is an object, he also holds.[15] Given these materials, we can discern the following answer to our question at the start of this paragraph:

1. Any objective change represented must conform to the conditions under which alone it can be represented as objective.
2. In order to be represented, an objective change must take place in apprehension.
3. Since this is the case, a condition under which an objective change *that takes place in apprehension* can alone be represented as objective is a condition under which *any* objective change can alone be represented as objective.
4. Since an objective change is an object and an object is now to be understood as whatever conforms to the mind's conditions for the representation of it as an object, an objective change is now to be understood as whatever conforms to the mind's conditions for the representation of it as objective.
5. The concept involved in the action described in Rep-Change-as-Objective$_2$ is such a condition.
6. Given Rep-Change-as-Objective$_2$, nothing that does not conform to this concept is now to be understood as an objective change.
7. Given Rep-Change-as-Objective$_2$, therefore, every objective change conforms to this concept.
8. This concept is that of an alteration of something that exists prior to it and still exists when it has taken place.
9. Since every objective change *conforms to the concept of* such an alteration, every objective change *is* such an alteration.

This completes the second part of the proof that Allison ascribes to Kant. As the reader may have noticed, it does not presuppose or build upon an initial Backdrop Thesis, i.e. a *separate* and *independently established* claim that something at least relatively persisting is required to serve as a substratum or backdrop in relation to which change can be experienced.[16] Somewhat surprisingly, therefore, the proof in question could simply *begin* with the part that Allison takes to come second.[17]

Having established (a) the claim that every objective change is an alteration of something (at least) *relatively* persistent, maintains Allison, Kant moves in the third part of his proof to (b) the claim that every objective change is an alteration of something *absolutely* persistent. The requisite argument proceeds by applying (a) to the enduring entities whose necessity has just been established, explains Allison. Take a piece of wood consumed by fire:

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> Clearly, the piece of wood … must be assumed to have existed for a period of time prior to its destruction by fire and to have been capable of being altered in any number of ways … without losing its identity as a … piece of wood. Equally clearly, its destruction by fire cannot be regarded as just another alteration of the wood … Nonetheless … we are still compelled to regard the process of combustion as an alteration. The difference is that instead of treating the piece of wood as the subject that alters, we are constrained to presuppose some matter, which at one point … assumed the form of a piece of wood, and at a later stage … smoke and ashes. (1983: 208–9)

Given (a), this is in order. How does it follow, however, that the destruction of the wood is a mere alteration of something *absolutely* persistent? Kant's answer, holds Allison, is that the matter we are constrained to presuppose must be identified with substance:

> The key to this argument … lies in the identification of substance … with the matter of which things are composed. This identification is necessary in order to have a subject or 'substratum' of which one can predicate the changes which occur when enduring physical objects … come into or pass out of existence. (1983: 209)

According to (a), every arising or perishing that is objective is an alteration of something that exists prior to it and still exists when it has taken place. For any *x*, furthermore, it follows from the claim that the arising or perishing of *x* is such an alteration that *x* is merely a way in which something else exists.[18] Given (a), this entails, anything the arising or perishing of which is objective is a way in which something else exists. For Kant, however, *substance* cannot be a way in which something else exists.[19] For Kant, consequently, it follows from (a) that nothing the arising or perishing of which is objective can be substance. Since the matter of which things are composed must be identified with substance, Allison thus takes him to infer, no arising or perishing of that matter can be objective. For this reason, the matter in question is absolutely persistent and every objective change (including the destruction of the wood) is an alteration of something absolutely persistent.

This completes the third part of the proof that Allison ascribes to Kant. Since nothing the arising or perishing of which is objective can be substance, Allison takes the fourth and final part to maintain, the quantity of substance remains constant through all change.

4. Initial objections of Ward

To the best of my knowledge, the most extensive previous discussion of Allison on the First Analogy is that of Andrew Ward. According to Ward, Allison's interpretation is shared by such figures as D. P. Dryer and Paul Guyer. In his view, this 'shared interpretation' is based wholly on a single passage at A188/B231. For this reason, he holds, its adherents must take this passage to 'introduce some entirely new … argument into the analogy, incongruously stuck on almost at the end' (Ward 2001: 387). The first thing that must strike the reader upon examination of the relevant passage,

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he maintains, is that 'the' account of it offered by Allison and the other figures in question is 'most strained' (p. 388). On Allison's own admission, he points out, 'Kant himself contributed to the almost universal misunderstanding of the argument of the First Analogy by his failure to spell out any of this [viz. any part of the shared interpretation]' (Allison 1983: 206; Ward 2001: 389; bracketed interpolation by Ward).

In reality, of course, there is no interpretation shared by all of these figures. Allison, as we have seen, takes Kant to be concerned with conditions under which alone we can so much as *represent* a change that takes place in apprehension as objective. Dryer and Guyer, on the other hand, take him to be concerned with conditions under which alone we can *know* (as opposed to merely *believe*) that a succession (or change) that takes place in apprehension is objective.[20] It is admittedly true, nonetheless, that all of them rely heavily on the passage from A188/B231 and that none of them defend their interpretations of it in great textual detail. Here is the passage:

> [A]rising or perishing, without that it concerns only a determination of the persistent, can be no possible perception, because precisely this persistent makes possible the representation of the transition … from not-being to being, which can thus only be known or recognized (*erkannt*) as changing determinations of that which remains. Assume that something absolutely begins to be; then you must have a point of time in which it was not. But to what will you attach this [point of time] if not to that which is [or was] already there? For an empty time is no object of perception; if you attach the arising to things that were before, however, and last until that which arises [is in being], then the latter was [or is] only a determination of the former … It is … the same with perishing …[21]

In both editions of *KTI*, Allison points to the first sentence of this passage – but *only* to that sentence – as possible support for his account of the second part of Kant's proof. In neither edition does he seem especially confident, however. 'It may not be immediately evident that there is any such argument' as that which he is about to describe, he confesses in both (1983: 205; 2004: 241). Allison's potential case here is much stronger than he makes it. The problem is his exclusive focus on the first sentence.

The passage concerns conditions under which alone we can perceive arising and perishing. One might take this to involve the *representation* of arising and perishing that takes place in apprehension *as objective*. In order to do this, one would then take Kant to assert in the third sentence, one must attach a point of time in which the *x* that arises was not to that which was already there. In doing the latter, Kant then clearly implies on any reading of the fourth sentence, one connects the arising of this *x* to things that were in existence before it arose and last (at least) until it is in being. One does so, moreover, in a way that entails that this *x* is only a determination of those things, i.e. a way in which those things exist.

In hopes of understanding, let us return to the example of a house composed of blocks. To represent the arising of this house as objective, implies Rep-Change-as-Objective$_1$, one must take the house and something else that was present in apprehension at an earlier time to be the same subject with different determinations or in different forms. Present in apprehension at an earlier time, let us say, was a set of blocks scattered on a flat surface. If one takes the house and the blocks that were

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scattered to be the same subject (the same set of blocks) in different forms, one takes something to be the case that would rule out the existence of the house at the earlier time. If one does this, it seems natural to say, one *attaches a point of time in which the house* (at least in one's own resulting conviction) *was not to that* (namely the set of blocks) *which was already there*. In so doing, it also seems natural to say, one *connects the arising of the house to things* (the relevant blocks) *that were in being before it arose and last* (at least) *until it is in being*. The way in which one does this, moreover, entails that the house is only a way in which those things exist, i.e. *a determination of those things*.

There is thus a striking fit between Rep-Change-as-Objective$_1$ and the third and fourth sentences of the passage from A188/B231. In view of this fit, Allison need not make the admission upon which Ward pounces – the admission, namely, that Kant fails to spell out any of 'this'.

Must he nonetheless admit that the passage introduces some entirely new argument into the analogy, incongruously stuck on almost at the end? Not if this would imply that the passage introduces an argument unconnected with what has come before. What the passage actually does, Allison could insist, is reveal at least some of the grounds for crucial but mysterious assertions near the start of the analogy in both its A and B forms. Consider the paragraph that comes second in both and begins with this flourish:

> Our apprehension of the manifold of appearance is at every time successive, and is thus always changing. Thus through it alone we can never determine whether this manifold, as object of experience, is at the same time, or follows after each other, where in it something does not lie at the ground, which is at every time, i.e. something lasting and persistent, of which all change and simultaneity are nothing but so many ways ... in which the persistent exists. (A182/B225–6)

In apprehension, implies Kant in the first sentence of this passage, various elements of the manifold given in or through sensibility are always arising and perishing. To determine that two such elements, *as objects of experience* (and not merely in apprehension), follow after each other, we must determine that the perishing of the one and the arising of the other are objective. We can never do this, asserts Kant in the second half of the second sentence, where it is not the case that in the manifold something lies at the ground which is persistent. We can also never do this, he asserts in the same portion of that sentence, where it is not the case that the elements in question are merely ways in which the persistent at the ground of the manifold exists.

Kant does not proceed to explain and/or defend these assertions. In the sentence that follows, he simply draws an implication. In the next three, he points out a correspondence between the persistent on the one hand and time itself on the other. In the two after that, he proclaims that being in different parts of the temporal succession receives a magnitude through the persistent alone and provides a ground for that proclamation. The three sentences with which the paragraph then concludes are so closely related to the earlier sentence in which he simply draws an implication that they could (and perhaps should) follow directly upon it. Like that earlier sentence, however, they do not explain and/or defend the assertions with which we are concerned. The last of them is virtually identical to the Principle of

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Persistence that Kant aims to prove in A and begins with 'therefore'. The implication, it seems clear, is that the proof of said principle is now complete.

Given their place in the relevant paragraph, the assertions with which we are concerned are presumably essential to that proof. Given the rest of the paragraph, however, they must rest on grounds that Kant has not (at least yet) made explicit. The passage from A188/B231 turns out to be crucial in this regard, Allison could maintain. In order to *determine* that the arising or perishing of some element of the manifold is objective, after all, we must *represent* it as objective. Any condition under which we can alone do the latter will thus be a condition under which we can alone do the former. In the relevant passage, Allison could argue, Kant spells out conditions under which we can alone do the latter. In so doing, he could conclude, Kant reveals at least some of the grounds for the assertions with which we are concerned, and thus for crucial assertions near the start of the First Analogy in A.[22]

As we have seen in section 2, there are major problems with Allison's account of the paragraph added in B.[23] If he were to revise that account, however, he could hold that the passage from A188/B231 plays the same basic role with respect to that paragraph. While sentences (1)–(3) seem in order, he could observe, (4) gives rise to questions. Since time cannot be perceived for itself, asserts Kant in the first half of that sentence, the substrate which represents time in general (*überhaupt*) must be to be met with in the objects of perception, i.e. the appearances. *What substrate which represents time in general? Why must there be such a substrate?*

Sentences (6) and (7) *presuppose* that there is such a substrate, while sentence (5) merely equates the substrate *of everything real* with substance. If Kant gives any answer(s) to these questions in the paragraph itself, therefore, he must do so in the second half of (4). His answer, in that case, is that all change or being at the same time can be perceived only through the relation of appearances to such a substrate. What does this mean, however, and why should we believe it?

When Kant speaks of change here, Allison could hold, he means arising and perishing that is objective. In the later passage from A188/B231, he could then note, Kant spells out conditions under which alone such arising and perishing can be perceived. Combined with other elements of the proof upon which he takes Kant to rely, the conditions in question entail that the matter of which things are composed must be absolutely persistent. This matter would be a substrate in the objects of perception, i.e. the appearances. It would also represent time in general in the sense that it has never arisen and will never perish. In the passage from A188/B231, Allison could thus conclude, Kant finally reveals some of the grounds for crucial assertions near the start of the First Analogy in B.

5. Further objections of Ward

Ward has two further objections to the 'shared interpretation'. The first is that the argument ascribed to Kant by its adherents fails to account for the very ability with which they take him to be concerned. The second is that the argument in question would undermine Kant's own subsequent attempt to prove the causal principle. The first is completely off target in the case of Allison. The second, however, points towards a real challenge.

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Here is Ward's summation of the first:

> Of course, the shared interpretation does seem correct on this point: *once* we have ascertained that successive representations are respectively disclosing incompatible states of the same object, we can know that a change rather than a coexistence must have been observed. But if, as the advocates of the shared interpretation maintain, the question at issue for Kant is the question of how we are enabled to distinguish the perception of change from coexistence, they are evidently faced with the further question: 'And how, on your interpretation, are we to ascertain that the two incompatible states do belong to the same object?' (Ward 2001: 389)

This question may be relevant in the cases of Dryer and Guyer. According to both of them, after all, Kant is concerned with our (alleged) ability to *know* (as opposed to merely *believe*) that there has been an objective change. According to Allison, however, the focus of Kant's attention is our (indisputable) ability to *represent* a change that takes place in apprehension as objective.[24] In order to do *this*, we need not 'ascertain' that two incompatible states belong to the same object. We need merely *suppose* that they do. Ward's question is thus irrelevant in the case of Allison.

Now for Ward's account of the second of these objections:

> If we are confronted with the incompatible contents of successive representations which, by the argument of the First Analogy (as understood by the shared interpretation), have been determined not to be states of two coexisting objects – viz. by ascribing them to the *same* underlying object – then it follows that we must be perceiving a change ... Yet, in the Second Analogy, Kant contends that any succession of representations that can be perceived as a change of states must be subject to the principle of sufficient reason. This contention would obviously be false if Kant had supposed that the principle of the First Analogy could, by itself, determine the possible perception of any change ... (Ward 2001: 391)

In a somewhat revised form, this does raise a question for Allison. In the Second Analogy, he holds, Kant is concerned with conditions under which alone we can represent a succession that takes place in apprehension as objective (1983: 221–2; 2004: 250–1). In order to do so, he takes Kant to insist there, we must take there to be a cause of that succession (1983: 226; 2004: 251). Given what he takes Kant to hold in the First Analogy, this may well seem odd. If one represents a *change* that takes place in apprehension as objective, one represents a *succession* that takes place in apprehension as objective. In order to represent this succession as objective, Allison takes Kant to hold in the First Analogy, we must refer the elements involved in it to some common subject. Yet in order to represent this same succession as objective, he then takes Kant to hold in the Second Analogy, we must take it to have a cause. Why would Kant hold both of these things? Why would he take the action invoked in the Second Analogy to be needed?

Allison does not address these questions. According to Béatrice Longuenesse, however, Kant holds that the action invoked in the Second Analogy is a necessary

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condition of that invoked in the First. 'We can attribute changing marks to the same ... object only if we suppose that there is a ground of change that can be stated according to the form of a hypothetical judgment', she takes him to insist (1998: 365). To attribute changing marks to the same object is (in Allison's somewhat different terminology) to refer elements of a succession that takes place in apprehension to some common subject. To suppose that there is a ground of change that can be stated according to the form of a hypothetical judgement is to suppose that there is a cause. In order to answer the questions with which we are presently concerned, therefore, Allison could appeal to the analysis of Longuenesse.

What is the support for that analysis, however? According to Longuenesse, Kant holds that 'judgments ... are assertions under a universal condition' (1998: 93). 'Kant inherits the term "condition" from Wolff and his school', she also maintains. 'The "sufficient marks" to know the truth or falsity of a judgment are what Wolff calls the *condition* of the judgment' (95–6). When one attributes changing marks to the same object, she appears to assume, one makes a judgement, i.e. an assertion under a universal condition. In making such an assertion, however, one assumes the existence of a sufficient 'mark' or set of 'marks' to know its truth. The only possible such 'mark' in the case of one's attribution of changing marks to the same object, she takes Kant to believe, is a ground of change that can be stated according to the form of a hypothetical judgement.[25]

A fair assessment of this analysis would far exceed the bounds of this paper.[26] In possible support of it, however, one might mention a puzzle that concerns the Second Analogy alone. In apprehension, let us say, there is a ship at point A and then a ship at point B. In order to represent this succession as objective, Kant repeatedly implies there, we must take there to be something that precedes it upon which the replacement of the one state of affairs (a ship at point A) by the other (a ship at point B) follows in accordance with a rule.[27] But why would he hold this? A different explanation seems at least equally plausible. Assuming that the ship at point B is very similar to the ship at point A, we may simply take it to be the same ship. If we do so, it seems, we will perforce represent the succession at issue as objective. Kant fully agrees, on the analysis of Longuenesse. Yet in order to take the ship at point A and the ship at point B to be the same ship, Kant holds on that analysis, we must take there to be something upon which the replacement of the one state of affairs (ship at point A) by the other (ship at point B) follows in accordance with a rule. This would be a cause of that replacement and thus of the succession at issue. If on target, therefore, the analysis of Longuenesse does not merely render Allison's account of the First Analogy compatible with his account of the Second. It also resolves a serious puzzle concerning the Second itself.

6. Problems with the second part of the proof

The interpretation of Allison may thus survive the objections of Ward. Even if it does so, however, there seem to be problems with the second part of the proof that Allison ascribes to Kant. One concerns Rep-Change-as-Objective$_1$ and Rep-Change-as-Objective$_2$. Others concern the reasoning by means of which he takes Kant to move from the second of those claims to the thesis that every objective change is an alteration.

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In order to see the first of these problems, we need only reflect on the response of James Van Cleve to a reading of the passage from A188/B231 suggested by Arthur Melnick. According to Melnick (1973: 71–7), Kant may be concerned there with conditions under which it is verifiable that some state of affairs (S_2) came into being at time t_1. This is verifiable only if it is verifiable that S_2 did not exist *anywhere* at t_1. The latter is verifiable, Melnick thinks Kant may hold, only if for some S_1 there is a law that if S_2 existed anywhere at t_1, it existed where S_1 existed. If there is such a law, he also thinks Kant may hold, S_1 and S_2 are connected as states of a substance. Here is the response of Van Cleve:

> The idea is that in order to know that S_2 did not exist anywhere at t_1, we would have to perform the impossible task of scanning the whole universe – unless there were a law limiting the number of places we would have to have looked. I do not see, however, why the law must tie S_2 to another particular item or kind of item. If there were a law implying that things of S_2's kind are never subject to rapid transport, that would limit the area of search to the immediate vicinity of the place where S_2 is at t_2. (1999: 112–13)

There is no discussion here of any act(s) we must perform if we are to represent an arising (or perishing) that takes place in apprehension as objective. There is thus no *immediate* threat to Rep-Change-as-Objective$_1$ and Rep-Change-as-Objective$_2$. With a bit of adaptation, however, we can formulate such a threat.

In apprehension, let us say, there was at t_1 a flat surface with nothing on it and is at t_2 a flat surface with a house composed of blocks on it. At least in apprehension, let us further say, there was no such house prior to t_1. At least in apprehension, this entails, the house has arisen. There is no apparent difference between the surface that is present in apprehension at t_2 and the surface that was present in apprehension at t_1. For this and other reasons, we take it to be the same surface. The interval between t_1 and t_2 has been short and we have focused carefully on the vicinity of the surface and paid close attention throughout the interval. For whatever reasons, finally, some of us take it utterly for granted that items such as the house are never subject to rapid transport, i.e. transport so rapid that we would not notice the movement of an item like the house even if we focused on the relevant vicinity and paid close attention. Given that some of us do this, some of us will take it utterly for granted that the house has not moved to its present location during the interval between t_1 and t_2. Will this by itself not lead those of us who do so to represent the arising of the house as objective?

In search of a principled answer, let us return to the scenario discussed in section 4. If we take the blocks that compose a house to be the same blocks that were scattered on a flat surface at some earlier time, Allison takes Kant to hold, we will represent the arising of the house as objective. The reason, he must evidently maintain, is that we will assume with complete certainty that what we take to be the case is incompatible with the existence of the house at the earlier time. If the blocks that now compose the house are the same blocks that were scattered, we will assume with such certainty, the house cannot have existed *anywhere* at the earlier time and the arising of the house cannot have taken place *merely* in apprehension.

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In the scenario with which we are now concerned, some of us take it utterly for granted that the house has not moved to its present location between t_1 and t_2. If those of us who do so also assume with complete certainty that this is incompatible with the existence of the house at t_1, the above analysis suggests, we will indeed represent the arising of the house as objective.[28] We will do so, moreover, without referring something that is now present in apprehension and something else that is no longer present in apprehension to a single subject. The scenario in question casts serious doubt on Rep-Change-as-Objective$_1$, therefore. Since Rep-Change-as-Objective$_1$ is the ground of Rep-Change-as-Objective$_2$, it casts equal doubt on the latter.

It is possible, of course, that this doubt is not in order and that both of these claims are actually solid. Even if they are, however, there seem to be problems with the reasoning by means of which Allison takes Kant to get from the second of them to the thesis that every objective change is an alteration.[29] One such problem concerns the new conception of an objective change that said reasoning invokes. Another concerns a possible difference between *conforming* to a concept and *corresponding* to it.

According to Allison, as we have seen, there is a changed point of view involved in the recognition that 'the cognitive structure of the human mind is the source of certain conditions that must be met by anything that is to be represented as an object by such a mind' (1983: 29). This recognition 'brings with it' a radically new conception of an object, he asserts: 'An object is now to be understood as whatever conforms to the mind's conditions for the representation of it as an object' (p. 30). Since an objective change is an object and the concept involved in Rep-Change-as-Objective$_2$ is a condition of the sort in question, he evidently infers, an objective change is now to be understood as whatever conforms to that concept.

If this is really so, the relevant conception of an objective change should follow from this three-part supposition:

- The human mind is the source of the concept involved in the action described in Rep-Change-as-Objective$_2$.
- That concept is a condition that must be met by anything that is to be represented as an objective change by such a mind.
- Meeting that condition consists in conforming to that concept.

The relevant conception does not appear to follow. On our 'old' conception, an objective change is (or was) understood as a change that does not take place merely in apprehension. If our three-part supposition is in order, anything that is to be represented as such a change by the human mind must conform to the concept of an alteration. If Rep-Change-as-Objective$_2$ is in order, furthermore, we could not even *have* our 'old' conception of an objective change without the concept of an alteration. It hardly seems to follow, however, that an objective change is now *to be understood as* whatever conforms to that concept. Why should it not continue to be understood as a change that does not take place merely in apprehension? How does or would the recognition that concept *x* makes conception *y* possible 'bring with it' (i.e. entail) a transformation of conception *y* itself?

Without answers to these questions, the argument by means of which Allison takes Kant to move from Rep-Change-as-Objective$_2$ to the assertion that every objective change is an alteration hits a wall at step 4. Even if it did not, moreover, there would

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remain a problem with step 9. Since every objective change *conforms to the concept of* an alteration, proclaims this step, every objective change *is* an alteration. If Rep-Change-as-Objective$_2$ is in order, of course, we must view a change that takes place in apprehension as an alteration in order to represent it as objective. There is no apparent reason, however, why we must *correctly* view the change that takes place in apprehension in this way in order to represent it as objective. There is no apparent reason, in other words, why the change in question must *conform* to the concept of an alteration in the sense of *corresponding* to it and thus of *being* an alteration. The only sense in which the change in question must 'conform' to that concept, it appears, is that of allowing us to apply that concept to it, perhaps correctly but perhaps also not.

7. A problem with the third part of the proof

In Allison's own case, there is also a problem with the third part of the proof that he ascribes to Kant. In that part, he maintains, Kant moves from the claim that every objective change is an alteration of something at least *relatively* persistent to the claim that every such change is an alteration of something *absolutely* persistent. According to Allison, the key to that move lies in the identification of substance with the matter of which things are composed. 'This identification is necessary in order to have a subject or "substratum" of which one can predicate the changes which occur when enduring physical objects ... come into or pass out of existence', he explains (1983: 209).

At least *prima facie*, this appears to be false. In the case of the destruction of the wood by fire, for example, one could identify the matter of which the wood is composed at the relevant time with a large set of molecules. If one does, it seems clear, one has a subject or 'substratum' of which one can predicate the change that occurs when the wood passes out of existence. The change in question, one might then hold, is merely an alteration in the form or arrangement of the set of molecules. Since the relevant molecules have arisen and may perish, however, the set comprised of them cannot be identified with substance.[30] In order to have a subject or 'substratum' of which one can predicate the changes which occur when enduring physical objects come into and pass out of existence, therefore, it is *not* in fact necessary (at least in the first instance) to identify substance with the matter of which things are composed.

This point might seem minor. Even though the set of molecules does not qualify as substance, one might be tempted to respond, something else surely must. The something else in question may be a set of atoms, a set of subatomic particles, vibrating strings of energy, or something even more basic. No matter what it is, it is 'the matter' of which the wood is composed and any arising or perishing of sets and/or items further up the chain will be an alteration of it. Although false in the first instance, on such a response, Allison's claim that it is necessary to identify substance with the matter of which things are composed turns out to be true.

The obvious question with respect to such a response, however, is why something else must qualify as substance even though the set of molecules does not. The only possible answer, it appears, is that the chain (piece of wood, set of molecules, set of atoms, and so forth) must eventually bottom out in something that is not merely a way in which something else exists.[31] The claim that this is so does not seem analytic.

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Nor is it empirical. In order to hold that Kant is entitled to it, consequently, one must hold that he has already shown in the Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding that there is something in any item the arising or perishing of which is objective that qualifies as substance. Given his own assessments of that deduction, however, Allison cannot do so.

In *KTI* 1, he draws a distinction between objective validity and objective reality and takes the Deduction to show that the pure concepts of understanding have both (1983: 134–6 and 170). In his view, however, this entails only that those concepts have application to perceptions or 'subjective objects', not that they have application to items of the sort any common person means by a house composed of blocks or a piece of wood (1983: 167–70). Given this view and the fact that the arising and perishing of such items can be objective, he cannot take Kant to show in the Deduction that there must be something in any item the arising or perishing of which is objective that qualifies as substance.[32] At least in *KTI* 1, consequently, Allison should reject the argument on which he takes Kant to rely in the third part of his proof.

He should do the same in *KTI* 2. What he there holds about the Deduction is that it fails to show that the *dynamical* categories are even conditions of apprehension or perception, let alone that they are conditions of the sort of experience with which he takes the First Analogy to be concerned. The concept of substance is a dynamical category, however. This being so, Allison cannot take Kant to show in the Deduction that there must be something in any items the arising or perishing of which is objective that qualifies as substance. Just as in *KTI* 1, therefore, he should reject the argument on which he takes Kant to rely in the third part of his proof. Just as in *KTI* 1, nonetheless, he explicitly maintains that it is sound (1983: 200; 2004: 237).

8. Conclusion

As we have now seen, there are serious problems with core elements of the proof upon which Allison takes Kant to rely in the First Analogy. These problems, however, do not necessarily rule out Allison's interpretation. Even if Rep-Change-as-Objective$_1$ and Rep-Change-as-Objective$_2$ appear shaky, there is significant evidence in the passage at A188/B231 that Kant subscribes to them. Even if there are flaws in the reasoning by means of which Allison takes Kant to move from the second of those claims to the thesis that all change is alteration, Kant may fail to see those flaws or rely on different reasoning.[33] Even if the argument on which Allison takes Kant to rely in the First Analogy may seem at first glance to undermine the Second, the analysis of Longuenesse may show that and why Kant would hold that it does not. Even if Allison's own assessments of the Transcendental Deduction should lead him to reject Kant's move from relative to absolute persistence, Kant himself may believe that the Deduction has established the claim on which that move depends.

Given all of these problems, nonetheless, we must surely remain open to other interpretations. The ideal would be an account that both fits the text as a whole and leaves Kant in a tenable philosophical position.[34] At least as of now, the extent to which the account of Allison does so seems limited. The question, however, is whether the accounts of others do better when subjected to equally rigorous scrutiny. A fair answer to this question would require many more pages and will thus have to be reserved for another occasion.

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Notes

1 Among the most notable exceptions is that of James Van Cleve (1999). In the view of Van Cleve, the principle at issue in the First Analogy actually follows from what he (along with Jonathan Bennett) calls the Kant-Frege view on the nature of existence statements.
2 Examples are Walsh (1975), Ward (2001), Hall (2011) and Harriman (2014).
3 Examples are Dryer (1966) and Guyer (1987).
4 When one represents a change or succession that takes place in apprehension as objective, one *at least seems to be aware* that it is objective. Examples of this approach are Allison (1983, 2004) and Longuenesse (1998).
5 Allison presents it in both editions of *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. In the first, it takes up a full chapter. In the second, an abridged and very slightly revised version forms part of a chapter on the Analogies in general. The only real difference concerns the translation of *beharrlich* and its cognates, which is more accurate in the second. In what follows, I draw from both as appropriate. I also include 'at least mainly' in parentheses here because of occasional passages in both that are evocative of the first camp. As we shall see from the exegesis in section 3, however, the real core Allison's interpretation falls entirely into the third.
6 Among these I would place the interpretations of Dryer, Guyer and Ward in particular.
7 The letters A and B refer to the first edition of 1781 and the revised edition of 1787, respectively. All translations are mine, based on Kant (1998).
8 My translation of this sentence may seem garbled but literally follows Kant's original German.
9 See A187/B230.
10 For this reason, I drop 'replacement' as a modifier of 'change' in all further citations from Allison.
11 The reason, of course, is that an arising *ex nihilo* or perishing *in nihilum* would not *be* a change in which one item is replaced by another. In some passages, careful readers may note, Allison takes Kant to be concerned with all replacements of one *state of affairs* by another (see 1983: 205 and 2004: 240, for example). If he takes *states of affairs* to be *items* and thus takes all replacements of one *state of affairs* by another to be replacement changes, the claim that every replacement change is an alteration *does* rule out the possibility of arising *ex nihilo* and perishing *in nihilum*. It seems like an analytic truth that all changes involve the replacement of one *state of affairs* by another, however. If Allison really takes *states of affairs* to be *items*, consequently, he has no reason to introduce the phrase 'replacement change' in the first place. The reason he gives, after all, is an alleged need to distinguish the sort of change with which he takes Kant to be concerned from change of some other sort(s).
12 Allison himself contrasts replacement change with 'a radical change akin to the Aristotelian notion of substantial change' (1983: 204).
13 I adapt this example from Dryer (1966: 356).
14 At an analogous point in his account of the Second Analogy, he cites Kant's famous dictum that 'the conditions of the **possibility of experience** are … conditions of **the possibility of the objects of experience**' (1983: 226; 2004: 252). He could do the same here, but this would not explain why we should believe the relevant dictum and how its truth would justify the move with which we are concerned.
15 Allison does not explicitly say this. He does say that an objective *temporal order* is an object, however, which I take to confirm that he would (1983: 221; 2004: 234).
16 It might (if successful) *establish* such a claim but does not *presuppose* or *build upon* it.
17 Kant's alleged case in support of the Backdrop Thesis has been sharply questioned by Van Cleve (1999: 107–8). Although his criticism of that case seems in order, I see no evidence that sentences (1)–(4) in the paragraph added to B are intended to present the argument that Allison professes to see in them.
18 If *x* is not merely a way in which something else exists, its arising or perishing cannot be a mere alteration of something that exists prior to it and still exists when it has taken place. For its arising or perishing to be a mere alteration of that something, it must be a mere determination of that something, i.e. a way in which that something exists.
19 According to Kant, substance is something that exists as subject but never as mere 'predicate' or determination. (See B149, for example.) To exist as 'predicate' or determination, he also holds, is to be a way in which something else exists. (See the 'i.e.' clause in his statement of the Principle of Persistence at A182, for example.)

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20 See note 3 above.
21 Bracketed interpolations are mine. I have also left the translation of *erkannt* open between 'known' and 'recognized', both of which are perfectly defensible. The latter fits better with the interpretation of Allison, while the former fits better with those of Dryer and Guyer. Guyer and Wood opt for 'cognized', which is also defensible but strongly suggests 'known'.
22 In A, the paragraph that comes first is very brief and does not seem to lay essential groundwork for the paragraph that follows. The assertions with which we are concerned thus appear to mark the real beginning of Kant's proof in A.
23 See section 2 for text of full passage.
24 Allison sometimes uses terminology ('know', 'knowledge', 'cognition' and so forth) that might seem to suggest that he (like Dryer and Guyer) takes the Analogies to be concerned with conditions of *knowledge* in a strong sense, a sense in which *knowing* that there has been an objective change would be opposed to merely *believing* that there has been such a change. Upon careful examination, however, it becomes abundantly clear that he does not take the Analogies to be concerned with conditions of knowledge or cognition in any *such* sense.
25 As this sentence makes clear, Longuenesse employs the term 'mark' in two different ways. In one, a mark is a determination. In the other, it is the ground (or part of the ground) for an assertion or judgement.
26 I elsewhere explain the philosophical grounds upon which Longuenesse apparently takes Kant to rely with respect to this analysis (Osborne 2007: 307–11). I have yet to complete a full survey of the evidence that Kant subscribes to it, however.
27 As I have shown elsewhere, Kant makes claims that clearly imply this in at least four different passages. These can be found at A195/B240, A198/B243, A201/B246–7 and B234. (See Osborne 2007: 294–8.)
28 The scenario in question seems perfectly conceivable. If we place ourselves in the world of *Star Trek* and its transporters, it is easy to imagine the sudden appearance (apparently out of nowhere) of a house composed of blocks. It is also easy to imagine this taking place in the presence of benighted human subjects who have no idea that space travel or transporters exist, thus take it utterly for granted that the house has not moved to its present location between t_1 and t_2, and assume with complete certainty that this is incompatible with the existence of the house at t_1.
29 The argument in question, of course, amounts to an application of Kant's alleged case in support of transcendental idealism to the specific case of objective change. If there are problems with the argument in question, consequently, there are also problems with the philosophical tenability of Kant's transcendental idealism as Allison construes it.
30 For Kant, as we have seen in the penultimate paragraph of section 3, substance cannot be a way in which something else exists. On Allison's account of Kant's proof in the First Analogy, as we have also seen in that paragraph, anything the arising or perishing of which is objective is a way in which something else exists.
31 Van Cleve (1999: 109–10) raises the possibility that it need not.
32 Even if he could, he might not be able to hold that it is a mere determination, i.e. a way in which something else exists. This would depend on which of two concepts of substance he takes to be at issue in the Deduction. (For the distinction between two concepts of substance, see Allison 1983: 119–20.)
33 The latter would be the case if Allison is mistaken about the nature of Kant's transcendental idealism.
34 Perhaps the most striking respect in which the account of Allison does not fit the text as a whole concerns Kant's memorable assertion at A188/B231 that any case(s) of arising *ex nihilo* or perishing *in nihilum* would destroy the empirical unity of time. Allison does try at two points to integrate this assertion into his interpretation (1983: 208–9; 2004: 243–4). In neither does he show that or how it really plays a role in the argument on which he takes Kant to rely. Nor does he even try to defend it.

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