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RESTING IN THE COURT OF REASON: KANT'S RESOLUTION TO THE ANTINOMY OF PURE REASON

by

SARAH ALEXANDER

Under the Direction of Melissa M. Merritt

ABSTRACT

Kant attributes the power to awaken one from dogmatic slumber to skepticism and to the antinomy of pure reason; in his accounts of his own awakening and the origin of the critical philosophy, he credits the antinomy and his memory of David Hume. This essay suggests that Kant's primary aim in the first *Critique* was to find a resolution to the antinomy; an examination of this resolution shows Kant's memory of Hume critical to Kant's enterprise. Kant's resolution to the antinomy exploits metaphors of war, jurisprudence, slumber, and historical development, as well as his Transcendental Deduction and explanation of transcendental illusion, to unravel the riddle of metaphysics and provide for both the possibility of objective knowledge and the possibility of freedom.

INDEX WORDS: Immanuel Kant, David Hume, Dogmatic Slumber, Antinomy of Pure Reason, Illusion of Reason, Critical Philosophy

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SARAH ALEXANDER

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In his letter to Garve and *Prolegomena,* Kant provides two apparently conflicting accounts of the stimulus for a critique of reason. In the *Prolegomena*, Hume takes the role:

> I freely admit that the remembrance of *David Hume* was the very thing that many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave a completely different direction to my researches in the field of speculative philosophy. (4:260)

Six years later, in his letter to Christian Garve, Kant assigns the same role to the antinomy of pure reason:

> It was not the investigation of the existence of God, immortality, and so on but rather the antinomy of pure reason— "the world has a beginning; it has no beginning, and so on," right up to the 4th : "There is freedom in man, versus there is no freedom, only the necessity of nature" —that is what first aroused me from my dogmatic slumber and drove me to the critique of reason itself, in order to resolve the scandal of ostensible contradiction of reason with itself. (7:256-8)

Here Kant identifies two catalysts for the critical philosophy: his memory of David Hume, and the antinomy of pure reason. The accounts seem contradictory, for Kant claims that both first interrupted his dogmatic slumber. Yet Kant's descriptions of their roles in the formation of the critical philosophy hardly present a contradiction: his memory of Hume gave "a completely different direction" to his work in speculative philosophy, while the antinomy provided a particular aim — "resolving

the scandal of ostensible contradiction of reason with itself" — and a way to achieve this aim: the critique of reason itself.

In this essay I suggest that Kant's accounts of the formation of the critical philosophy are accurate and compatible. Scandalized by an ostensible contradiction of reason with itself, Kant hopes to provide a resolution to the antinomy in a critique of pure reason. Simultaneously subject and object, judge and plaintiff, reason reflects in this critique on its own capacities; it legitimates and dismisses its own rights and pretensions. If reason *does* contradict itself, as the appearance of the antinomy suggests, reason cannot rightly judge about its own capacities. So the critique of pure reason aims both to legitimate its capacity to rule (to show that reason does not contradict itself), and to express its capacity to know its own capacities. Put simply, the critique is an expression of self-ruling (autonomous) reason, and a legitimating of reason's autonomy. Kant's memory of Hume gives this critique a clear direction, providing insights about what the critique should include, about the origin of the appearance of a contradiction of reason with itself, and about how to avoid Hume's conclusions that most threaten human autonomy.

0.1

Near the end of the *Critique*, Kant provides a brief and abstract history of human reason. In its dogmatic childhood, reason is sleepy, stubborn, deaf to criticism, and blind to its own capacities. The dogmatist mandates that others think like him. In its skeptical form, reason distinguishes itself from dogmatism and reflects on its dogmatic wanderings, but does not yet have complete knowledge of

itself, its own rights and determinate limits (A761/B789). The skeptic attempts to think for herself, but since she lacks complete self-knowledge, merely thinks in reaction to dogmatism and mandates that others adopt her own position.[1]

In its dogmatic and skeptical forms, reason is heteronomous. It does not know itself at all (in the case of dogmatism), or only knows itself in part (in the case of skepticism), and so lacks the power to rule itself, to think and act autonomously. While heteronomy entails relying on the rule of others, autonomy entails being to be able to give oneself the law, to rule for oneself about one's own rights and capacities. Kant contrasts these pictures of developing reason with an image of reason in its mature form. Here is critical, self-aware, and thus autonomous; reason fully knows it capacities, rights, and limits, and it employs this knowledge to rule itself.

In his accounts of the origin of the critical philosophy, Kant connects his pictures of reason's development and his own awakening with juridical metaphor: the antinomy is a conflict of laws; dogmatic slumber and Humean skepticism are emblematic of heteronomy; a critique of reason is a critical account of reason's self-knowledge, an image of autonomy. But for reason to be autonomous, it must not be divided against itself. Mature or critical reason must be able to rule for itself about a conflict of laws, about the antinomy. Kant's description of the antinomy, and his resolution to the antinomy – the critique of reason itself – rely on the same linked juridical and developmental metaphors.

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[1] While Kant treats many forms of skepticism, he most closely associates this position with David Hume.

Kant first articulated a nascent version of the antinomy of pure reason in his 1770 *Inaugural Dissertation*; in its final articulation various theses of metaphysics are pitted against one another, with equally compelling and logically correct proofs for each thesis. For example, the first pits "The world has a beginning in time," against, "The world has no beginning in time," and the third pits "There is only natural causality," against "There is, aside from natural causality, the causality of freedom." Thus the antinomy gives the appearance of a "contradiction of reason with itself," the reality of which no Enlightenment thinker, and especially Kant, would like to confirm (7:256-8).

Kant does not name the apparent contradiction of reason with itself 'antinomy' until its appearance in the first *Critique*. The name is significant, for it indicates a conflict of laws. The players in this conflict, not surprisingly, are dogmatists and skeptics. Those who cling blindly to the thesis or antithesis position, and who seek to fell their opponent with well-executed logical arguments exemplify dogmatism. Blind to the logical validity of his opponent's claim, the dogmatist sees only that reason supports his claim. He does not admit a genuine conflict of laws, but hopes that reason will silence his opponent. Those who, seeing that the conflict cannot be resolved by appealing to more logical arguments, throw up their hands in a joyful despair, Kant calls skeptical. The skeptic sees a genuine conflict of laws, but also sees that reason cannot resolve the conflict and can only perpetuate it. The antinomy appears to be a conflict of reason with itself, a conflict between one set of rules for making arguments and another set of rules. Kant's dogmatists pursue the

conflict with hope for certain victory, and his skeptic suggests that the conflict indicates that reason really is conflicted with itself, and unreliable.

The antinomy and the dogmatic and skeptical solutions to this conflict of laws are deeply at odds with Kant's own systematic aims of aiding advances in knowledge and contributing to the restoration of the rights of humankind. Nevertheless, these aims demand that the conflict be resolved. For, on the one hand, if reason is genuinely conflicted with itself, neither the natural sciences nor metaphysics can hope to produce genuine knowledge. And on the other, if reason contradicts itself, it cannot hope to lay claim to intellectual — or practical— autonomy. To resolve the conflict, Kant conceives of a court of reason, wherein reason confirms its rightful claims to knowledge, and dismisses those to which it enjoys no right. This court is, in one sense, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, an expression of autonomous reason. In this court, reason rules for itself that it has a right to rule itself; that is, the court both exemplifies and legitimates intellectual autonomy.

0.2

This essay is an analysis of Kant's resolution to the antinomy of pure reason. In it I argue that this resolution requires a critique of pure reason, a critique funded in part by Kant's memory of Hume.[2] In section one, I argue that Kant's problem with

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[2] This essay is concerned with Kant's memory of Hume, which I treat as roughly equivalent to Kant's caricature of 'the skeptic'. Unless I indicate otherwise, explicitly or with a quotation from Hume's works, I mean by 'Hume' Kant's Hume. Hume is, for Kant, emblematic of skepticism. But the terms 'skeptic' and 'skepticism' gloss over the many peculiar forms skepticism takes. For example, skepticism might entail doubt about the reliability of reason itself, or merely doubt about the availability of a

the antinomy — that it presents an ostensible contradiction of reason with itself — delineates a complex set of criteria for its resolution. Taken as a genuine expression of reason, the antinomy presents a threat to the possibility of intellectual autonomy: it renders reason's supposed capacity to rule about its own rights and pretensions suspect, and hinders the advance of knowledge. It hinders the advance of knowledge by opening objective scientific knowledge to doubt, by casting suspicion on the possibility of knowledge or progress in metaphysics, and by highlighting the practical dangers of the free public exercise of reason. Put differently, if the antinomy is taken as evidence of conflicted reason, reason cannot hope for its own maturity or autonomy. Practically, this means the end of the Enlightenment hope that reason could provide a universal law for progress in knowledge and for perpetual peace.

In order to provide a proper resolution to the antinomy, or — what is the same — to show that the antinomy is not evidence that reason is in conflict with itself, Kant conceives of the critique as a court in which reason rules about its own rights and pretensions. This court will attempt to set metaphysics on the secure course of a science by 1) showing synthetic *a priori* judging is possible, 2) giving an account of

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criterion that would allow us to decide about which claims count as justified or justifiable. Michael Forster delineates three kinds of skepticism at play in the first *Critique*: "veil of perception" skepticism, Humean skepticism, and Pyrrhonian skepticism in his essay, "Kant and Skepticism." While these distinctions can be quite useful, I've chosen to simply apply the term where (and as) Kant applies it. Put practically: do not be surprised when I report that Kant predicates things of Hume and skepticism that are not properly predicated of Hume or of all forms of skepticism. And more bluntly: both 'Hume' and 'the skeptic' are names for a straw man. But I aim here to present the beauty of Kant's argument in its own historical situation, not to evaluate its plausibility.

the origin of "endless battle" in metaphysics, and 3) suggesting how metaphysics might hope to progress in knowledge. Kant suggests that progress in the sciences depends on recognizing what we put into cognition; to put metaphysics on the secure course of a science, Kant must give an account of what human beings put into cognition *a priori*.

Kant's reflection on what we put into cognition issues in a way to fulfill the second set of requirements for a successful resolution to the antinomy. These requirements stem from Kant's assessment of Hume's failed solution to the antinomy and his interest in contributing to the restoration of the rights of mankind. Kant's resolution must avoid the problems of Hume's solution — denying reason the right to practical use of claims that are not knowledge and the theoretical possibility of freedom — while upholding Hume's insightful claim that antinomial claims are not knowledge.

After outlining the requirements for a successful resolution to the antinomy, I suggest that Kant meets these requirements, aided by his memory of Hume, in the two major sections of the *Critique*. In section two I argue that the conclusions of the Analytic (particularly the Transcendental Deduction) 1) show synthetic *a priori* judging possible, and 2) provide the first step toward an account of the origin of endless battle in metaphysics. Primarily an exposition of Kant's answer to the skeptic's question *quid juris* (by what right), section two highlights the role of the Transcendental Deduction in Kant's resolution to the antinomy. The Transcendental Deduction points to the conclusion that claims to knowledge of things that are not

objects of possible experience are, as the skeptic claims, made by no right. The Deduction also suggests that all our representations and cognitions are temporally determined; temporal determination is a condition of the possibility of objective knowledge, but also a condition of any representation whatsoever. So the Deduction points up a way forward in metaphysics: recognizing that we put time into all our representations and cognitions.

In section three I suggest that Kant's account of transcendental illusion makes full use of this recognition. Metaphysics does not progress because it does not recognize what human beings put into cognition *a priori*. We put time into cognition *a priori*. In the Dialectic Kant argues that reason demands that we attempt to represent ideas like soul, God, and world. These ideas are not objects of possible experience. But we inevitably represent these ideas as temporally determined. Thus metaphysics goes about in circles when it does not recognize that its talk about soul, God, and world is temporally determined.

In this account, Kant draws on Hume's exposition of metaphysical error — but uses his own account against Hume's charge. Kant reconfigures Hume's insights that error arises from the imagination, it arises when what is merely subjective is passed off as objective. But, while Hume concludes that there is no unity of reason, Kant's account shows that transcendental illusion arises from the unity of reason. Transcendental illusion is the work of "unnoticed influence of sensibility on understanding" via the imagination, and it occurs when subjectively useful concepts are passed off as objectively valid concepts.

Section four details Kant's successful resolution to the antinomy. This resolution uses the conclusions of the Analytic and the beginning of the Dialectic to show the antinomy an illusion: the warring dogmatists argue about nothing. Kant's resolution exploits the *Critique'*s juridical metaphor and analysis of transcendental illusion to show unfounded the skeptical Hume's hopes that reason will rule that metaphysical claims must be relinquished. Further, the resolution is consistent with Kant's systematic aims – it contributes to the advance of knowledge by unraveling the riddle of metaphysics, and it contributes to the restoration of the rights of humankind by permitting the practical use of the theoretical possibility of freedom. Both of these contributions support Kant's hope that reason will mature and exercise autonomy. For without self-knowledge, reason cannot properly rule itself in theoretical matters (of knowledge), and without the possibility of freedom, reason cannot give itself the law, cannot properly rule itself practically.

1.0

Kant's criteria for a successful resolution to the antinomy lie in his conception of the problem. In his letter to Christian Garve and his introduction to the Antithetic, Kant provides two direct descriptions of the problem of the antinomy: it presents a scandalous picture of reason in contradiction with itself, and it tempts reason to fall either into dogmatic stubbornness or skeptical despair. In the Antithetic, the prefaces to both editions of the *Critique*, in his resolution to the Antinomy, and his comments on this resolution in the Doctrine of Method, Kant characterizes the antinomy as an international conflict – as an endless war, or an international conflict of laws for which reason cannot give a final judgment. Kant's reports about his problem with the antinomy and the images he uses to depict the conflict uniformly point to a more general problem: if the appearance of a conflict of reason with itself betrays a *real* conflict of reason with itself, the conflict threatens to render impossible Kant's systematic aims of contributing to the advance of knowledge and the rights of mankind.

In 1765 Kant reports a change in his systematic aim: he was previously concerned with the advance of knowledge, particularly in the field of metaphysics, but after reading Rousseau, his focus shifted toward the restoration of the rights of mankind.

> I am a scientist by inclination. I know the thirst for knowledge and the deep satisfaction of every advance of knowledge. There was a time when I believed all this knowledge could be the honor of mankind, and I despised all those who were bereft of such knowledge. Rousseau

> has corrected me. I learned to honor man, and I would consider myself less worthy than the average worker if I did not believe that all this
> [i.e., philosophy] could contribute to what really matters—the restoration of the rights of mankind. (20:45)

Kant's primary concern in the first *Critique* is the advance of knowledge. Yet his resolution to the antinomy evidences this second systematic aim — contributing to the restoration of the rights of mankind — as well.

As the wording of a question sets limits on what counts as an answer, Kant's conception of the *problem* of the antinomy — how it is opposed to his systematic aims —sets particular limits on how the antinomy might be resolved. Kant uses the familiar metaphors of reason's development and juridical procedure to characterize the problem with the antinomy as an international conflict, one that must be resolved if Kant is to advance his own systematic aims.

Kant puts the problem of the antinomy in two ways. In his letter to Christian Garve, Kant claims that the antinomy of pure reason "drove [him] to the critique of reason itself, in order to resolve the scandal of ostensible contradiction of reason with itself" (7:256-8).[3] This description perhaps best expresses Kant's theoretical and practical problems with the antinomy, because if reason genuinely is in contradiction with itself, Kant's hopes for advancing knowledge (particularly in metaphysics) and for contributing to the rights of mankind are ill founded. Put differently, if reason is in contradiction with itself, the Enlightenment hope for intellectual autonomy falls

[3] Thus it provides both a motivation (resolving the scandal) and a particular aim (the critique of reason itself) for Kant's work.

apart.[4] In his introduction to the antinomy, Kant suggests that it "leads reason into the temptation either to surrender itself to a skeptical hopelessness or else to assume an attitude of dogmatic stubbornness" (A407/B434). The antinomy leads reason to believe in its own inability to govern itself.

The antinomy presents Kant with a series of theoretical problems and a practical problem. From a theoretical standpoint, the problem of the antinomy is that it calls the unity of reason, and thus the possibility of advance in knowledge into question. From a practical standpoint, the problem of the antinomy is that it hinders human autonomy — it occasions temptations to dogmatic stubbornness and skeptical despair, to heteronomy. The practical problem is primarily one of intellectual freedom, for as long as the dogmatist or skeptic holds political power, the threat of censorship holds the exercise of intellectual autonomy at bay. This section details Kant's conception of the problem of the antinomy and what a proper resolution would require: Kant conceives of the antinomy as a conflict of international law expressed as an endless and bloody war of metaphysics; the conflict can be resolved only in reason's court, the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

1.1

Kant claims that the antinomy of pure reason "drove [him] to the critique of reason itself, in order to resolve the scandal of ostensible contradiction of reason with

[4] Reason can hardly hope to govern itself peaceably if its own dictums oppose one another. That is, to be autonomous, reason must govern over all possible sets of laws, over everything in its jurisdiction.

itself" (7:256-8).[5] He takes the antinomy as emblematic of the stalled progress of metaphysics, which is in a state of endless and bloody war. He begins the first-edition Preface with a description of the problem of metaphysics:

> Human reason has the peculiar fate in one species of its cognitions that it is burdened with questions which it cannot dismiss, since they are given to it as problems by the nature of reason itself, but which it also cannot answer, since they transcend every capacity of human reason. Reason falls into this perplexity through no fault of its own. [….] The battlefield of these endless controversies is called metaphysics. (Avii – viii)[6]

He echoes the claim in the second-edition Preface, characterizing metaphysics as an exercise in "retrac[ing] our path countless times," as an enterprise so "far from reaching unanimity in the assertions of its adherents that it is rather a battlefield [… on which] no combatant has ever gained the least bit of ground" (Bxv). The battle metaphor drives the entire second chapter of the Dialectic, and there Kant revisits the themes of the Preface: the antithetic is a wholly natural snare, one "every human reason must necessarily come up against in the course of its progress," and which is "a dialectical battlefield […. that has] often been entered, both sides gaining many victories," but none ultimately decisive (A423/B451). The antinomy is an endless battle, emblematic of the inability of metaphysics to make progress as a science.

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[5] Thus it provides both a motivation (resolving the scandal) and a particular aim (the critique of reason itself) for Kant's work.

[6] The problem is framed in the same way in the introduction to the antithetic: it is wholly natural, a trap into which "reason falls of itself and unavoidably," a battleground for endless war (A407/B434).

Kant hopes to set metaphysics on the secure course of a science, but metaphysics itself is in a state of war, constantly fighting about whether or not the world has a beginning in time, whether anything is a simple, whether there is only natural causality or also freedom, whether a necessary being exists. A series of perfectly logical arguments for each the of antithetical positions in the four conflicts supports the conclusion that reason *does* contradict itself, and that there is no warrant for hoping that metaphysics can make any progress as a science. Put simply, the antinomy makes it seem as if metaphysics *is* hopelessly fated to continue fighting as it does, for the very arbitrator (reason) we might hope could indicate a winner only seems to perpetuate the conflict.

Drawing on the word's history, Kant also connects the antinomy with international conflict. 'Antinomy' simply refers to a conflict between laws. It may refer to an intranational conflict, or, more often, an international legal conflict.[7] Kant conceives of this international legal conflict as a conflict between two parties that both claim a right to a single property or title. For example, one party argues that she has a right to make the knowledge claim that the world has a beginning in time. She uses a well-reasoned *reductio* to give proof of her right to the claim. A second party, using a perfectly executed *reductio,* gives evidence of his right to knowledge that the world does not have a beginning in time. Each party claims a right to make some claim about the beginning of the world, and supports his claim using reasonable

[7] 'Intranational' and 'international' are anachronistic, yet useful. For the purposes of this essay, I use 'international conflict' not to indicate conflicts between nation states, but conflicts between independently governed territories.

proofs. But again, the best arbitrator only perpetuates the conflict. Reason should be able to say which party has the right to make her claim, since nothing is more clear than that both parties have this right; yet reason, since it creates and is convinced by both proofs, cannot.

Kant's problem with the antinomy is two-fold: on the one hand, the appearance of a contradiction of reason with itself threatens to undermine the unity of reason and thus the possibility of advance in knowledge. On the other hand, it "leads reason into the temptation either to surrender itself to a skeptical hopelessness or else to assume an attitude of dogmatic stubbornness" (A407/B434). The dogmatist and skeptic are the players in Kant's conflict; Kant's presentation of their positions and solutions to the antinomy points up a conflict with Kant's systematic aims and the requirements for a successful (critical) resolution.

The dogmatist's stubbornness prevents the advance of knowledge, for he clings to the notion that reason really does legitimate *his* right to make *his* claim to know the truth about, e.g., the beginning of the world. His stubbornness blinds him to the possibility that reason legitimates his opponent's right to her claim.[8] Thus he is caught in a battle whose only conceivable end is his own victory. In reality, the dogmatist can only hope for a temporary solution wherein his opponent is forbidden to take up weapons, for as long as the dogmatist can keep on the offensive, he can keep the upper hand (A422-3/B450).

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[8] He "assume[s] a dogmatic stubbornness, set[s] [his] mind rigidly to certain assertions without giving a fair hearing to the grounds for the opposite" (A407/B434).

The hope for such a solution is a hope for censorship, a hope that the dogmatist's own supporters acquire the power to silence the exercise of reason in his opponent. Dogmatic stubbornness inhibits the advance of knowledge on two fronts: first, it does not seek progress in knowledge, but seeks to affirm a claim to the dubious knowledge it has already, and second, it seeks an end to its conflict that squelches the exercise of reason. Put differently, Kant's problem with the dogmatist is his lack of autonomy. The dogmatist is heteronomous. He dogmatist has no sense of his error, does not admit that he could be in error, and can only imagine the conflict ending with a ruling in his favor. He cannot think for himself, and demands that others think like him.

The dogmatic expression of heteronomy inhibits the advance of knowledge because it seeks war instead of progress, and censorship instead of the free exercise of reason. For Kant, censorship denies a fundamental human right: the right to free exercise of reason. So long as dogmatists are engaged in their endless and bloody battle, the possibility of a free public discourse is held in check. If we take the Pietists as examples of dogmatism, we might better see Kant's concern. So long as the Pietists held political power, and were committed to one antinomic thesis or another, they could mandate that no opposite argument could be published. For Kant, this is problematic on two fronts: first, it prevents the free public discourse or exercise of intellectual autonomy. Second, it gives the appearance (at least in published work) that there is no antinomy, that no arguments for the opposite side are rational. Both results are detrimental to reason's maturity, for they aim to keep

people in dogmatic chains (heteronomy), and attempt to squelch out even skeptical heteronomy. Kant's claim that his memory of Hume aroused him from dogmatic slumber, then, shows how detrimental dogmatic rule is for reason's progress in maturity.

While the skeptic sees that the warring metaphysicians will not find peace by their own efforts, he recoils from the conflict, despairing over the possibility of any advance of knowledge in metaphysics. While the skeptic attempts to provide a solution – Hume hopes to provide a new metaphysics – this solution, on Kant's account, rejects the possibility of advance in knowledge, particularly in metaphysics. Kant speaks of Hume's response to the antinomy variously as despair and joy, as a decisive blow to metaphysics, and an insightful, but not acceptable, solution to the antinomy.

Kant takes the despairing skeptic's blow to metaphysics as a decisive rejection of hope for the possibility of knowledge or progress in the field.

> Since the Essays of *Locke* and *Leibniz*, or rather since the rise of metaphysics as far as the history of it reaches, no event has occurred that could have been more decisive with respect to the fate of this science than the attack made upon it by *David Hume*. He brought no light to this kind of knowledge, but he certainly struck a spark from which a light could well have been kindled, if it had hit some welcoming tender whose glow was carefully kept going and made to grow. (4:257)

Hume's attack on metaphysics consisted in his rejection of the possibility of knowledge of causal claims. Causal reasoning concerns relationships between

matters of fact, not necessary truths.[9] Matters of fact can be discovered by experience, but causal relationships between them cannot. Hume argues that since effects are distinct from causes – since we can always conceive of one happening and the other not – causal relationships are not *a priori* relationships. The knowledge of cause and effect "is not, in any instance, attained by reasonings *a priori*; but arises entirely from experience, when we find that any particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other."[10] People believe themselves to have causal knowledge when, after repeatedly observing similar acts, objects, or operations, they come to expect the acts, objects, or operations they have associated or conjoined with them. Thus causal beliefs are not knowledge about some objective ordering of the world, but merely beliefs that arise from the subjective conjunction of empirical experiences. Kant takes Hume's case to imply a complete rejection of the possibility of knowledge in metaphysics, science, and mathematics.[11]

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[9] David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Antony Flew (La Salle: Open Court 1988)., 71.
[10]David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Antony Flew (La Salle: Open Court 1988)., 73.
[11] Such claims are the result of "a mere delusion of an alleged insight of reason into that which has in fact merely been borrowed from experience and from habit has taken on the appearance of necessity" (B19-20). They occur when "reason completely and fully deceives herself with this concept, falsely taking it for her own child, when it is really nothing but a bastard of the imagination, which, impregnated by experience, having brought certain representations under the law of association, passes off the resulting subjective necessity (i.e., habit) for an objective necessity (from insight)" (4:258). -- "Now from the incapacity of our reason to make a use of this principle that goes beyond all experience, he inferred the nullity of all pretensions of reason in general to go beyond the empirical" (A760/B788).

Hume's solution to the endless battle of metaphysics is simple and intuitive: the warring dogmatists make their claims by no right; we can demand that these warmongers give up their claims, and the war will end. So the skeptic enters the court of reason with a claim against warring dogmatist parties. He produces evidence that their claims are made by no right, and rules that the claims must be given up – both practically and theoretically.

While it has the power to arouse people from dogmatic slumber, the skeptic's position is no less heteronomous than the dogmatist's. The skeptical solution, which suggests that dogmatic claims are made by no right and demands they be relinquished, is a mere reaction to dogmatism. The skeptic allows dogmatic error to dictate his solution, and demands (dogmatically) that the dogmatists conform to his own position, that they assent to the notion that their claims are unjustified. Again, this demand is tantamount to a demand for censorship. If Hume held political power, both the Pietists and the Spinozists would be censored or disarmed. While it may seem a fine solution, it denies the possibility of a free public discourse, advance in knowledge, and the theoretical possibility of freedom. It does not promote autonomy in the sphere of knowledge or the sphere of action.

Hume's solution denies the possibility of the advance of knowledge – in both science and metaphysics. While Kant admits that it is insightful, he rejects Hume's solution to the antinomy on the basis that it does not promote the advance of knowledge. Hume's solution, on Kant's account, is also opposed to Kant's aim of restoring the rights of mankind. Kant puts his criticism thus:

> The acute man was, however, looking only to the negative benefit that curbing the excessive claims of speculative reason would have, in completely abolishing so many endless and continual conflicts that perplex the human species; he meanwhile lost sight of the positive harm that results if reason is deprived of the most important vistas, from which alone it can stake out for the will the highest goal of all the will's endeavors. (4:238)

Here Kant claims that Hume's solution to the antinomy (demanding that rights to metaphysical claims like those in the antithetic be relinquished) falls short of a proper resolution because it does harm to reason by depriving it of the use of freedom.

Kant suggests that a proper resolution to the antinomy will not deprive reason of the use of freedom. While it seems a strange conclusion, it is not unwarranted. Kant notices that the third antinomy treats the causality of freedom and the causality of nature. If Kant, like Hume, denies a right to claims about freedom and causality, he will simultaneously deny the theoretical possibility of freedom. Better put: wholly denying a right to claims about freedom and causality means wholly denying a right to talk about freedom, even as a theoretical possibility. For Kant, this solution is unacceptable, for without the theoretical possibility of freedom, he can hardly hope to contribute to the restoration of the rights of mankind.

The theoretical possibility of freedom aids Kant's aim in at least three ways: it gives grounds for legitimating a free public discourse, and so aids progress in autonomy —one's right to think for oneself —, it permits an hypothesis about freedom to be put to practical use, and it legitimates Kant's public discussion of

freedom in subsequent works, wherein he defines autonomy in the moral sphere — freedom to give oneself the law, to legislate one's own actions.

1.2

Kant conceives of the *Critique* as a court in which "reason may secure its rightful claims while dismissing all its groundless pretensions" (Axi). In this image, reason is both judge (it dismisses claims) and defendant (it may secure its rightful claims). We might imagine the critique a courtroom wherein reason puts questions to itself, and affirms or denies its own rights.

This image provides Kant with a way to give a proper resolution to the antinomy. Conceived as a conflict of international law, the antinomy lends itself to a juridical resolution. Kant knows of a legal procedure by which conflicts of international law can be resolved: the deduction. The aim of deduction writings was to "justify controversial legal claims between the numerous rulers of the independent territories, city republics, and other constituents of the Holy Roman Empire."[12] A deduction need not "presuppose a particular legal system with reference to which the entitlement becomes decidable," and so it is particularly useful in "international" conflicts.[13]

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[12] Dieter Henrich, "Kant's Notion of a Deduction and the Methodological Background of the First *Critique*," in *Kant's Transcendental Deductions*, ed. Eckhart Förster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 32.
[13] Dieter Henrich, "Kant's Notion of a Deduction and the Methodological Background of the First *Critique*," in *Kant's Transcendental Deductions*, ed. Eckhart Förster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 36.

Conceived as a juridical question, Kant sees the antithetical cosmological claims as an antinomy, a conflict of "international law." Seen this way (via skeptical *method*), the court of reason (which has universal, albeit self-limited, jurisdiction), can entertain a dispute between the dogmatist and skeptic.[14] The former claims that reason legitimates his right to *knowledge* of the truth of his claim, his right to practical use of this claim, and his right to request that his dogmatist opponent's rights to knowledge and use of her claims be relinquished. The latter claims that neither the dogmatist nor his dogmatist opponent have a right to knowledge of the truth of their claims, and demands that their supposed rights to knowledge and use of these claims be relinquished.

Because the dogmatist can see only that reason legitimates his claim, he cannot see that there is a conflict at all. To be sure, he may see that his opponent continues to fight; but his hope for peace is merely a hope for his own victory. He cannot conceive of the possibility that reason legitimates his opponent's claim, and hence cannot see a genuine conflict at all. He "assume[s] a dogmatic stubbornness, set[s] [his] mind rigidly to certain assertions without giving a fair hearing to the grounds for the opposite." (A407/B434). Put differently, the whole world is the dogmatist's territory. He does not recognize that the claims may have originated in different territories; rather, he "tear[s] down all […] boundary posts and […] lay[s] claim to a […] territory that recognizes no demarcations anywhere" (A296/B352).

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[14] Skeptical method is distinct from skepticism, and here means observing the conflict between the thesis and antithesis positions.

The only "resolution" to such a conflict occurs when the dogmatist's opponent is forbidden to take up weapons, for as long as the dogmatist can keep on the offensive, he can keep the upper hand (A422-3/B450).

From the dogmatist's perspective, there is no genuine conflict. The dogmatist is tossed into war because of his opponent's stubborn pugilism and his own hope for victory. The dogmatist does not recognize that, insofar as reason can legitimate his right to knowledge of the truth of his claim, reason can equally legitimate his opponent's rights. But from the perspective of one who — either from the skeptical ramparts or reason's raised judge's seat — sees that reason provides equally compelling proofs for both the dogmatist and his dogmatic opponent, the antinomy gives the appearance of a conflict of reason with itself. It seems as if reason should be able to give a final ruling about who is right; but since reason (expressed as logical proof) seems to legitimate both claims, reason seems only to perpetuate the conflict.

Both the dogmatist and the skeptic erroneously assume that a right to *knowledge* of a claim entails a right to practical employment. Thus the dogmatist, certain that reason legitimates his right to knowledge, assumes a right to use of his claims, and a right to demand that his opponent's claims be dismissed as illegitimate knowledge, and to demand that his opponent's use of these claims be relinquished. The skeptic, certain that dogmatic claims are not *knowledge*, assumes that this entails a right to demand that their practical use be relinquished. Thus the skeptic sees a conflict, and hopes to resolve it by showing that the opposed parties' claims are made

by no right, and demanding that any rights to claim these as knowledge or to practically use them be relinquished.

But neither the skeptic nor the dogmatist can rule autonomously for peace. The dogmatist can only hope that a government will endorse his position, and strike down his opponent's rights. For the dogmatist, intellectual freedom is impossible and useless. The skeptic can only hope that a government will endorse his claims and enforce his hoped-for ruling. Since reason is divided against itself, the antinomy needs a different solution: one in which metaphysical claims are willingly relinquished, or forcefully demanded. Put simply, neither the skeptic nor the dogmatist has recourse to reason as a judge who might rule for peace. Although he cannot see that his opponents have a law-of-reason of their own, a distinct territory with distinct rules, the dogmatist trusts that both he and his opponent live in a single territory under the rule of (his own) reason. Thus dogmatic reason cannot rule for peace, because such reason sees no genuine conflict. In its skeptical form, reason cannot rule for peace, either. Although the skeptic sees the antinomy as an international conflict of laws, he recoils from the conflict, despairing that there is no higher court of reason that could solve the conflict. Although he hopes that someone (something) will rule that the dogmatists' supposed rights will be demanded of them, he cannot appeal to a unified ruling reason to do this. For the skeptic takes the antinomy to be certain evidence that reason really is in contradiction with itself. And the skeptical hope for peace is nothing but the skeptical hope for universal skepticism.

1.3

A successful resolution to the antinomy will both express and legitimate intellectual autonomy. A successful resolution to the antinomy will contribute to the advance of knowledge by setting metaphysics on the secure course of a science. To accomplish this, Kant must 1) show that metaphysics is possible, 2) provide a convincing story about the origin of the endless battles in metaphysics, and 3) offer an alternative to this endless battle. A successful resolution to the antinomy will contribute to the restoration of the rights of mankind by establishing that freedom is theoretically possible, and that reason maintains the right to *use* its idea of freedom within the practical sphere. A successful resolution will also contribute to the rights of mankind by showing that reason *can* operate autonomously; intellectual autonomy presents no real political threat.

Kant uses a deduction in the Transcendental Analytic to show that metaphysics is possible and to begin to give a story about the origin of endless battle in metaphysics. Framed as an answer to the question, "*quid juris*" (by what right), the Transcendental Deduction shows (contra Hume) that synthetic *a priori* judging is possible. This is tantamount to showing the possibility of metaphysics.

The Transcendental Deduction begins an account of the origin of the riddle of metaphysics by drawing attention to what we put into cognition. In the *Critique*'s Preface, Kant suggests that knowledge advances in a particular field only when its practitioners recognize what they put into cognition. For example, physics made great progress when

> those who study nature […] comprehended that reason has insight only into what it itself produces according to its own design; that it must take the lead with principles for its judgments according to constant laws and compel nature to answer its questions, rather than letting nature guide its movements by keeping reason, as it were, in leading-strings […] (Bxiii)

Metaphysics can hope to progress in knowledge only when it recognizes what it puts into cognition. In metaphysics, this recognition provides the first step toward uncovering an answer to why metaphysicians can always give equally well-supported arguments for contradictory cosmological claims. This recognition is simultaneously a step toward autonomy, for it involves self-knowledge and permits the discipline to legislate about its own rights and pretensions. The Transcendental Deduction suggests that we put time into all our representations and cognitions, and thus provides a clue about what prevents progress in metaphysics, and how it can hope to gain autonomy.

In the Transcendental Dialectic, Kant continues his account of reason's capacities, and the court of reason continues to rule — this time dismissing reason's illegitimate pretensions to knowledge. Here Kant continues the story about what prevents progress in metaphysics by giving an account of transcendental illusion. Here Kant draws on Hume's description of the error of metaphysics to show that an illusion arises when we forget that we put time into every representation and cognition, and believe we have knowledge of things like soul, world, and God. So the dogmatic claims in the antithetic are not — as Hume suggested— knowledge. Nevertheless, Kant's account of why such claims are not knowledge differs

significantly from Hume's, for Kant's stems from a clear delineation of the limits and bounds of reason's capacities.

Yet simply showing that these claims are not knowledge is not enough to resolve the antinomy. Hume tried this solution when he attempted to show that a science of metaphysics is impossible, and suggested that claims about the unknowable must be relinquished. Hume's solution fails because it hopes for heteronomy (censorship) and because it denies the theoretical possibility of freedom. In Kant's resolution to the antinomy, reason's court must rule that the antithetical claims are not knowledge, while permitting their practical use and maintaining the theoretical possibility of freedom.

We would be right to look for a deduction to resolve the antinomy. Yet in Kant's resolution to the antinomy, no deduction appears. Nevertheless, his resolution is wholly successful, and the court of reason rules in such a way that perpetual peace is possible. This resolution is the subject of section four; for now, we can proceed to the Analytic.

2.0

Kant's answer to *quid juris*, by what right can we make claims to objective knowledge, stands as the centerpiece of the Analytic and the entire *Critique*. It takes

the form of what he calls a Transcendental Deduction. Kant claims that his reflection on Hume's work first gave him the idea for such a deduction. And, while the Transcendental Deduction is not a direct response to Hume, Kant does frame it as an answer to the skeptical question: by what right do people make claims to synthetic *a priori* knowledge. Kant's answer entails a proof of the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgment, and so a first step toward putting metaphysics on the secure course of a science. Thus Kant's answer advances knowledge in metaphysics.

Kant's answer provides for his successful resolution to the antinomy in three important ways. First, it limits knowledge to objects of possible experience, and so permits the possibility that the antinomy's antithetical claims are not knowledge, not claims to which their possessors have a right. The conclusion is in line with Hume's suggestion that antithetical metaphysical claims are made by no right. But, while Hume's claim entailed the impossibility of any metaphysical knowledge (including laws of nature), Kant's conclusion that the claims of the antithetic are made by no right stems from his claim that we do enjoy a right to some metaphysical knowledge. Second, it lends credibility to Kant's claim in the Aesthetic that human beings (including metaphysicians) put space and time into cognition *a priori*. Progress in metaphysics depends on metaphysicians recognizing what human beings put into cognition *a priori*; Kant's account directs metaphysical reflection toward the pure forms of intuition. Third, Kant's answer provides a reflection what we put into

cognition. It contains a difficult and deep account of *how* time-consciousness is a condition for the possibility of having any mental representation, and thus any cognition. This account makes way for an explication of transcendental illusion, which is crucial to Kant's resolution to the antinomy.

2.1

Kant's answer to *quid juris* develops out of his hypothesis that there are two fundamental faculties, sensibility and understanding, which each contribute to knowledge. In the Aesthetic, Kant introduces sensibility as a receptive faculty of intuition, and in the Transcendental Logic he introduces understanding as an active faculty of cognition. The Transcendental Deduction explains how sensibility and understanding can combine to produce knowledge. More technically, it shows that the categories of the understanding are objectively valid *a priori* for objects of possible experience. So Kant suggests that our right to make knowledge claims about objects of possible experience derives from the activity of the mind.

This claim is a first step toward unraveling the riddle of metaphysics, because it entails a proof of the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judging. It also helps to unravel the riddle of metaphysics by suggesting that since we can uncover the active structure of our minds to which objects conform, metaphysicians can recognize what they put into a cognition. For Kant, this recognition of what we put into cognition is crucial for the advance of knowledge, or, put differently, progress in science. Since the activity of our minds determines how and what we know, we can have epistemic

certainty about objects of possible experience, we can employ synthetic *a priori* concepts, and we can recognize what we put into cognition.

In the Aesthetic Kant claims that all objects of sensible intuition must conform to the constitution of the faculty of intuition – put simply, that all objects of intuition are determined by its pure *a priori* forms: space and time in the case of objects of external experience, time in the case of objects of internal experience. Space is the pure form of outer intuition, and time is the pure form of inner intuition. While space and time both inform outward experience, time alone informs inner experience. For example, if I experience a bowl of popcorn, I experience it in a particular place and a particular time. But if I experience joy or a mathematical theorem, my experience is tied to a particular time – but not a particular place. The active structure of our minds demands that *we* add space and time to sensible intuition. Part of making progress in metaphysics is recognizing that space and time are not characteristics of objects (things-in-themselves), but rather all objects *appear to us* in terms of space and time.

Sensibility is a receptive faculty, which, separate from the active faculty of the understanding, yields no knowledge. Sensible intuition taken apart from the categories of the understanding is nothing for us. The categories are *a priori*, and belong to the *active* faculty or understanding. They concern quantity, quality, relation, etc., and must be combined with sensibility before we can represent objects of sensibility. Kant argues that the activity of the mind imparts form to sensible intuition and provides the categories with which to make sense of such intuition.

2.2

In the Transcendental Deduction, Kant shows that the categories of the understanding are *a priori* valid for objects of possible experience, and that the activity of our minds makes the combination of such categories with sensible intuition possible. Put simply: sensibility and understanding can be combined such that the outcome is knowledge. Kant's argument proceeds in two steps.

In the first step of the Transcendental Deduction, Kant argues that all my representations are mine — they belong to a single transcendental unity of apperception, which he calls the "I-think." If all my representations are mine, and all my representations are, at the very least, tied to a particular time, then all my representations take place in a single, linear temporal order. This means that, before I can represent an object, it must be united under the pure form of inner intuition, and it must be temporally determined in a way that makes the representation available to me — I must be able to think about it as having a particular place in a single temporal order.

Here Kant draws on the character of the pure form of inner intuition: it both informs a manifold (a possibly sensible something) and contains a manifold. Space and time are not only represented *a priori* as forms of sensible intuition, but also as intuitions themselves (B160-1). As intuitions, space and time contain a manifold, and they are represented with "the determination of the unity of this manifold in them" (B160-1). In other words, space and time are represented as *a priori* forms of sensible intuition and as intuitions that contain a manifold. Representations of space

and time represent the manifold as singular, as already combined into a unity. Because space and time are pure forms of intuition that contain a manifold, they do not have the power (in themselves) to unite that manifold. In Kant's account of the *a priori* conditions for all my representations being mine, he suggests that the **imagination**, which belongs both to sensibility and understanding, has the power to *unify* the manifold of the inner form of pure intuition *a priori* (B151-2). Kant calls this unification the figurative synthesis of the imagination.

This figurative synthesis of the imagination is important because it helps to make possible the *a priori* combination of the pure categories of the understanding and the pure forms of intuition. It helps make it possible for me to have an *a priori* concept of an object in general, without which I could not have any experience at all. Put simply, before I can be aware of an object, I have to already have a sense about what an object is. This is not wholly unlike the following example: suppose I do not yet know what a table is, but I do know what a bed is; I encounter a table, but because I cannot conceive of it as a table, I experience it as a funny-looking (and perhaps rather uncomfortable-looking) bed. This example is about empirical concepts, but Kant's claim is about *a priori* concepts. One condition of my having any experience at all is that I have an *a priori* concept of an object in general. Since the pure forms of intuition (space and time) are *a priori* forms whose manifold is united by the figurative synthesis of the imagination, and the categories of the understanding are *a priori* categories, time and the categories can be combined *a priori* to produce a concept of an object in general. For this, the imagination must

produce a schema, or rule for subsuming objects under categories. To do so, the imagination combines the pure categories of the understanding with the pure form of inner intuition.[15]

In the second step of the Transcendental Deduction, Kant shows that all objects of possible experience can be united under the pure form of inner intuition. Kant suggests that the imaginative synthesis, which he calls the synthesis of apprehension, unites a manifold of empirical intuition (not the manifold of the pure form of inner intuition) under the form of inner intuition so that it can be mine – or, what is the same, so that I can represent it. This second step depends on the first, for without the *a priori* concept of an object in general made possible by the figurative synthesis, I would not have a rule for making an empirical manifold temporally determined such that it can be represented as mine, and combined with concepts of the understanding so as to yield knowledge.

In order for a manifold in an empirical intuition to be apprehended and thus available for combination with the categories, it must be combined in what Kant calls the synthesis of apprehension.

> The unity of the synthesis of the manifold, outside or within us, hence also a combination with which everything that is to be represented as determined in space or time must agree, is already given *a priori*,

[15] The mere being-there of *a priori* concepts and the pure form of *a priori* intuition is not sufficient to make their combination possible. For this, the imagination must actively combine the two *in conformity* with the transcendental unity of apperception. So the transcendental ground of this combination is the transcendental unity of apperception — the "I-think" which must be *able* to accompany all my representations.

> along with (not in) these intuitions, as condition of the synthesis of all apprehension. (B160-1)

The synthesis of apprehension can occur only in accordance with the form of time, and is carried out by the imagination (B160). The imagination synthesizes a sensibly informed manifold with space or time to form a unity – particularly, a unity that reflects the form of the synthetic unity of apperception. That is, the imaginative synthesis makes a manifold compatible with the transcendental unity of apperception, able to be represented to it, by uniting the manifold in such a way that it can stand in some particular temporal relation in the transcendental unity of apperception.[16]

Kant puts the point rather plainly at the close of §26:

> Now that which connects the manifold of sensible intuition is imagination, which depends on understanding for the unity of its intellectual synthesis and on sensibility for the manifoldness of apprehension. Now since all possible perception depends on the synthesis of apprehension, but the latter itself, this empirical synthesis, depends on the transcendental one, thus on the categories, all possible perceptions, hence everything that can ever reach empirical consciousness, i.e., all appearances of nature, as far as their combination is concerned, stand under the categories […] (B164-5)

Imagination synthesizes the manifold of sensible intuition, unifies it, and makes it available to the transcendental unity of apperception. Since the imagination has access to sensibility, the understanding, and is capable of spontaneous action, it can accomplish this task. Without the synthesis of apprehension, representation is not possible, since the I-think cannot accompany anything that cannot have a determinable time-relationship to it. However, with the synthesis of apprehension, which is possible for anything spatio-temporally or temporally intuited through the

[16] The transcendental unity of apperception makes the imaginative synthesis possible.

work of the imagination, a manifold can be unified and made capable of representation. Without the unification of a manifold in accordance with the form of time, representations are not possible. Further, the synthesis of apprehension ensures that the categories of the understanding are valid *a priori* for all objects of possible experience. For whatever I could possibly represent as an object – whatever is temporally unified such that it falls under my concept of an object in general – is something to which the concepts of the understanding can be rightly applied. Thus the Transcendental Deduction shows that we have a right to make knowledge claims about objects of possible experience because of the activity of our minds.

2.3

Because it shows that the *a priori* forms of intuition (space and time) can combine *a priori* with *a priori* categories of the understanding to form a concept of an object in general, the Transcendental Deduction shows that synthetic *a priori* judging is possible. This is tantamount to showing that metaphysics is possible. In the *Prolegomena,* Kant credits his discovery of this link and the necessity of a deduction to his memory of Hume.

> So I tried first whether Hume's objection might not be presented in a general manner, and I soon found that the concept of the connection of cause and effect is far from being the only concept through which the understanding thinks connections of things *a priori*; rather, metaphysics consists wholly of such concepts. I sought to ascertain their number, and as I has successfully attain this in the way I wished, namely from a single principle, I proceeded to the deduction of these concepts, from which I henceforth became assured that they were not, as Hume had feared, derived from experience, but had arisen from the pure understanding. (4:260)

The Transcendental Deduction undermines Hume's claim that progress in metaphysics is impossible by showing that synthetic *a priori* judging is possible.

But at the same time, the Transcendental Deduction shows just how insightful Hume's thoughts about metaphysics were, for one consequence of the Deduction is that reason has a right only to knowledge of objects of possible experience. Put negatively: we have no knowledge of the supersensible or of things-in-themselves; only things that can be informed by space and time and put under the categories are things about which knowledge is possible. Since knowledge is fundamentally combinatory, knowledge claims about things-in-themselves or pure concepts are made by no right.

Hume's work was an important catalyst for Analytic's centerpiece, the Transcendental Deduction; the Deduction both rules out Hume's solution to the antinomy by showing metaphysics possible as a science, and confirms Hume's insight that we have no right to much of what is claimed as metaphysical knowledge (knowledge of things-in-themselves, and knowledge of the supersensible).

The Analytic makes several important steps toward a resolution to the antinomy. It suggests that metaphysics is possible as a science by showing how synthetic *a priori* judging is possible. It directs metaphysicians toward reflection on what they put into cognition *a priori*, particularly time, and thus aids progress in metaphysics. Further, it contains an account of the conditions of human representation and cognition that ground Kant's analysis of the illusion of reason.

In the next section I suggest that recognizing that we put time into cognition, and recognizing the limits of possible knowledge, combined with a sense about the ever-striving character of reason, allows Kant to give a penetrating analysis of the epistemic status of the metaphysical claims in the antithetic, and of the illusion on which the antinomy (which gives rise to these claims) rests. This analysis exploits Hume's account of the error latent in causal claims, and ultimately provides for a resolution to the antinomy of pure reason that neither affirms Hume's skepticism nor allows the claims of the antithetic status as knowledge.

3.0

In the Dialectic, Kant continues his story about the origin of endless battle in metaphysics. For Kant, recognizing what we put into cognition *a priori* is the key to putting metaphysics on the secure path of a science. In the Analytic, Kant argues that we contribute certain synthetic *a priori* principles to cognition (e.g., space and time), and that, while we have a legitimate right to claims of knowledge of objects of possible experience, we have no right to claims of knowledge of things-in-themselves or to knowledge of the supersensible. Resolving the antinomy will require Kant to say in what sense the claims of the antithetic are misguided, and in what sense we can hope that reason can give a better direction to metaphysical inquiry. Kant begins this account with an analysis of the illusion of reason.

Kant's resolution to the antinomy rests on his analysis of the illusion of reason, an illusion effected "through the unnoticed influence of sensibility on understanding, through which it happens that the subjective grounds of judgment join with the objective ones," and the subjectively necessary inference to an idea of reason is taken to be objectively necessary, valid, and real (A294/B350). Kant's account of transcendental illusion exploits Hume's analysis of the error of metaphysics to show that the dogmatic metaphysical claims in the antithetic are not knowledge – a conclusion in line with Hume's hopes. Kant's account of transcendental illusion takes clues from Hume about how reason is duped into making claims to which it has no right, and makes use of the notion that we put time into cognition. In this section,

I briefly present how Kant's Hume accounts for the error of metaphysical claims, and then show how Kant uses key portions of this account in his analysis of transcendental illusion.

3.1

Kant's Hume notes that causal (and indeed all metaphysical) claims are "a mere delusion of an alleged insight of reason into that which has in fact merely been borrowed from experience and from habit has taken on the appearance of necessity" (B19-20). Here Kant alludes to Hume's argument that what we take to be knowledge of causality is in fact merely the result of custom. On Hume's account, we associate or conjoin objects and events so often that we come to expect that after one appears, the other necessarily follows. In this passage, Kant suggests that Hume attributed this error to a delusion of a dubious insight of reason. On this account, reason erroneously discovers that there is a necessary connection between objects or events, and is deluded into believing that this insight is legitimate. Thus people take the appearance of a necessary connection between objects or events as more than an appearance, as an objectively necessary connection.

Elsewhere Kant's Hume takes the error to occur when "reason completely and fully deceives herself with this concept, falsely taking it for her own child, when it is really nothing but a bastard of the imagination, which, impregnated by experience, having brought certain representations under the law of association, passes off the resulting subjective necessity (i.e., habit) for an objective necessity (from insight)"

(4:258).[17] On this more detailed picture, the appearance of causal relationships is the result of taking subjective conjunctions or associations as objective and necessary connections. Here the imagination does the work of association or conjunction, and produces the expectation that the future will be like the past. But reason deceives itself, and takes these subjective associations and the expectation they produce to be a *concept* of causality.

While Hume takes the concept of causality to be a "bastard of the imagination," Kant takes causality to be the legitimate offspring of the *a priori* productive imagination. Kant's Analytic shows the concept of causality to be a necessary condition of the possibility of experience, and therefore legitimate. But there are other *a priori* concepts that we have no legitimate right to employ, particularly those concepts he calls the pure concepts or ideas of reason. 'World' is among these ideas. Kant suggests that the cosmological claims in the antithetic have their origin in the pure concepts or ideas of reason; concepts that cannot be rightly applied to objects of possible experience, and so can yield no legitimate knowledge. Instead of concluding that metaphysics is impossible as a science, that metaphysical claims are mere bastards of the imagination, Kant hopes to treat the metaphysical claims in the antithetic as the legitimate offspring of reason.

> We are, also, not justified in repudiating these problems under the excuse of our incapacity, as if their solution really lay in the nature of things, and in rejecting further investigation, since reason has given birth to these ideas from its own womb alone, and is therefore liable to

[17] Cf. Hume's *Enquiry*, §5 Part 2.

> give account of either their invalidity or their dialectical illusion. (A763/B791)

Thus Kant proposes to give an account of the origin of illusion, considering first the origin of the ideas or pure concepts of reason.

3.2

While Hume takes the claims of the antithetic to result from reason's self-deceit or delusion, Kant suggests that these claims arise, in part, from reason's nature. While Hume suggested that metaphysical concepts were mere alleged insights, Kant suggests that these concepts, while not useful for knowledge, are the inevitable result of reason's work in organizing experience.

According to Kant:

> All our cognition starts from the senses, goes from there to the understanding, and ends with reason, beyond which there is nothing higher to be found in us to work on the matter of intuition and bring it under the highest unity of thinking. (A298/B355)

If I had only cognitions, I would not have a complete or systematic picture of experience, but a mere a series of facts, related by common concepts or associations. Reason puts cognitions together according to principles in order to make a systematic picture of experience possible.[18]

While the understanding is the faculty of cognition or judgment, reason is the faculty of principles or rules for uniting the products of understanding (A299/B355-

[18] The transcendental ideas "determine the use of the understanding according to principles in the whole of an entire experience" (A321/B378). They give the understanding a direction and systematize its cognitions in a way that makes experience comprehensible.

6). Its highest principle is this: for every given conditioned, seek the unconditioned (A3078/B364-5). By finding the unconditioned, reason finds a limit beyond which it cannot infer anything; it finds the 'ultimate' assumption or suppressed major premise.[19]

Reason also fills out whatever falls within the limits of possible experience by combining cognitions. It seeks to complete and organize judgments of the understanding through inferences, and to put all cognitions under the fewest possible principles (A305/B361). Its principle (find the unconditioned) is applied to the three forms of syllogism: categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive (A304/B360-1). In the first case, reason infers regressively from 'All x are y' to 'I'; in the second, from 'If x then y' to 'world'; in the third from 'x or y' to 'God'.[20] In its systematic capacity, reason puts cognitions into one of these three forms; it then seeks to infer from the given conditioned cognition to the unconditioned (I, world, God). Thus it seeks completeness by subordinating cognitions in syllogistic form to a first premise – a proposition about the unconditioned; in the process, it fills out the realm of possible experience – it makes the assumptions of cognitions available for articulation.[21]

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[19] "Now a transcendental concept of reason always goes to the absolute totality in the synthesis of conditions, and never ends except with the absolutely unconditioned, i.e., what is unconditioned in every relation" (A326/B383).

[20] Kant puts it most clearly thus: "There are, […] just as many [three] species of syllogism, and in each of them prosyllogisms proceed to the unconditioned: one, to a subject that is no longer a predicate, another to a presupposition that presupposes nothing further, and the third to an aggregate of members of a division such that nothing further is required for it to complete the division of a concept" (A323/B380).

[21] See A323/B380 for more on the directing function of reason.

Kant calls these guiding principles the ideas of reason. They are heuristic devices, ways of organizing subjective experience of subjective experience (I), subjective experience of objective experience (world), and subjective experience of the combination of the two (God). The ideas of reason are both useful for organizing experience, and the result of necessary inferences.

Like concepts of the understanding, the pure concepts of reason organize or categorize; they permit important distinctions, e.g., between I and world. But these ideas of reason differ importantly from concepts of the understanding in two ways: they apply only to cognitions, not to objects of possible experience; and they are not constitutive of objects *a priori*. While concepts of the understanding have objective validity and reality for objects of possible experience, pure concepts of reason have only a subjectively necessary application to cognitions of the understanding. Where concepts of the understanding serve for cognition, concepts of reason serve for *comprehension*; they permit a complete and systematic picture of experience (A311/B368).

Reason, the faculty of principles, seeks completeness, seeks to systematize cognition; thus it seeks the unconditioned for any given condition through a syllogistic regress. Reason takes all cognition to fall under one of the three syllogistic forms; the unconditioneds at the end of syllogistic regress for these forms are 'I', 'world', and 'God'. The pure concepts or ideas of reason apply only with subjective validity and reality solely to cognitions of the understanding. The ideas of reason are not objects of possible experience, but merely pure concepts that yield no knowledge.

3.3

We are now in a position to see how the illusion of reason produces error – how Kant combines his accounts of time-consciousness and the ideas of reason to show the origin of endless battle in metaphysics. The cognitions that arise from the final and inevitable inferences of reason (inferences to the unconditioned, to the ideas) err.[22] If all cognitions are temporally determined, and all inferences are cognitions, all inferences are temporally determined. The final inferences of reason concern concepts to which no object of possible experience corresponds; thus they neither apply to objects of possible experience, nor can the categories of the understanding (which have objective validity and reality only insofar as they concern objects of possible experience) apply correctly to the reified concepts.[23] Put more concretely: When I infer 'I', 'world', 'God', I err – even though I do so inevitably.

For Kant, these inevitable errors result from transcendental illusion, which, in turn, stems from the nature of reason itself. Kant describes the illusion in two ways,

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[22] Truth and error are found only in cognition, in judgment. Cognition that agrees with the laws of understanding cannot err, and senses, since they do not judge, cannot err; but "because we have no other sources of cognition besides these two, it follows that error is effected only through the unnoticed influence of sensibility on the understanding […]" (A294/B350).

[23] Kant puts it most clearly here: "It can be said that the object of a merely transcendental idea is something of which we have no concept, even though this idea is generated in an entirely necessary way by reason according to its original laws. For in fact no concept of the understanding is possible for an object that is adequate to the demand of reason, i.e., an object such as can be shown and made intuitive in a possible experience. But we would express ourselves better and with less danger of misunderstanding if we said that we can have no acquaintance with an object that corresponds to an idea, even if we can have a problematic concept of it." (A338-9/B396-7).

each of which takes the nature of reason as central. First, it occurs when subjective principles are passed off as objective (A298/B354). While Hume takes the trouble with metaphysics to be passing off subjective laws of association for objective necessity, Kant takes the trouble to be passing off subjective concepts of reason for objective ones. Why Kant uses this description is clear enough: reason seeks completeness, and so strives to locate the unconditioned. Its rules or principles are subjective but "look entirely like objective principles," and so are inevitably taken as such.[24] These rules are merely subjective principles for organizing cognitions of the understanding, but the illusion makes it look as if things in themselves (unconditioned) are determinate or conditioned.

It would seem as if the illusions of reason arise from a misapplication of pure concepts of the understanding to things that are not objects of possible experience. Because 'I', 'world', 'God' cannot be present in sensibility, it seems as if the illusion of reason has nothing to do with sensibility. For example, 'The world has a beginning in time' seems merely to treat 'world' (not an object of possible experience) as an object. Similarly, 'I am', seems simply to treat 'I' as an object. The error here seems to be simply the application of pure concepts of the understanding to the supersensible; it seems to be an error of the understanding, the faculty of cognition.

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[24] Put concretely: it seems as if 'find the unconditioned, the final suppressed premise' is an objective principle, that it belongs to the understanding. After all, it presupposes a series (made possible by the form of inner sense), begins with a determinate cognition, and seems to be directly related to the logical form of judgment. But it is merely a *subjective* principle, one that makes the organization of cognitions possible.

But, second, Kant also claims that the error "is effected only through the unnoticed influence of sensibility on understanding" (A294/B350). This causes "the subjective grounds of the judgment to join with the objective ones, and make the latter deviate from their destination" (A294/B350-1). The subjectively necessary inference to an idea of reason and the subjectively necessary temporal determination of this idea are united with an objectively valid concept of an object in general, and the objectively valid *a priori* categories of the understanding.

Kant's claim becomes even more puzzling when we see that it attributes action (influence) to the receptive faculty (sensibility), and when we remember Kant's insistence that neither sensibility nor understanding by itself can err (A293/B249 – A294/B150). Since the illusion is an *a priori* judgment, Kant hopes to uncover the source of the illusion via transcendental reflection, "through which every representation is assigned its place in the faculty of cognition proper to it, and hence the influence of the latter [understanding] is distinguished from it [the illusory representation]" (A295/B351). So Kant proceeds by separating out the work of understanding and sensibility, trying to distinguish what is responsible for the illusion.

Kant identifies the illusion as a representation — one that is mistaken to be cognition. This gives us a clue about how sensibility might effect an unnoticed influence on understanding, for the work of the imagination (a faculty that belongs to both sensibility and understanding) makes possible all our representations. To this same faculty, Kant attributes the power to combine concepts with time-

consciousness.[25] The error – the illusion – must result from the work of the imagination, since only the imagination could effect the unnoticed influence of sensibility on understanding.

Kant claims that inferences are cognitions, so we might tentatively conclude that the inevitable inferences of reason to the unconditioned are cognitions, and make sense of Kant's claim that error arises from the unnoticed influence of sensibility on understanding thus: the illusions of reason arise from reason's inferences from objects of possible experience to the unconditioned, particularly from the temporal character of these necessary cognitions. When we infer the unconditioned from the conditioned, we inevitably take the unconditioned as temporally determined. The unconditioned is unconditioned — it cannot be temporally determined. Therefore, we err. But this account is potentially misleading, for it assumes that we can cognize the supersensible.

A more accurate account might run thus: when we infer the unconditioned from the conditioned, we *represent* the unconditioned. All representations are temporally determined. And, all representations require the previous addition of time to the pure categories of the understanding to produce a rule for subsuming objects

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[25] In the Schematism, Kant shows that imagination makes the application of the pure categories of the understanding to sensible intuition (two non-homogenous elements of cognition) possible by combining the pure form of inner intuition (time) with the categories to form a rule for the imaginative synthesis of a concept and an object. Without this rule, the imaginative synthesis cannot unite a manifold in such a way as to make it available to the transcendental unity of apperception. So time-consciousness is, in several ways, necessary for the possibility of any representation or cognition.

under the categories. Thus even when we *represent* the unconditioned (which cannot properly be cognized) in the imagination, we represent it as conditioned, as temporally determined. The unnoticed influence of sensibility on the understanding occurs when we represent the unconditioned as temporally conditioned.[26]

Kant's assessment of the illusion of reason draws on Hume's suggestion that errors of metaphysics occur when reason takes the work of the imagination for *a priori* insight. But Kant's assessment stems from the temporal *unity* of the transcendental unity of apperception and the necessity of reason's inferences – it stems from his conclusion that the structure of our minds permits some knowledge. Hume's assessment indicates that reason is easily duped by the unbridled imagination; that reason is not united, but a concatenation of impressions; and that our minds are not structured so as to yield any objective knowledge. Thus Hume hopes that people will relinquish their claims to metaphysical knowledge.

While Kant rejects Hume's solution, Kant's account of transcendental illusion echoes Hume's intimation that metaphysical error is an unavoidable consequence of the nature of human minds. For Kant, as for Hume, inevitable illusion of reason cannot be adjusted for or corrected. But on Kant's telling, it can be labeled 'illusion', and thus lose its deceptive power. A corrective is, nevertheless, unavailable, since the objects in question are not objects of possible experience.[27] In other words, I might

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[26] In his analysis of transcendental illusion in relation to the antinomy, Kant describes the error as an error of representation (A416/B444; A564/B592).

[27] "The transcendental dialectic will […] content itself with uncovering the illusion in transcendental judgments, while that the same time protect us from being deceived by

notice that my thought 'The world has a beginning in time' is the result of an illusion, because it is a claim about 'world' and its relationship to time. But, because the illusion stems from the active structure of temporally unified consciousness, the illusion remains.

Transcendental illusion is neither avoidable nor correctable, but its origin can be identified. It arises in this way: reason seeks to put every cognition into a syllogism whose form is categorical, hypothetical, or disjunctive. By doing so, reason can draw inferences, and so present a complete and organized picture of experience. So 'I', 'world', 'God' — the ideas of reason — are necessary for reason's work, for the systematization and organization of experience. A thinking subject employs the ideas to bring an end to syllogistic regress, and must do so.[28] The result of reason's seeking the unconditioned condition of a given conditioned is an inference (a cognition — or better, representation) about an unconditioned — about I, world, or God. The thinking subject infers –cognizes or represents —'I' 'world' or 'God' necessarily, unavoidably; reason must seek completeness, and so must infer from cognitions to the ideas of reason, to the limits. In so doing, the thinking subject

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it; but it can never bring it about that transcendental illusion […] should even disappear and cease to be an illusion" (A297-8/B354). "[…E]ven after we have exposed the mirage it will still not cease to lead our reason on with false hopes, continually propelling it into momentary aberrations that always need to be removed" (A298/B355).

[28] By 'syllogistic regress' I mean something of this form: 1) All S are P; Some Q is S; Some Q is P; 2) All Y are S; 3) All Z are Y; 4) All F are Z, etc. At some point, we must infer a 'highest' category. Since highest, it mustn't be possible to subordinate this category to any other; it mustn't fall *in* the temporal series as a possible subordinate. With the categorical syllogism, the regress will end with 'I' – a subject that cannot itself be a predicate.

drags a pure concept of reason into the temporal order; she determines or conditions the 'unconditioned'. These inferences are, in one sense, cognitions; they are the result of the application of the categories of the understanding to some object. But in the case of the ideas of reason, the application is not objectively valid; nor is its result objectively real.

Yet the thinking subject inevitably gives these inferences objective reality – quite without noticing, she determines reason's ideas temporally. The illusions of reason arise when mere ideas of reason are reified in this way. The thinking subject fails to notice that she has mistakenly assigned objective reality –and thus taken the unconditioned as temporally conditioned – to a mere idea of reason. She mistakenly takes 'I', 'world', and 'God' to be concepts of the understanding, or worse, objects of possible experience, and judging about them, takes them to be temporally conditioned. Thus the nature of reason makes the illusion inevitable, and its error springs from the unnoticed influence of the sensibility on the understanding.

3.4

We can now step back and see how Kant's story about the origin of endless battle in metaphysics unfolds. In the Analytic, Kant claims that all our representations and cognitions are temporally determined. This is why he can claim that all my representations are mine. In the Dialectic, Kant introduces reason as a faculty that seeks (and demands) completeness. Because it demands completeness, it infers the unconditioned (e.g. world) from the conditioned (e.g. an object of possible

experience). Inferences are cognitions; these inferences of reason, though, are mere representations, since they represent things that are not objects of possible experience *as if* they were. In the antithetic (the four-fold expressions of the antinomy), we find opposed, but well-reasoned claims about the world. While it seems that reason should be able to rule that one claim or another is justified, it cannot; rather, reason only seems to perpetuate the conflict. Kant's account of transcendental illusion (an expression of reason's self-knowledge), when applied to the antinomy, will show why metaphysics seems to make no progress: the illusion that gives rise to the claims in the antithetic, and to the antinomy itself, is inevitable. The structure of the mind that makes genuine knowledge possible demands that we represent things temporally, and the faculty of the mind that organizes experience demands that we infer from the conditioned to the conditioned. Thus the very structures or faculties of mind that make progress in knowledge possible prevent this progress in metaphysics by producing the inevitable illusion that we have metaphysical knowledge about the world.

But Kant is not without hope that metaphysics can, despite inevitable illusion, make progress as a science. His resolution to the antinomy shows just how the illusion gives rise to the appearance of a conflict of reason with itself and gives rise to endless war in metaphysics. It also shows how the skeptic's resolution falls short – for while the skeptic admits that these metaphysical illusions are inevitable, he does not recognize that the illusions arise from the *a priori* forms of the mind that make advance in knowledge possible. Thus relinquishing a right to make the antithetical

claims altogether does nothing to further the advance of knowledge or human autonomy, but merely confirms that the battle is inevitable, bloody, and pointless.

4.0

Kant's resolution to the antinomy expresses and legitimates reason's autonomy. Alternatively put, Kant's resolution to the antinomy shows that the appearance of a conflict of reason with itself does not undermine the possibility of intellectual autonomy, or the possibility of progress in metaphysics; the appearance of such a conflict is merely an appearance, an illusion that stems from reason's actual unity.

The first step toward a resolution to the antinomy is to give a precise account of the errors of the dogmatic metaphysical claims that comprise the antithetic. Hume's attempt at solving the riddle of metaphysics focused on the error of metaphysical claims; he simply did not take synthetic *a priori* knowledge to be possible or claims to such to be justified. Kant's response to the dogmatic metaphysical claims is more complicated: neither metaphysics nor dogmatism is the source of the problem, but rather the error's origin lies in human constitution: the activity of our minds that makes knowledge possible and reason's tools for organizing that knowledge interact so as to produce the appearance of a conflict of reason with itself.

4.1

We can account for the dogmatist's error in metaphysics with an appeal to the simple version of transcendental illusion: he takes the unconditioned as conditioned, the atemporal as temporal, the subjective conditions of experience for objective, and

does not see an error at all. He "has not measured the sphere of his understanding, and thus has not determined the boundaries of his possible cognition in accordance with principles, […and] therefore does not already know in advance how much he is capable of […]" (A768/B796). The dogmatist cannot see what constitutes error or truth; he blindly takes the concepts of reason as objects, and so succumbs to transcendental illusion. Put differently, the dogmatist's error in metaphysics is a simple disrespect for the limits of knowledge. The Deduction limits knowledge to objects of possible experience, and so rules out the possibility that dogmatic metaphysical claims can be justified as knowledge.

The claims of the thesis and antithesis positions are not judgments based on possible experience, but judgments based on faulty inferences of reason. Kant exposes the faulty inference common to both the thesis and antithesis positions. Reason is a faculty of principles, or faculty of inference, and strives for completeness (A299/B356; A305/B361). Reason strives to articulate knowledge according to principles. But the principles of reason apply only to the understanding, which is not itself an object of possible experience (A302/B359; A643-4/B671-2). The idea that a series of conditions extends to the unconditioned (that the series is limited or closed) is not objectively valid (not available for judgment), but merely a way of closing the series so that reason's demand for completeness is satisfied. Hence, the inference of reason from the principle "If the conditioned is given, then the entire series of all its conditions is likewise given," to "The entire series of conditions of objects of the senses is given," is fallacious. The major premise is true for things in themselves, but

the conclusion makes a claim about objects of the senses. Reason moves from a law that governs things unavailable to judgment to a law about things available to judgment. Reason infers something about sensible appearances from a principle concerned with things-in-themselves.[29]

Each of the positions in the antithetic make claims about the world based on this inference. Thinking that the entire series of conditions for objects as appearances is given, each position makes a claim about the limits of the series by positing the unconditioned as either outside but affecting the series or the series taken as a whole. While the unconditioned may be a useful idea, it is not an object of possible experience. Claims to know that the unconditioned lies outside a series, or that the unconditioned is the series taken as a whole are unjustified.

While these claims are not knowledge, they are subject to *logical* proof. Kant produces proofs for both the thesis and antithesis positions. But these proofs, while claiming something about the world, do not claim anything about objects of possible experience. Kant puts the problem of the antinomy's distance from experience rather elegantly in the *Prolegomena*:

> For if we simply do not contradict ourselves […] then we can never be refuted by experience in all such cases in which the concepts we connect are mere ideas, which can by no means be given (in their

[29] "From this it is clear that the major premise of the cosmological syllogism takes the conditioned in the transcendental signification of a pure category, while the minor premise takes it in the empirical signification of a concept of the understanding applied to mere appearances; consequently there is present in it that dialectical deception that is called a *sophisma figurae dictionis*. This deception is, however, not artificial, but an entirely natural mistake of common reason" (A499-500/B527-28).

> entire content) in experience. For how will we decide through experience: Whether the world has existed from eternity, or has a beginning? [….] Concepts such as these cannot be given in any experience (even the greatest possible), and so the falsity of the affirmative or negative thesis cannot be discovered through that touchstone. (4:340)

The positions in the antithetic cannot be affirmed or denied by appeal to experience, i.e., by appeal to any knowable thing. The proofs merely make claims about reason's idea of world (subjective experience of objective experience); they are not objectively valid, or based on an objectively valid inference. They "take merely *subjective* grounds to be *objective*, and consequently confuse the mere illusion of truth with truth itself" (9:53-4). They yield no knowledge.

4.2

But exposing the fallacy of equivocation and its combination with the inevitable but invalid inference of reason to the various world-concepts is not enough to resolve the antinomy, to crack dogmatic stubbornness.[30] And without a resolution, the antinomy remains a problem. This is one of the problems Kant identifies with Hume. For Hume's blanket denial of metaphysical knowledge of this sort did nothing to stop the battle, but merely confirmed that it was bloody and pointless. Kant exploits the legal metaphor again to characterize Hume's hopes.

> All failed dogmatic attempts of reason are *facta*, which it is always useful to subject to censure. But this cannot decide anything about reason's expectations of hoping for better success in its future efforts

[30] "When such a fallacy has been shown to ground the common argument (for the cosmological assertions), the deems of both disputing parties could rightfully be dismissed as being based on no well-grounded title. But that does not put an end to their quarrel to the extent of winning them over to the view that one or both of them is wrong in what he actually asserts…" (A501/B529).

> and making claims to that; mere censure can therefore never bring to an end the controversy about what is lawful in human reason. (A764/B792)

While Hume took these claims to be bastards of the imagination to be left behind, Kant insisted that they are somehow valuable and worthy of investigation. Further, since they are products of reason, the investigation can yield good results.[31] Kant imagines Hume hoping to censure these dogmatic metaphysical claims, and agrees that this can be useful. After all, they are not knowledge. While they are groundless, merely showing the claims of the antithetic groundless does not resolve the antinomy.

Kant's resolution, then, will do more than show the claims of the antithetic groundless. It will draw on a complete critique of pure reason and avoid the temptation to censure dogmatic metaphysical claims and to "deprive reason of its most important vistas" (4:258). It will attempt to convince the dogmatist that he argues about nothing, and the skeptic that the antinomy is a mere illusion, (i.e., an expression of reason's unity, not something that warrants the rejection of metaphysics). The way forward, on Kant's account, is to show 1) that the antinomy's origin lies in an illusion of reason (which in turn results from the unity of reason, and 2) that the skeptic's charge that rights to use antinomial claims must be

[31] "We are, also, not justified in repudiating these problems under the excuse of our incapacity, as if their solution really lay in the nature of things, and in rejecting further investigation, since reason has given birth to these ideas from its own womb alone, and is therefore liable to give account of either their invalidity or their dialectical illusion" (A763/B791).

relinquished cannot be substantiated, thus settling "a dispute that cannot be decided by a final judgment" (A501-2/B529-30).[32]

A proper resolution to the antinomy requires either that the dogmatists see from the antithetic that they argue about nothing, or that the appearance of the antinomy is a mere illusion. Kant does attribute to the antithetic this sort of power – it guards reason against dogmatic slumber. But a more direct route, showing the antinomy in its entirety (both the thesis and antithesis positions, as well as their apparent conflict) an illusion, is one Kant pursues, for it aims to convince the stubborn dogmatist of the pointlessness of his war, and to relieve the hopeless skeptic of his impossible task.

The latter requires a robust notion of the inevitability and source of transcendental illusion. The skeptic affirms the critical position that dogmatic metaphysical claims are not knowledge; but she denies that the illusion's inevitability stems from the unity and coherence of reason, and thus demands that such metaphysical claims be relinquished.[33] From another angle: The skeptic denies that the categories of the understanding have objective validity and reality; she denies

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[32] "[… B]ecause there is equal evidence on both sides, it is impossible ever to ascertain which side is right, and so the conflict drags on as before, even though the parties have been directed by the court of reason to hold their peace. Thus no means is left for ending the dispute in a well-grounded way and to the satisfaction of both sides, unless through the fact that they can do such a fine job of refuting each other they are finally won over to the view that they are disputing about nothing, and that a certain transcendental illusion has portrayed a reality to them where none is present. This is the path on which we will now set forth in settling a dispute that cannot be decided by a final judgment" (A501-2/B529-30).

[33] See Kant's comments on Hume, esp. A758-770/B786-798.

that, e.g., causal claims are the result of a 'correct' *a priori* synthetic judgment. In so doing, she rejects the source of empirical knowledge: the application of the categories to objects of possible experience. Since she does not conceive of an understanding that works as Kant takes it to, one wherein the categories have, if rightly limited to objects of possible experience, objective reality and validity, she cannot rightly conceive of the inevitability of the illusion. The illusion is inevitable precisely because reason must infer an unconditioned; it must lead the understanding to cognize or represent the unconditioned temporally. Thus, apart from a notion of the necessity of time-consciousness for cognition and representation, the metaphysical claims put forth in the antithetic appear to be entirely avoidable. One need not infer to the unconditioned, nor necessarily cognize that unconditioned temporally, and so believe that dogmatic metaphysical claims are true – subjectively or objectively. Thus skeptical despair appears when the skeptic tries –endlessly, but pointlessly— to eradicate any rights to make metaphysical claims by appealing to contingent claims. Instead of a critical position, she directs her energy toward eliminating the results of an inevitable illusion she takes to be avoidable.

It is not only the inevitability of the illusion that resolves the antinomy, but also Kant's recognition of the role of imagination in the illusion. The illusion of an antinomy appears when, from the empirically conditioned, we infer the unconditioned as conditioned, when we represent the unconditioned in the imagination as we inevitably must do. For, on the one hand, the "unconditioned is always contained in the absolute totality of the series if one represents it in the imagination," and thus

temporally conditioned (A416/B444). And on the other, if we infer any condition from something sensibly conditioned, it belongs to the series, and is thus itself conditioned (A564/B592). So the resolution to the antinomy entails "***posit[ing]*** *the unconditioned outside the series in the intelligible realm*, where necessity is neither demanded nor permitted by any empirical condition, and thus in respect of appearances it is unconditionally necessary" (A564/B592, emphasis mine). Put simply, the temptation to treat the appearance of a contradiction of reason with itself as an actual contradiction disappears when we recognize that 'world' is an idea of reason.

The resolution to the antinomy – which does not make the illusions of the antinomial claims disappear, but does make the illusion of a conflict of reason with itself disappear – lies in uncovering the unnoticed influence of sensibility on understanding, the unnoticed work of the imagination. The illusion is inevitable – reason cannot but infer the unconditioned, the world – but the antinomy can be seen aright

> by showing that it is merely dialectical and a conflict due to an illusion rising from the fact that one has applied the idea of absolute totality, which is valid only as a condition of things in themselves, to appearances that exist only in representation, and that, if they constitute a series, exist in the successive regress but otherwise do not exist at all. (A506/B534)

Reason's account of its own capacities reveals that the antinomy itself is an illusion. It occurs when we imaginatively represent 'world' as an object, and conclude that we have

successfully represented an absolute totality (an unconditioned). One side takes 'world' to lie outside the series of conditions, the other takes 'world' to constitute the series of conditions. Both err. Hence, reason does not contradict itself.

Thus Kant's resolution to the antinomy shows that warring dogmatists are arguing about nothing. For reason is not actually opposed to itself, but rather appears to be when it takes appearances for things in themselves, when it takes 'world' to mean the sum total of appearances. 'World' is rather an idea of reason, and the antinomy (and the claims within) is merely the result of an illusion of reason. The dogmatist makes his cosmological claims by no right.

Kant's resolution to the antinomy allows for another proof of his hypothesis that reason recognizes only what it puts into cognition. This proof reinforces his previous work (if the dogmatist and skeptic have not yet bought the possibility of metaphysics). This proof takes the form of a *reductio*: assume the world (sum total of appearances) is a whole existing in itself, and therefore that it is either infinite or finite. If both are false, as Kant has shown, then the assumption "the world is a whole existing in itself," is false. Thus, it follows, Kant claims, that "appearances in general are nothing outside our representations" (A507/B535).

Perhaps this is why Kant twice connects the antinomy with the power to prevent or interrupt dogmatic slumber: it presents an intriguing but scandalous picture of reason in conflict with itself, but, seen aright, the antinomy is rather a picture of reason's unity – a unity that makes objective knowledge possible. Put differently, the antinomy is an apt starting point for immature reason, since it leads to the beginning

of a critique of reason. The Antinomy presents compelling proofs for opposed antithetic positions, and thus gives the dogmatist a chance to hear her opponent. Once heard, the apparent conflict of reason with itself comes into full view — the dogmatist may make use of skeptical method (seeing the conflict as an observer) to see the apparent conflict. If the dogmatist follows Kant through the second proof of his hypothesis that appearances are nothing outside our representations, the dogmatist might be able to read the *Critique* again; this time, alongside Kant. This proof also speaks to the skeptic, for if appearances are nothing outside our representations — and not merely nothing outside our associations — the skeptic might find a foothold for reading the *Critique* from a critical standpoint. The Antinomy is also an apt starting point for immature reason because it is the place where the dogmatist and skeptic already dwell: the dogmatist lives in the battle, and the skeptic's attention is turned toward observing the battle. The Antinomy provokes reason's maturity by showing the value of critical reflection.

Kant's resolution also shows the skeptical solution impossible. While the dogmatist cannot show that he has a right to make his claims to knowledge, the skeptic cannot give convincing proof that the *use* of these claims must be relinquished. Kant hopes that the skeptic, seeing the whole critique, would realize that "his objections rest only on *facta*, which are contingent, but not on principles that could effect a necessary renunciation of the right to dogmatic assertions" (A767/B795). That is, the skeptic would come to recognize the import of his own

claims: namely that he cannot, from a concatenation of empirical experiences, show that the dogmatist must give up the *use* of the cosmological ideas.

Thus the deduction we expected in the Dialectic is impossible. The dogmatist cannot produce evidence of his right to knowledge of his claims. The skeptic can show, by pointing to the apparent conflict of reason with itself, that the dogmatist's claims are made by no right. And critical reason (the judge) has shown definitively that the dogmatist's claims are made by no right. Yet the skeptic cannot substantiate her own charge that the dogmatist's *use* of his claims must be relinquished. Perhaps a crude analogy would be helpful: suppose that Billy (the dogmatist) attempts (but fails) to produce evidence that some toy is his. His nemesis, Sally, successfully shows that Billy cannot ever show that the toy is his, and claims that this means Billy must stop playing with the toy. But Sally is unable to substantiate her claim that Billy must give up playing with the toy.

Continuing the analogy, we might hope that Mrs. Smith can resolve the conflict. She might affirm Sally's conclusion that Billy cannot show that the toy is his, and ask Billy to stop claiming to know that it is his toy. But, since Sally can give no compelling reason that Billy should stop playing with the toy, Mrs. Smith allows him to carry on playing with it. Mrs. Smith's resolution does not grant Billy or Sally what they want —but it does permit them to stop fighting.

The court of reason makes a similar ruling in the case of the antinomy. The deduction that the skeptic and dogmatist hopes will resolve the conflict in their favor fails. In cases where a deduction is warranted but impossible, where "rightness of

usage cannot be settled, the usage remains with the possessor: '*melior est conditio possedendi'*."[34] Reason, instead of giving up these cosmological ideas that lie beyond possible experience, may retain and make use of them – provided it "refrains from claiming that they are used as justifiable knowledge."[35] When reason rules that both parties fail, it rules that the dogmatist may maintain practical use of his claims, provided they are not passed off as knowledge. The dogmatist has no right to knowledge of his claims, but maintains possession of them. The skeptic has no right to demand that the dogmatist's claims be relinquished, but may maintain his claim that the dogmatist has no right to claim knowledge about the world.

4.3

We are now in a position to see how Kant's resolution to the antinomy is successful, and requires the whole *Critique*. In the Analytic, Kant shows that metaphysics is possible and begins an account of the origin of metaphysical battle. In the Dialectic, Kant finishes this account in his exposition of transcendental illusion. This story in hand, Kant shows that the dogmatic metaphysical claims of the antithetic are not knowledge. When the hoped-for deduction fails, reason rules in such a way to provide for peace: the dogmatist cannot claim a right to knowledge of his claims, the skeptic cannot demand that practical use of these claims be

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[34]Dieter Henrich, "Kant's Notion of a Deduction and the Methodological Background of the First *Critique*," in *Kant's Transcendental Deductions*, ed. Eckhart Förster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 39.; see A776/B804ff.

[35] Dieter Henrich, "Kant's Notion of a Deduction and the Methodological Background of the First *Critique*," in *Kant's Transcendental Deductions*, ed. Eckhart Förster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 39.

relinquished. Thus a right to use of the claims is retained, and a right to claim them as knowledge is denied. This is Kant's alternative to endless battle, a "critique of pure reason, […] a true court of justice for all controversies of pure reason," whose task is "of determining and judging what is lawful in reason in general in accordance with the principles of its primary institution" (A751/B779).

This alternative is a legal verdict, one given by reason itself. Kant likens the dogmatic dispute to a state of war, a Hobbsean state of nature. Without the critique of pure reason, "the true court of justice," a resolution is impossible. For reason is a judge "whose authority no one can doubt, [which] grants us the peace of a state of law" (A751/B779). While in the state of nature (the state of dogmatic war), the only conceivable possible resolution is victory, in the state of law, a verdict can resolve the conflict, "since it goes to the origin of the controversies themselves," and thus can "secure a perpetual peace" (A752/B780).

Kant's resolution shows that the appearance of a conflict of reason with itself is merely an appearance. Reason can operate autonomously. Thus reason can govern itself — it can legitimate those claims to which it has a right, dismiss those claims to which it has no right, and make use of the claims whose right cannot be decided, provided they are not claimed as knowledge.

But this use is viable only in the practical sphere, and needed only in the practical sphere. Reason has "a possession the legitimacy of which need not be proved, and the proof of which it could not in fact give" (A777/B805). Hence, the claims in the dynamical antinomies – ones that concern freedom, causality, and God –

despite their status as 'not knowledge' are available for use in the practical sphere. The dynamical antinomies concern freedom and causality. In the resolution to the third antinomy, Kant claims that the causality of nature and the causality of freedom are not incompatible. The same occurrence may be regarded as a "mere effect of nature," and as "an effect of freedom" (A543/B571). Freedom is possible. Reason has the right to assume freedom *in practice*. The theoretical possibility of freedom permits Kant to speak in his further work about freedom. And its retained usage means that people can *practice* moral autonomy.[36] Thus Kant's resolution avoids Hume's oversight. For Hume forgot, or failed to recognize, that the skeptical solution does not end war, and does create positive harm.[37] In particular, his solution denies reason its "most important vistas:" freedom or autonomy.

Kant's characterization of the antinomy as an international conflict speaks to the dogmatist, the skeptic, and to critical reason alike. Blind to the possibility of an international legal conflict (to the possibility that reason might possibly support his opponent's position), the dogmatist does recognize that he is at war. The skeptic, capable of reflecting on the war of dogmatic thesis and antithesis, sees the conflict as an international legal conflict that cannot be resolved. Dogmatists on both sides appeal to uncritical reason, which, because of its own contradictions, is impotent to

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[36] See A776/B804-A777/B805.

[37] "The acute man was, however, looking only to the negative benefit that curbing the excessive claims of speculative reason would have, in completely abolishing so many endless and continual conflicts that perplex the human species; he meanwhile lost sight of the positive harm that results if reason is deprived of the most important vistas, from which alone it can stake out for the will the highest goal of all the will's endeavors" (4:238).

resolve the conflict. Critical reason grants the insight of the skeptic's assessment, but conceives of yet a different international conflict of laws — a conflict for which reason *can* give a ruling, albeit not a final judgment. From the critical standpoint, the skeptic opens a legal case against the dogmatist (emblematic of both thesis and antithesis positions) when he brings the charge that the dogmatist has no right to knowledge or practical use of his claims, and demands that these claims be relinquished in both the practical and theoretical sphere. The dogmatist attempts — but fails — to show that (uncritical) reason legitimates his claim. The skeptic attempts to show that (uncritical) reason legitimates her claim that the dogmatist's claims are illegitimate. And critical reason partially affirms her conclusion: the dogmatist's claims to knowledge are made by no right. Yet critical reason affirms the skeptical conclusion based on his prior ruling that claims to knowledge about things that are not objects of possible experience are illegitimate. But critical reason does not affirm, nor can the skeptic legitimate, the skeptic's charge that a right to practical *use* of these claims must be relinquished. Reason rules that human beings retain a right to the practical use of the cosmological claims, provided they are not claimed as knowledge. Reason rules for peace.

Kant's resolution to the antinomy secures this right to the practical use of freedom by seeking out and identifying the source of the appearance of reason in contradiction with itself. Kant suggests that finding the source of the antithetical claims and showing that they are held (insofar as they are claimed as knowledge) by no right is the way to ground perpetual peace (A777/B805). After seeing the

antinomy for what it is — the illusory appearance of self-contradictory reason — one can be certain that one's right to the practical use of freedom is absolutely secure. Kant puts it thus: "There is nothing in this [giving the dogmatic or skeptical opponent his best shot] to fear, though much to hope, namely that you will come into a possession that can never be attacked in the future" (A778/B806). Thus reason in its critical form, unlike the dogmatic and skeptical forms, holds the antinomy in high regard. No matter what the dogmatist or skeptic may claim, reason can (and does) rule that it retains a right to the possession and use of its claims.

The court of reason, because of its ability to resolve the antinomy, provides a way for metaphysics to progress — for metaphysicians to leave a state of war behind. In place of a hope for victory (or a state of censorship), human beings can "submit [themselves] to the lawful coercion which alone limits our freedom in such a way that it can be consistent with the freedom of everyone else and thereby with the common good" (A752/B780). Put simply, the court (critique) of reason exhibits and legitimates intellectual *autonomy* by unraveling the riddle of metaphysics.

Kant's resolution to the antinomy accomplishes his aim of contributing to the restoration of the rights of mankind. Because the *Critique* shows that reason is not in contradiction with itself, and that people maintain a right to the *practical* use of freedom, it legitimates the "original right of human reason:" "the freedom to exhibit the thoughts and doubts which one cannot resolve oneself for public judgment without thereupon being decried as a malcontent and dangerous citizen" (A752/B780). Because reason can rule about its own rights and pretensions, human

thoughts and doubts need not be subject to censorship. More particularly, the dogmatist need not hope that his opponent's claims will be censored, and the skeptic need not hope that all dogmatic claims will be censored. Rather, all thoughts can be submitted for public critique. Put simply, human reason, in its critical form is a trustworthy ruler, one who can resolve even the most timeless metaphysical conflicts.

5.0

Kant's memory of Hume and the antinomy worked together in the formation of the critical philosophy. A proper resolution to the antinomy required a critique of pure reason. This critique gives an account of reason's positive and negative capacities, which grounds Kant's resolution to the antinomy. The resolution unravels the riddle of metaphysics: it shows why metaphysics has not made progress, and makes clear what legitimate work metaphysics can hope to do in the future. Kant's resolution was funded in part by Hume's work, which helped Kant to see the connection between metaphysics and synthetic *a priori* judgments, the need for a deduction of the validity of *a priori* concepts, the need for a complete critique of pure reason, etc. Hume's work also contained important clues about the origin of the illusion of reason, which Kant used to show how the antinomy is the result of an inevitable illusion of reason.

But Kant's interest in the resolution to the antinomy was not merely driven by theoretical interests. By showing the antinomy an illusion, Kant obviates the need for dogmatic or skeptical censorship in the public sphere. Further, Kant's resolution negates the skeptic's claim that dogmatic metaphysical claims must be relinquished. While these are not knowledge, Kant shows that a right to their *practical* use is retained. In the practical sphere, then, one may use the notion of the possibility of freedom. Hume's resolution permits no such use, and thus, no such possibility of restoring the rights of mankind.

Kant's descriptions of the two catalysts for the critical philosophy are both accurate and compatible: Hume's work provides a general direction for Kant's speculative work, particularly important clues about the problem of metaphysics and how it might be resolved. But it is the antinomy of pure reason itself that provides both the drive to solve the riddle and a clear aim or goal, the critique of reason itself. For unraveling the riddle makes a path to peace – it secures metaphysics as a science, and opens the possibility of freedom – a possibility precluded by Hume's wholesale rejection of metaphysics. For skepticism provides only "a resting place for human reason, which can reflect upon its dogmatic peregrination," but not "a dwelling place for permanent residence" (A761/B789). And unraveling the riddle requires an account of the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments, of the possibility of scientific knowledge, and a clear articulation of the bounds and pitfalls of human reason. The court of reason provides a permanent residence for reason, one found only "in complete certainty, whether it be one of the cognitions of the objects themselves or of the boundaries within which all of our cognition of objects is enclosed" (A761/B789). A proper resolution to the antinomy requires an expression and legitimization of reason's autonomy. It requires a critique of reason itself.

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