In Chapter 6 I treated the mathematical principles to both a genetic consideration, showing how Kant arrived at them from a treatment of his pre-Critical works, and to a structural justification connecting them to the prior discussion of intuition in the Aesthetic. In this chapter I will treat the dynamical principles in both these respects, showing how they connect to Kant’s discussions of dynamical questions in his “pre-Critical” writings and also how the arguments of the Analogies build on the discussions of the transcendental synthesis of imagination in the Transcendental Deduction and the chapter on schematism.

Substance, succession and co-existence in the New Elucidation

In 1755 Kant submitted as part of the qualification for the position of Privatdozent a writing that promised to provide a “new elucidation” of the first principles of metaphysical cognition. The statement of purpose that precedes the work carefully states the independence of the young thinker. Kant states that in the work he will critically assess the view that the principle of contradiction is the prime standard of truth as well as attending to an improvement of both the formulation of the principle of sufficient reason and its proof. Finally, he will also develop some subsidiary principles of metaphysics. The first section of the work in which Kant argues that the principle of contradiction is not the first principle of truth is connected to an overall argument to the effect that there is in fact no single principle of truth (Ak. 1: 388). The argument here foreshadows the distinction in Negative Magnitudes between real and logical opposition stating that affirmative truths and negative truths are different from each other and rest upon distinct principles.
just as the later work presents an argument for stating that only equivalent quantities can produce a sum.

The second section of the work is where Kant begins the discussion that is important for our purposes as here he treats the principle of sufficient reason, a principle he re-describes as a principle of determining ground. The reason for the re-description of the principle is connected to Kant’s discussion of it as part of an account of truth. The opening of the second section is with a proposition that connects determination to predication and effectively states that to posit something is to exclude something that is opposed to that posited. Kant then states that determination of a subject, in respect of any predicates, is provision of a ground for the subject. On the one hand there is an “antecedently determining ground” that provides a concept which precedes that which it determines whilst, on the other hand, there is a consequentially determining ground which follows from what has been determined. The difference between the two is that the former is ontological whilst the latter is epistemological (Ak. 1: 392). In giving a justification of his distinction Kant argues that the consequentially determining ground can in many cases be identified simply with experience (Ak. 1: 392) whilst the antecedently determining ground “converts things which are indeterminate into things which are determinate” (Ak. 1: 392) and is the real source of truth, not the formal principles that were treated in the first section of the work. This real source is one that does not simply set out what follows from something being the case but shows why it is the case. However the reference to such a why is not to be included in the statement of the principle of the ground as it presupposes the notion of ground so the key is simply to think of the antecedently determining ground as that which converts the indeterminate into something determinate whilst in so doing describing for us the necessity of its being as it is. The reason for Kant’s redefining the principle as one of determining ground is given superficially in his treatise as based on Crusius’ argument that the notion of sufficient reason involves an assumption as to what is sufficient. The real reason for Kant’s alteration of formula is surely that the consideration of determination shows the treatment to be one that connects truth to real existence and is thus part of an understanding of predication, something not evidently true of the principle of sufficient reason.

In specifying the connection of this principle to the understanding of existence Kant argues that the ground of something cannot lie in the thing itself as where it to do so it would violate a key element of the understanding of causality, namely that it is temporally marked.