In Section 2.1 we saw that Hume and Kant have differing conceptions of knowledge, since the former grants all epistemic authority to the givenness of sense experience and the latter insists upon an *a priori* synthesis to render sense experience intelligible, while both nevertheless conceive of objects of knowledge as materially constituted by sense experience. These similarities and differences are epitomized in Bhaskar’s observation that for both the Humean and the Kantian versions of empirical realism, a constant conjunction of events is a necessary condition for a causal law (such that nature as known by science partly consists of regularly sequential perceptual events) and that empiricism and transcendental idealism just part ways at the question of what constitutes the sufficient conditions. However, that transcendental idealism actually is so committed to constant conjunctions of events is not as immediately obvious as Bhaskar’s quick and casual references to Kant would have us believe, given the complexity of the transcendental idealist account of the representation of an objective causal connection. In this chapter, therefore, I will provide an exposition of Kant’s conception of natural necessity with a view to demonstrating its commitment to constant conjunctions of events, its transformation of the ontological concept of causality into a purely epistemological one, and its corresponding disallowance of real causal powers in nature. Doing this requires a close look at the Second Analogy of Experience, and in particular Kant’s conception of categorial synthesis, the schematization of the category of causality, and the relation between what Kant calls ‘the subjective sequence of apprehension’ and ‘the objective sequence of appearances’.
4.1 Natural necessity and categorial synthesis

If what Bhaskar calls the implicit empirical realist ontology shared by Hume and Kant partly consists of perceptual events and their constant conjunctions, the fact that such events are *atomistic* signals the epistemological problem at which Hume and Kant diverge. As Hume's thoroughgoing empiricism famously showed, once what is immediately given in sense experience is analyzed away from inferences made upon it and conceptual determinations of it, so that all that is left are spatio-temporal relations between sensations, there remains no room for the *a posteriori* givenness of a necessary connection between one event and another. This is because the relation of necessary connection itself can never be perceived, no matter how much we dissect our perceptions of the terms we suspect to be so connected. Thus every sensed event is equally external to and independent from every other, so that none imply the existence of any other, as those related by cause and effect presumably should. That Kant agrees with Hume regarding the atomism of the contributions of sensibility is clear from the manner in which he characterizes the unsynthesized manifold of intuition (*qua* subjective sequence of apprehension) in the Analogies of Experience:

Now in experience, to be sure, perceptions come together only contingently, so that no necessity of their connection is or can become evident in the perceptions themselves, since apprehension is only a juxtaposition of the manifold of empirical intuition, but no representation of the necessity of the combined existence of the appearances that it juxtaposes in space and time is to be encountered in it. (B219)

It is because sensibility only gives a temporal succession of spatially arrayed and distinct sensations (rather than interacting unified objects persisting over time) that its events are atomistic and their conjunctions contingent. Hence Westphal's claim that 'the mutual externality of the perceptions, appearances, or states of affairs to be related by the transcendental concept of causality is virtually a corollary of the successive nature of appearances and our apprehension of them' (Westphal 2004: 148). Within these constraints, the natural necessity we supposedly cognize via natural science must: 1) consist in *relations between experienced events*; and 2) be *subjectively grounded* – either *empirically*, as the product of a psychological propensity to invalidly infer the existence of a causal connection between regularly conjoined events (Hume),