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Hegel, Kant and the Antinomies of Pure Reason

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1. Hegel on Kant's Antinomies

Hegel is profoundly critical of Kant's account of the antinomies of pure reason and especially of what he regards as Kant's "trivial" resolution of them (EL § 48 Remark). Yet at the same time Hegel emphasises the considerable significance of Kant's account. "These Kantian antinomies", he writes, "will always remain an important part of the critical philosophy", since "they, more than anything else, brought about the downfall of previous metaphysics and can be regarded as a main transition into more recent philosophy" (in particular that of Hegel himself) (SL 190 / LS 198).¹ How then, according to Hegel, did the antinomies help take us from pre-Kantian metaphysics to his own speculative philosophy?

Such metaphysics (exemplified most clearly by the thought of Christian Wolff) sought, in Hegel's view, to attribute predicates to objects of reason, such as the soul, the world and God, and it assumed in so doing that such predicates were mutually exclusive. It aimed to determine, therefore, whether the world is finite *or* infinite and whether the soul is simple *or* composite, and it did not consider the possibility that the object concerned could in fact be both. This metaphysics was, accordingly, a form of dogmatism because it assumed "that of *two opposed assertions* [...] one must be *true*, and the other *false*" (EL § 32).²

Through his examination of the antinomies, however, Kant deals a significant blow to such dogmatism, for he argues that in the case of the *world* no choice between two opposing assertions can be made but "each of the propositions must be affirmed with equal necessity" (EL § 48): the world must be understood to be finite *and* infinite, to be composed of indivisible units *and* to be infinitely divisible. Kant's argument, in Hegel's view, thus puts an

end to the simple “either / or” of pre-Kantian metaphysics, at least in the area of cosmology. Yet Kant also agrees with metaphysics that predicates such as “finite” and “infinite” are opposed to one another and cannot be reconciled. The claim that both have to be predicated of the world “with equal justification and equal necessity” thus in fact produces a “contradiction” (*Widerspruch*): we must judge the world to be both finite and infinite, yet these two determinations exclude one another completely (EL §128, Remark and Add.).

In Kant’s view (as Hegel sees it), this contradiction between assertions or judgements is not accidental, but inevitably confronts pure reason when it seeks to determine the nature of the world: “Kant’s conception of the antinomies is that they are ‘not sophisms but contradictions which reason must necessarily *come up against*’ (a Kantian expression); and this is an important view” (SL 191 / LS 199).³ Kant’s argument also suggests, albeit only implicitly, that the predicates, or *categories*, employed by reason are in fact contradictory themselves (see EL § 48 Remark). This is precisely because they are mutually exclusive, yet prove to be inseparable (since both must be asserted of the world). For Hegel, it is above all this implicit suggestion that categories are themselves contradictory — and necessarily so — that raises reason “into the higher spirit of more recent philosophy” and so takes us forward from metaphysics to truly speculative philosophy (SL 46 / LS 28, trans. altered).

The idea that categories are contradictory does not, however, form the immediate starting point of speculative philosophy itself: for, as I have argued elsewhere, such philosophy at the outset may not presuppose anything concrete about thought and its categories but must begin from sheer indeterminate being.⁴ Kant’s antinomies thus do not lead directly to speculative philosophy. By suggesting that the categories are contradictory, the antinomies challenge the idea that they are simply distinct from, or opposed to, one another, that they are one-sided, finite categories; indeed, Hegel claims, the antinomies “produce the conviction of the nullity [*Nichtigkeit*] of the categories of finitude” (SL 190 / LS

198). This does not, however, itself require us to suspend all assumptions about the categories; yet it does help to prompt the philosopher, who is otherwise committed to free self-critical thought, to determine from scratch, without presuppositions, how the categories are to be understood. The antinomies, as Hegel conceives them, thus do not themselves make presuppositionless philosophy necessary, but they contribute indirectly to the emergence of such philosophy.⁵

Hegel concedes that, *for Kant*, categories or “thought-determinations” are not contradictory in themselves, but contradictions arise only when reason *applies* them in judgements to the “unconditioned” or “things in themselves” (or, more precisely, to the *world* considered as something “in itself”).⁶ (Like the metaphysicians he criticises, Kant continues to think of categories themselves as one-sided and finite.)⁷ Nonetheless, Hegel contends, Kant’s account of the antinomies *implicitly* suggests that categories are contradictory, and that they are such necessarily: the “general idea” underlying that account, Hegel writes, is that of the “*necessity of the contradiction* which belongs to the *nature* of thought determinations” (SL 56 / LS 41).⁸ Indeed, he calls this idea “the great negative step towards the true concept of reason” (SL 46 / LS 29).⁹

This step is merely negative, for Hegel, because it negates the simple distinctions and oppositions between categories and points to their contradictory character, but does no more than this: it does not take us on to what Hegel thinks is the logical conclusion of that very step, namely the insight that opposed categories actually form a *unity*. This insight is, however, reached in the course of speculative philosophy, initially and in particular in speculative logic. Such logic begins from the presuppositionless, indeterminate thought of pure being; but categories then emerge that are more or less explicitly contradictory or “antinomial”, insofar as each is both itself and its negation, and in this way the insight that for Hegel is implicit in Kant’s antinomies is confirmed. We also discover, however, that

categories are not merely contradictory, but prove to be more or less explicit *unities* of opposed determinations (see EL §§ 81–2). In the sphere of quality, for example, the infinite proves not just to be a contradictory *finite*-infinite, but to be the perfect fusion of finitude and true infinity: the truly infinite process *of* its finite moments (see SL 148 / LS 148–9).¹⁰ Speculative logic does not stop at contradiction and antinomy, therefore, but shows how categories *resolve* the very contradictions they contain (by mutating either into further versions of themselves or into different categories).

Now, in Hegel’s view, Kant also “resolves” his antinomies to his own satisfaction. He does so, however, not by watching them resolve themselves into a unity of opposed determinations but by declaring them to be merely “*subjective*” (SL 191 / LS 200).¹¹ For Hegel’s Kant, the contradictions revealed by the antinomies are genuine and necessary, but the world that exhibits such contradictions is in truth not something that exists *in itself*: it is merely the world of our subjective experience, that is, “the world of *appearance*” (*die erscheinende Welt*) (EL § 48 Remark, trans. altered). Whatever there may be in itself is thus, for Kant, free of contradiction, and the latter belongs only to the world that is there *for us*. To Hegel, however, this “resolution” is inadequate, for it leaves the antinomies themselves “unresolved” (*unaufgelöst*). In the eyes of Kantian reason, Hegel claims, the contradictions remain, even though the world they beset is declared to be subjective rather than objective (SL 191 / LS 200).

Note that there is actually an inconsistency in the position Hegel attributes to Kant: for Hegel’s Kant, contradictions arise only because opposing categories “are applied by reason to *things in themselves*” (SL 56 / LS 41), that is, to the world considered as thing in itself; yet they remain even when the world is revealed *not* to be a thing in itself but mere appearance. (As we will see below, Hegel also gets Kant wrong at this point, since Kant himself does not consider appearances to be contradictory.) Yet Hegel fails to notice the

inconsistency, so it makes no difference to his assessment of Kant's "resolution" of the antinomies. The latter, in Hegel's view, is inadequate because Kant argues that "the worldly content, whose determinations are caught in such a contradiction, cannot be something *in itself*, but only appearance [*Erscheinung*]" (EL § 48, trans. altered), but he thereby leaves our own "subjective" reason and experience entangled in contradiction and, Hegel would add, contradictory categories. In the *Logic*, by contrast, Hegel provides what he considers to be a more profound resolution of the antinomies. He does so by showing that the categories that (in his view) underlie those antinomies are not *merely* contradictory after all, either for our reason or in being itself, but "have their truth only in their sublatedness [*Aufgehobensein*], only in the unity of their concept" (SL 192 / LS 200, trans. altered).

The idea that Hegel's speculative logic proceeds by "resolving contradictions" is, of course, a simplification of what actually goes on, which is more complex and subtle.¹² Nonetheless, it is true that being and nothing are at odds in becoming but united in *Dasein* and that the contradictions of finitude are resolved in true infinity. So Hegel's simplified description of what occurs in speculative logic is not wrong. The principal difference between Hegel and Hegel's Kant is thus, indeed, that the former resolves contradictions in categories that the latter leaves unresolved.

A further difference between them is that Hegel's Kant fails to see, as Hegel does, that all antinomies, properly understood, are actually generated *by categories*. I noted above that Hegel's Kant, unlike Hegel himself, does not consider categories as such to be contradictory, but locates the source of contradiction in the *application* of those categories to the world (regarded as a thing in itself). This in turn means that he does not understand the categories themselves to be the true source of antinomies, and so does not appreciate the real significance of what he has disclosed. For Hegel's Kant, antinomies are conflicts between metaphysical judgements about the world (in which categories are applied to an object of

reason), but they are not conflicts between, and do not highlight the contradictory character of, one-sided categories as such. As Hegel puts it, therefore, “Kant did not take up the antinomy in the concepts themselves, but in the already *concrete form* of cosmological determinations” (SL 191 / LS 199). In Hegel’s own view, by contrast, what is expressed and demonstrated by Kant’s antinomies — albeit implicitly — is that “the categories on their own account [*für sich*] are what produce the contradiction” (EL § 48 Remark, trans. altered).¹³ Thus, in order to study the antinomies of reason properly, we must focus directly on the categories, without Kant’s (for Hegel) extraneous cosmological baggage. In Hegel’s words:

in order to possess the antinomy in its purity and to deal with it in its simple concept, the determinations of thought must not be taken in their application to and entanglement in the general idea of the world, of space, time, matter, etc.; this concrete material must be omitted from consideration of these determinations which it is powerless to influence and which must be considered purely on their own account, since they alone constitute the essence and ground of the antinomies (SL 191 / LS 199).¹⁴

This, of course, is what Hegel does in his “science of logic”. That logic can thus be regarded as Hegel’s revised and purified version of Kant’s important but deficient study of the antinomies of reason (just as it can also be regarded as a revised and purified version of Kant’s question-begging derivation, or “metaphysical deduction”, of the categories).¹⁵

Since Hegel’s Kant fails to identify the categories as the source of the antinomies of reason, he also fails to see that there are far more than just four such antinomies. Indeed, he fails to see that “profounder insight into the antinomial, or more truly into the dialectical nature of reason demonstrates *any* concept whatever” — that is, any *pure* concept or category

— “to be a unity of opposed moments to which, therefore, the form of antinomial assertions could be given” (SL 191 / LS 199).¹⁶ In this respect, Hegel claims, Kant lags behind ancient Greek scepticism, which “did not spare itself the pains of demonstrating this contradiction or antinomy in every concept which confronted it in the sciences” (SL 191 / LS 199). Yet Kant’s contribution is still the more important one for speculative philosophy — indeed, is “one of the most important and profound advances of the philosophy of modern times” (EL § 48) — because he argues not just that antinomies *can* be found (or generated) by thought contingently, but that they belong to reason *of necessity*. This Kantian insistence that the production of antinomies — or “dialectic” — is “*a necessary activity of reason*” (SL 56 / LS 41, trans. altered) is so important, in Hegel’s view, because it in turn makes it necessary for post-Kantian philosophy to reconsider the way the understanding conceives of the categories (though, as I noted above, it does not itself make a strictly presuppositionless study of the categories necessary). This is not to deny that Hegel’s philosophy owes a debt to Greek scepticism (and to Greek dialectic in, for example, Zeno and Plato); but, in Hegel’s eyes, it is indebted more profoundly to Kant’s philosophy.¹⁷ For Hegel, Kant’s emphasis on the necessity of the antinomies, and by implication on the necessarily contradictory character of categories, makes it essential that we reconsider how the latter have traditionally been conceived; and his commitment to rational self-critique and freedom requires such reconsideration to take nothing for granted about thought (or being) and to be radically presuppositionless.¹⁸

Having said all this, it is hard to deny that Hegel’s understanding of Kant’s antinomies is, from a *Kantian* point of view, idiosyncratic. By Hegel’s own admission, he sets to one side what principally interests Kant about them and focuses on a claim that Kant himself does not explicitly make, namely that *categories* produce the antinomies and thereby prove to be contradictory themselves; indeed, Hegel even says that such a claim goes “against

[*gegen*] Kant's intention" (VGP 356).¹⁹ Moreover, what Hegel means by "category" does not coincide exactly with what Kant means. Kant understands a category to be a pure concept through which "the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition" is thought (CPR B 105); this is to be distinguished not only from an empirical concept, but also from other pure concepts, including concepts of reflection and transcendental Ideas (see CPR B 316ff, B 378ff). By contrast, Hegel uses the term "category" in a broad sense to refer to all pure concepts and does not restrict any of them to mere representations of the unity of intuition: all categories, for him, are logical structures in their own right that at the same time bring fundamental ways of being to mind.²⁰ By implicitly suggesting that categories are themselves contradictory, Hegel's Kant thus implicitly suggests to Hegel himself that contradiction belongs to *being* as such — a suggestion that, as Hegel well knows, Kant himself would emphatically reject.²¹ Kantians can be forgiven, therefore, for thinking that Hegel does not provide an interpretation of *Kant's* antinomies at all, but simply reads into them what he is interested in finding there. There are, I think, good grounds for claiming that Kant should have been interested in what interests Hegel about the antinomies, since, as I have argued elsewhere, Hegel's whole philosophy is the logical outcome of taking Kant's *own* project of rational self-criticism more seriously than Kant did.²² Nonetheless, it seems clear that Hegel does not do justice to Kant's antinomies in a way that Kant himself would have recognised, and that the Kant whose antinomies Hegel finds so fruitful is, in the words of Martial Gueroult, an "hegelianised Kant".²³

Yet things are in fact a little more complicated than this, for, as I will argue later, Hegel's interpretation of Kant's antinomies is by no means wholly unjustified. Furthermore, Hegel sheds important light on Kant's actual arguments or "proofs" in the antinomies (as opposed to what Kant *should* be arguing or suggests merely *implicitly*).

In Hegel's view, Kant implicitly shows categories, such as "finite" and "infinite", to be contradictory by showing them to be bound to one another, even though they are opposed; and he shows them to be bound to one another by arguing that both must be predicated of the same world by reason. As we have seen, Hegel applauds this implication of Kant's arguments. At the same time, however, he dismisses Kant's manner of argument itself as a "useless form" (*unnütze Form*) (SL 191 / LS 199). Kant's arguments or "proofs" are "useless", in Hegel's view, because they serve no real purpose, and they serve no purpose because they simply presuppose what they are meant to prove. For Hegel, Kant's arguments in the antinomies, which purport to prove that the world is both finite and infinite, are really no more than assertions masquerading as arguments:

the Kantian antinomies on closer inspection contain nothing more than the quite simple categorical assertion of *each* of the two opposed moments of a determination, each being taken on its own in *isolation* from the other. But at the same time this simple categorical, or strictly speaking assertoric statement is wrapped up in a false, twisted scaffolding of reasoning which is intended to produce a semblance of proof and to conceal and disguise the merely assertoric character of the statement (SL 192 / LS 200).

The second antinomy, for example, consists merely in the *assertion* of the two moments of quantity — discreteness and continuity — against one another: "the one-sided assertion of discreteness gives infinite or absolute *dividedness* [*Geteiltsein*]", whereas "the one-sided assertion of continuity, on the other hand, gives infinite *divisibility* [*Teilbarkeit*]" (SL 190 / LS 198). The world is thus asserted to be absolutely finite in the first case, since division reaches its limit in simple discrete parts, and absolutely infinite in the second case, since

division continues without end.²⁴ (Hegel is well aware, by the way, that Kant actually opposes “composition” (*Zusammensetzung*), rather than “continuity”, to simplicity and discreteness in the second antinomy, but he insists that this does not itself generate an antinomy, since it is a tautology that “the composite consists of the simple” (SL 192 / LS 201). On the other hand, Hegel maintains, by asserting in the proof of the antithesis that “composition is possible only in *space*”, which for both Kant and Hegel is continuous, Kant implicitly pits continuity against simplicity in the antinomy (SL 195 / LS 205).)²⁵

Kant himself contends that the arguments in support of the thesis and antithesis in each antinomy are “sophistical” (*vernünftelnd*), insofar as they rest on an illegitimate assumption. This assumption is that appearances are things in themselves and so form a world that is independent of us (but also given to us) and that can be limited or unlimited, composed of indivisible units or endlessly divisible, and so on (CPR B 397–8, 535). Yet Kant also insists that, aside from this assumption, the “proofs of the fourfold antinomy are not semblances [*Blendwerke*] but well grounded” (CPR B 535): they are properly formed arguments that are “without contradiction” and are supported by “valid and necessary grounds” (CPR B 449).²⁶ Indeed, in the *Prolegomena* Kant states unequivocally that “I will vouch for the correctness of all these proofs” (P § 52a). Thus, on the (illegitimate) assumption that empirical objects form an independent world “in itself”, the arguments in each antinomy succeed, in Kant’s view, in *proving* that both the thesis and the antithesis are true of that world.

In Hegel’s view, by contrast, such arguments are mere “pseudoproofs” (*Scheinbeweise*), quite apart from the assumption that Kant claims they make. This is because they presuppose the very thesis and antithesis that they are to prove (and the categories contained therein): “what is supposed to be proved is always already contained in the presuppositions that form the starting point, and the semblance of a mediation is produced only through Kant’s prolix, apagogic procedure” (EL § 48 Add.). This can be seen, for

example, in Kant's proof of the thesis in the second antinomy. The thesis states that "every composite substance in the world consists of simple parts"; but the proof depends on the claim that "with substances composition is only a contingent relation, *apart from which*, as beings persisting by themselves, they must subsist", which is itself just a restatement of the thesis (CPR 462–4, emphasis added; see also SL 193–4 / LS 202–3). Indeed, as Michelle Grier puts it, Kant's proof actually "exploits a purely conceptual necessity", namely, that the very "concept of a composite" — and not just that of a "composite substance" — "commits us to the concept of the simple, which externally relates to comprise it".²⁷ Grier fails to note, however, that this makes a mockery of Kant's claim to have proven the thesis "apagogically".²⁸

Hegel's charge, therefore, is not (as Kant's is) that the proofs of the thesis and antithesis in each antinomy rest on an unwarranted assumption about appearances, but rather that these proofs are altogether circular. This problem cannot just be blamed on the proponents of the two positions, for Kant himself sets out the proofs and, indeed, regards them as correct (given the illegitimate assumption on which they rest). The problem, as Hegel sees it, is thus, in Sally Sedgwick's words, that "*Kant's* treatment of the antinomies is question-begging".²⁹ This strikes me, as it strikes Sedgwick, as a serious and well founded charge.

2. *Kant on the Antinomies in general*

If, however, we are properly to assess the merits of Hegel's interpretation of Kant's antinomies, we need to look in more detail at Kant's own account of the latter. We will thus now consider how in general, for Kant, an antinomy or contradiction in reason is generated.

First, Kant argues, reason concludes — or, more precisely, leads the understanding to judge³⁰ — that the totality of conditions of appearance, that is, the *world*, is given as a reality

in itself. This conclusion is reached by the following argument that Kant regards as “dialectical”: if the conditioned is given, then the whole series of all conditions for it is also given; now objects of the senses are given as conditioned; consequently, the whole series of conditions of the objects of the senses is, and must be, given as a world that is a thing in itself (CPR B 525).³¹ This argument is dialectical (in Kant’s sense) for two principal reasons. First, it assumes erroneously that objects of the senses can, indeed, be given as a totality, whereas in fact, as “appearances”, they can be given only through a regressive synthesis that can never be completed. Second, it assumes, again erroneously, that the objects of the senses, as appearances, are also things in themselves (the assumption of transcendental realism).³² The conclusion that the world is given as a reality in itself is thus reached by a dialectical argument that fails to respect the limits, in particular to the concept of an “appearance”, laid down by transcendental idealism.

After having convinced itself (or the understanding) that the totality of the conditions of appearances exists as a world in itself, reason then discerns an ambiguity in the very idea of such a totality. So what exactly is this ambiguity? The answer becomes clear if we consider the difference between the ideas of the soul and God and the idea of the world (see B 379). Each of the former is the idea of a single unconditioned condition: the unconditioned condition of thought as such in the case of the soul, and of all possible objects of thought, or of things as such, in the case of God (see CPR A 397, B 391). God, or the transcendental ideal, contains the totality of conditions of things, insofar as he, or it, encompasses “the entire storehouse of material from which all possible predicates of things can be taken” (CPR B 603). Nonetheless, God is, or rather is assumed to be, the single “being of all beings” that grounds all things (CPR B 607). The idea of the world, by contrast, is not that of a single unconditioned condition, but rather that of an explicit totality of conditions conceived as a

series. More precisely, it is the thought of the complete series of conditions of *appearances* (see CPR B 532).

Kant maintains that a “totality of conditions is always itself unconditioned” (B 379). He also points out, however, that the complete *series* of conditions of appearances can in fact be conceived as unconditioned, or as entailing the unconditioned, in *two* distinct ways. This is an ambiguity inherent in the idea of the world, but absent from the ideas of the soul and God. On the one hand, Kant contends, that series as a whole can itself be considered to be unconditioned, “because outside it there are no more conditions regarding which it could be conditioned” (CPR B 445n). On the other hand, however, the series can be understood to have the unconditioned as its first member (for example, as the first part or the cause of the series) (see CPR B 445). In the first case, in which there is no unconditioned first member, the series will be infinite and “without limits”; accordingly, reason will never be able to complete its regress through the conditions, even though the series itself is given as a whole. In the second case, by contrast, the series will have an endpoint or limit and so be finite (see CPR B 445–6). That limit will be the limit of space and time, or the point at which division ends, or the unconditioned (free) cause of events, depending on the antinomy concerned.³³

Kant goes on to argue that the complete series of conditions of appearances not only can but *must* be understood in these two opposing ways. When the thought of this necessity is then combined with the assumption that the complete series actually exists as something in itself, the *antinomies* are generated. This is because thought must now attribute *two* mutually exclusive features to *one* reality, but that reality, as such, must be determinate and so have one *or* the other of them (but not both). Note that, for Kant, a genuine antinomy or contradiction is not produced by the mere thought that the world is, or must be, ambiguous in the way I have described. It arises only when we take that ambiguous world to be a *reality* in itself that by its nature must be unambiguous. Antinomies arise, therefore, only because we

combine conflicting judgements about the “world” with the erroneous conclusion of the dialectical argument set out above, which is itself based on the error of transcendental realism. As Kant puts it, “if one regards the two propositions, ‘The world is infinite in magnitude’, ‘The world is finite in magnitude’, as contradictory opposites, then one assumes that the world (the whole series of appearances) is a thing in itself” (CPR B 532).

Since the erroneous judgement that appearances are things in themselves is, in Kant’s view, quite “natural” (CPR B 528), the antinomy to which that judgement leads is itself “a wholly natural antithetic” (CPR B 433). The very fact that an antinomy or contradiction arises, however, shows that the judgement on which it rests is, indeed, *erroneous*: the antinomy “uncovers a falsehood lying in this presupposition” of transcendental realism (CPR B 535). This in turn, Kant maintains, provides an indirect proof of transcendental *idealism* — the thesis that “everything intuited in space or in time, hence all objects of an experience possible for us, are nothing but appearances, i.e., mere representations”, not things existing independently in themselves (CPR B 518–19; see also CPR B 534). Kant’s direct proof of such idealism is presented in the first part of the *Critique*, the Transcendental Aesthetic, and it is against the background of this proof that he initially rejects transcendental realism as an error: for the latter falsely turns appearances or mere representations into things in themselves. The fact that transcendental realism generates antinomies, however, confirms that it is an error, and so indirectly confirms the truth of transcendental idealism.³⁴

For Kant, reality as it is thought to be *in itself* cannot be contradictory or antinomial, but must be unambiguously itself; indeed, “no predicate pertains to a thing that contradicts it”, whether the thing is a thing in itself or an appearance (CPR B 190). Yet, when the world — the complete series of conditions of empirical objects — is judged to be a reality in itself, it proves precisely to be contradictory. Since the arguments proving it to be so are sound, given the assumption that such a world exists, the conclusion we must draw is that that

assumption must be wrong and the world *cannot* be anything real in itself after all. It must, rather, be an “idea” that merely *seems* to have a real existence of its own. The fundamental forms of that world, namely space and time, cannot have a real existence of their own, either, but must be merely subjective (albeit for us universal): the a priori forms of our human sensibility. In this way, transcendental idealism is proven indirectly by the antinomy generated by transcendental realism.³⁵

Kant, however, does not justify the claim that reality in itself cannot contain a contradiction; he takes it over, uncritically, from traditional formal logic. (It is, of course, immediately derived from the “principle of contradiction”, which is regarded by Kant as the “general though to be sure only negative condition of all our judgments whatsoever” (CPR B 190).) For Kant, it is simply obvious that no reality can be contradictory; where contradiction is found, therefore, *there can be no reality*. This, I take it, is why Hegel accuses Kant of showing too great a “tenderness” (*Zärtlichkeit*) towards things (EL § 48 Remark).³⁶ In Hegel’s view, Kant deserves (qualified) credit for maintaining that reason generates antinomies, but he deserves censure for insisting, without clear justification, that reality as it is thought to be, and as it is judged actually to be, in itself must be free of all contradiction.³⁷

As we have seen, there is a necessary tension in the very idea of a complete series of conditions of appearances, since it can, and must, be conceived both as unconditioned itself (and so unlimited and infinite) *and* as containing an unconditioned first member (and so limited and finite). A strict antinomy or contradiction arises, however, only when that complete series is taken actually to be something *real* in itself, that is, when we commit the error of transcendental realism: for only in that case are we required to attribute two mutually exclusive characteristics to a reality that must be one *or* the other. If, therefore, we abandon the idea that this complete series constitutes something real in itself, in favour of transcendental idealism, then the antinomies of pure reason are immediately “removed”

(*gehoben*) (CPR B 534): if the reality that proves contradictory is eliminated, then the contradiction it produces itself disappears. Accordingly, for the critical or transcendental idealist, there is “no real *contradiction of reason*” (CPR B 768), because there is no determinate totality of appearances, or “world in itself”, about which two mutually exclusive judgements must be made: such a world is a mere “mirage” (*Blendwerk*) (CPR B 451). The thesis and antithesis of each antinomy remain opposed to one another, but they are not actually about anything and so produce no contradiction.³⁸

It is important to emphasise here that, in Kant’s view, not every pair of conflicting assertions about a thing or things produces a contradiction. If, for example, we assert that every body smells good and also that every body smells bad, there is not necessarily a contradiction, since both propositions could be false: there could, after all, be bodies that do not smell at all (see CPR B 531). A contradiction in Kant’s sense arises only when two assertions are made about something, and are assumed to be true of it, one of which, however, must be false while the other is true. So if we assert both that every body smells good *and* that not every body smells good (partly because some do not smell at all), we have a direct contradiction, because one assertion must be true and thereby excludes the other.

Similarly, conflicting claims about the world as a whole produce a contradiction, when both prove to be necessary but one must be true and the other false. Take, for example, the thesis and antithesis of the first antinomy (without their specific reference to space and time). The thesis states that the world is finite in magnitude, whereas the antithesis states that it is infinite. They produce a contradiction, however, only under the condition that “the world (the whole series of appearances) is a thing in itself” — an *actually existing* thing in itself — and so must be “determined in itself regarding its magnitude”: for this condition requires that it have a magnitude that is either finite or infinite (but that cannot be both) (CPR B 532–3). If, therefore, we remove this condition by denying that the world exists as a thing in itself, the

contradiction automatically disappears. It does so, because the thesis and antithesis both prove to be false: the world is neither finite nor infinite in itself, since there is no world “in itself” at all.³⁹ The conflict in each antinomy is thus *in truth* not a contradiction but a “dialectical” conflict — one that merely *seems* to be a contradiction — because the world that is its subject is itself an illusion. As Kant writes, it is simply “a conflict of an illusion” (or “due to” an illusion) (*ein Widerstreit eines Scheins*) (CPR B 534).

Yet things are in fact more complicated than Kant recognizes: for the conflict that is generated by the illusory world cannot just be *seemingly* contradictory. A contradiction is initially produced because the “world” is necessarily ambiguous but is also judged to be something real in itself and therefore unambiguous. This contradiction is then “removed” when the world is shown not to be real in itself after all, but to be merely illusory. The world, however, retains the same characteristics when it is reduced to mere illusion, as it had when it was judged to be real in itself: it must still be understood to be both finite *and* infinite, and to have a determinate character of its own that is unambiguously finite *or* infinite. This means that this illusory world must itself give rise to an actual contradiction. There is no contradiction in the world in itself, since there is no such world and the thesis and antithesis of an antinomy are both false insofar as they are taken to apply to such a world. Yet there is still a contradiction in the world there seems to be, since the thesis and antithesis still apply necessarily to that world, but the latter cannot be characterised by both of them. When the world is exposed as an illusion, therefore, the conflict between the thesis and antithesis does not just prove to be *seemingly* contradictory (and so dialectical); it remains a *genuine* contradiction besetting the world there merely *seems* to be. Kant does not make this point explicit himself — indeed, he insists that “the conflict of reason with itself” can be brought “entirely to an end” (CPR B 544) — but the point is implicit in what he says.

The judgements that the world has a beginning in time and does not have such a beginning thus have an ambiguous status. On the one hand, insofar as the world to which they apply is not something real in itself, those judgements merely *seem* to be true: they are illusory judgements. This in turn means that the transcendental illusion that Kant declares to be unavoidable includes not only the ideas and the principle Grier calls “P₂” — namely, “when the conditioned is given, then so is the whole series of conditions subordinated one to the other, which is itself unconditioned, also given” (CPR B 364)⁴⁰ — but also the theses and antitheses of the four antinomies: it includes “e.g. the illusion in the proposition ‘the world must have a beginning in time’” (CPR B 353). On the other hand, however, such judgements do not merely *seem* to be true of the world that merely *seems* to be real, but they *are* indeed true of it. The world as a whole is not real in itself but merely seems to be, but it remains no less true that it must be understood to be both finite *and* infinite even though it must also be determinate and so either finite *or* infinite.

Kant’s claim that there is “no real *contradiction of reason with itself*” (CPR B 768) thus needs to be qualified. There is no actual contradiction, since no complete world to which mutually exclusive predicates necessarily apply is actually given. Yet there *is* still a “real contradiction of reason”, since such mutually exclusive predicates continue to apply to the determinate world that seems to be given. This contradiction is no mere illusion, but is a necessary and irreducible feature of the world that seems, and must seem, to exist: it is the “conflict of an illusion” that remains *contradictory* (CPR B 534, trans. altered). Kantian reason — that is, reason enlightened by transcendental idealism — does not confront a contradictory reality “in itself”, but it will always face the contradictions generated by the illusions that it necessarily projects, that is, by its own “subjective” products. In this sense, Hegel is right to claim that Kant’s solution to the antinomies “make[s] the so-called conflict

[*Widerstreit*] into something *subjective*, in which of course it remains still the same illusion, that is, *as unresolved*, as before” (SL 191 / LS 200, emphasis added).

It has to be admitted, however, that in these lines Hegel does not himself have in mind the point I have just been making. He is not claiming that, for Kant, contradiction, though absent from the sphere of the “in itself”, continues to belong to the world that *seems* to be real in itself, that is, to transcendental illusion (*Schein*). His claim is rather that Kant shifts contradiction from things in themselves to the (in Hegel’s view) “subjective” realm of *appearance* (*Erscheinung*). It is for this reason that Hegel thinks Kant does not ultimately resolve his antinomies: for Hegel’s Kant, contradiction remains even in the world of our empirical experience, the world as it is *for us*.

That this is Hegel’s view is confirmed by his statement in the *Encyclopaedia* that, for Kant, “the worldly content, whose determinations are caught in such a contradiction, cannot be something *in itself*, but only appearance [*Erscheinung*]”, and by the subsequent remark that “it is not considered at all objectionable that the world of *appearance* [*die erscheinende Welt*] shows contradictions to the spirit that observes it” (EL § 48 and Remark, trans. altered). The interpretation of Kant expressed in these lines is, however, clearly mistaken: for, in Kant’s own view, *there is no contradiction in mere appearances*. The illusion projected by reason’s idea of the world may well continue to produce contradictions (even if Kant does not say as much himself); but there is no contradiction in things as they actually appear to us, in the things we experience.

For Kant, a contradiction arises when the totality of conditions of appearance is assumed to be something real in itself, because that one totality must be understood (for example) both to have and not to have a limit in space and time. Kant then dissolves this contradiction by rejecting the assumption on which it rests: in his view, appearances do not constitute a reality or world “in itself” and so are neither infinite nor finite “in themselves”;

there is thus no contradiction in them (see CPR B 533).⁴¹ One might still worry, however, that, even if they have no existence in themselves, appearances form a given whole *for us* and that that whole must be both infinite and finite. If that were the case, then the contradiction attached to reason would not actually be removed but would simply be relocated from the world “in itself” (which has now been exposed as an illusion) to the world of our appearances (which is empirically real), and Hegel would be right.

Kant insists, however, that appearances (and their conditions) not only do not constitute a whole reality or world *in itself* but also do not constitute a whole world or totality *for us*. Appearances (and their conditions) are not given as a totality *at all*, because (as I have noted above) they are given only in the “regressive series of my representations” and that series can never be completed (CPR B 533; see also B 527). As I regress back from what is actually given to me to other objects of perception, I regress from one conditioned thing to another, but I never reach a point at which no further regression is possible and the whole can thus be said to be given. Accordingly, the series of appearances “is never wholly given, and the world is thus not an unconditioned whole, and thus does not exist as such a whole, either with infinite or finite magnitude” (CPR B 533). There can be no contradiction in appearances, therefore, because they do not constitute a totality to which mutually exclusive predicates must, or could even, be applied.

Hegel thus misunderstands Kant when he claims that Kant just shifts contradiction from things in themselves into the realm of appearances and thereby leaves such contradiction “unresolved”. For Kant, there is no fundamental contradiction in the realm of appearance because that realm does not, and cannot, constitute a given totality to which conflicting predicates must apply. Nonetheless, as I suggested above, there is truth in Hegel’s claim that Kant leaves the contradiction set out in the Antinomies unresolved: for that contradiction remains an ineliminable feature of the worldly totality there merely *seems* to be.

3. *Hegel on Kant's Antinomies once again*

From Hegel's perspective, Kant also falls short insofar as he does not provide the resolution of the antinomies that *Hegel* thinks is required: Kant fails to focus on the categories that (in Hegel's view) give rise to the antinomies when they are understood in a one-sided manner, and he fails to think such one-sided categories in their true, "speculative", unity with one another. As I have noted above, what interests Hegel about Kant's antinomies is not principally Kant's own story about the ideas, transcendental illusion and transcendental realism, but rather what they suggest about the categories of thought, and about the categories in Hegel's sense rather than Kant's.

In Kant's own view, the antinomies are indeed related to categories, since they are generated by combining the idea of the world with transcendental realism and all ideas of reason in turn are simply "categories extended to the unconditioned" (CPR B 436; see also B 383). More precisely, the ideas are reached by starting from a premise in which a category of *relation* is expressed and arguing back, through syllogistic inference, to the point at which the "synthetic unity" thought in that category is regarded as something unconditioned (and / or as encompassing a totality of conditions) (see CPR B 383).⁴² The category of substance, for example, is the thought of "something that can exist only as subject and never as mere predicate", so this is extended to the idea of the unconditioned subject (CPR B 289, 379). This unconditioned subject is then identified with the thinking subject (or "I") to produce the specific idea of the "soul" (see CPR B 391).⁴³ The category of causality, on the other hand, is based on the thought of the dependence of one thing on another (or the relation of ground and consequent) (B 106), so this is extended to the idea of the whole series of such dependencies (see CPR B 106, 379, 393). This totality is then identified with the series of conditions of

objects in space and time (that is, of “appearances”) to produce the idea of the “world” (see CPR B 391).⁴⁴

In Hegel’s view, however, Kant’s antinomies are just as intimately connected to what he (Hegel) considers to be the *categories* of infinity and finitude, and they implicitly suggest that these categories themselves are both opposed to and inseparable from one another and in that sense contradictory (see VPG 356). Indeed, for Hegel, Kant’s antinomies are in truth generated *by* these and other categories (see EL § 48 Remark).⁴⁵ The proper consideration of the antinomies — which Kant fails to carry out — should thus focus on such categories “purely for themselves” (*rein für sich*) and show how they resolve their own contradictions logically and thereby develop into their unity (SL 191–2 / LS 199–200, trans. altered).

Hegel’s interpretation of Kant’s antinomies clearly disregards many of Kant’s own explicit concerns. In my view, however, it is not simply unjustified. The connection Hegel draws between Kant’s antinomies and certain (hegelian) categories finds its justification in Kant’s claim that the antinomies are generated (on the assumption of transcendental realism) by the two ways in which the totality of conditions of appearance can be understood to be unconditioned. As I noted above, that totality can be understood to be unconditioned as a whole and to have no unconditioned first member, in which case it is an *infinite* totality (in what Hegel would consider a “bad” sense); but the totality can also be understood to have an unconditioned first member and so to be limited and *finite*. Kant makes clear that this distinction, indeed opposition, between an infinite and finite series underlies all four antinomies (see CPR B 445–6). Furthermore, each antinomy purports to show that the world in itself must be *both* infinite and finite, even though the two are mutually exclusive. Thus, although Hegel interprets Kant’s antinomies “against Kant’s intention” (VGP 356), his claim that they are generated ultimately by *categories* is at least partly justified by Kant’s own procedure: for (assuming transcendental realism) Kant’s antinomies arise because “infinity”

and “finitude” prove to be both opposed and inseparable at the same time.⁴⁶ It is true that for Kant (in Hegel’s words) “reason *only* falls into contradiction through *the application of the categories*” to the “world” (EL § 48 Remark). Yet it is the fact that categories such as infinity and finitude — or continuity and discreteness — are themselves conceived by Kant as essentially *opposed* to one another that actually generates the contradiction when both have to be “applied” to the world. In this sense, Hegel’s interpretation of Kant’s antinomies is defensible.

Hegel is also justified in claiming that Kant does not properly resolve the contradiction that he (Hegel) sees in Kant’s antinomies. As we know, Hegel thinks that the contradictions within and between categories, such as infinity and finitude, are resolved — or, rather, resolve themselves — in the course of speculative logic. This occurs as such categories prove to be moments of a unity (see SL 191–2 / LS 200). No aspect of Kant’s resolution of the antinomies, however, yields this conclusion, so none can satisfy Hegel. Kant resolves the antinomies to his own satisfaction by rejecting transcendental realism and so denying that appearances and their conditions form a reality in itself that could be either infinite or finite: there is no “real *contradiction*” between the thesis and antithesis of the antinomies because there is no one reality to which both must apply (see CPR B 768). From Hegel’s perspective, however, Kant fails thereby to resolve the contradiction between *categories* such as infinity and finitude in a properly speculative manner.

This remains true even though Hegel is wrong to claim that Kant simply moves contradiction from the sphere of things in themselves to that of appearance. Viewed from a modified, “Hegelian” perspective (rather than Hegel’s own), Kant still fails to provide the resolution that Hegel seeks. He fails in two distinct ways.

First, as we have seen, Kant rejects the assumption that the totality of conditions of appearance constitutes a reality in itself, but he accepts that it *seems* to do so. Furthermore, as

I argued above, that seeming reality must continue to be contradictory in Kant's sense, even though Kant himself does not explicitly recognize this. Since the world there merely seems to be retains the same character as the world that is erroneously judged to exist, it must still be either finite *or* infinite, but must also still be judged to be *both*. This in turn means that for Hegel, the opposed categories of finitude and infinity must still both apply to Kant's illusory "world", and so be inseparable in their opposition, and so be contradictory in Hegel's sense. Kant, however, does not show how these contradictory categories can be reconciled and thought together *as one*, either in relation to that illusory world or (as in Hegel's *Logic*) in themselves. Hegel's assertion that Kant turns the conflict "into something *subjective*", but otherwise leaves it "unresolved", is thus justified, even though — *pace* Hegel — the unresolved conflict or contradiction attaches not to the realm of appearance (*Erscheinung*) but to the illusion (*Schein*) projected by reason (see SL 191 / LS 200).

Kant's second failure is different. As just noted, no contradictions are to be found in the sphere of appearance, as Kant understands it (since the latter is a not a given totality that must be, and yet cannot be, both infinite and finite). This conception of appearance as a contradiction-free zone does not, however, *resolve* the contradiction between the categories of infinity and finitude that Hegel finds expressed in Kant's antinomies. It just *removes* the contradiction by denying that the categories are opposed-but-inseparable (since, in the sphere of appearances, they do not both apply to the same totality). Infinity and finitude are thereby simply left distinct from one another within appearance: finite things are, indeed, infinitely divisible, but they are thus "finite" and "infinite" in quite different respects. Now, for Kant, of course, finding a way to remove a contradiction is a mark of philosophical success; for Hegel, however, it is to fail to take seriously the insight implicitly contained in the antinomies. To take the latter seriously, in Hegel's view, is not to do away with the contradictions within and between categories, but to think those contradictions through to

their logical conclusion and speculative resolution. Kant fails to do this because he does not see the need for a purely logical study of the categories in Hegel's sense (see CPR B 108), but also because, for all his strengths, he is ultimately a philosopher of the *understanding*: in Kant's view, the point of philosophy is not to go along with, and think through, contradiction but above all to keep thought and reality *free* of it.

I have suggested that Hegel's general interpretation and critique of Kant's treatment of the antinomies are justified by certain key aspects of Kant's procedure in the first *Critique*. Yet that interpretation and critique still do not look genuinely *immanent*, despite Hegel's stated commitment to entering immanently into "the strength [*Kraft*] of the opponent" (SL 581 / LB 10, trans. altered). First, Hegel focuses, not on what explicitly concerns Kant in the antinomies, but on what he takes to be implicit in Kant's account of them: namely that categories themselves generate the antinomies. Second, Hegel takes Kant to task for failing to do what Kant had no intention of doing, namely consider the categories and their intrinsic antinomies "purely for themselves", as Hegel himself does in his speculative logic.

In another sense, however, Hegel's critique of Kant on the basis of his logic can be considered immanent after all. This is because that very logic is made necessary by Kant's own demand that thought be *self-critical* and not take the dogmatic assumptions of reason for granted. Dogmatism, Kant tells us, is the "presumption" (*Anmaßung*) that reason can proceed according to principles "without first inquiring in what way and by what right it has obtained them" (CPR B xxxv). The purpose of critique is thus to challenge that presumption and to show how — under what conditions — reason's principles can be justified. Hegel, however, also sees in this conception of critique a call to challenge the unquestioned assumptions made by understanding, such as that distinct categories and concepts like "infinity" and "finitude" are, indeed, simply distinct and that thought and the world are governed by the principle of contradiction (or, more accurately, non-contradiction) (see SL 41–2 / LS 21–2, and EL §§ 32,

80). Hegel takes Kant to task, therefore, for failing to carry his own rejection of dogmatism to its logical conclusion: for Kant retains the categorial and conceptual distinctions of the understanding “without first inquiring in what way and by what right he has obtained them”.⁴⁷ In Hegel’s eyes, to carry Kant’s rejection of dogmatism to its logical conclusion is to carry out the radically presuppositionless derivation and examination of the categories that is undertaken in the *Science of Logic*. That in turn includes a close study of those categories — such as infinity and finitude, condition and the unconditioned, and discreteness and continuity — that explicitly or implicitly “constitute the essence and ground of the antinomies” (SL 191 / LS 199). Hegel’s apparently “external” consideration of Kant’s antinomies is thus in fact guided by a logic that is the direct result of following Kant’s own injunction to reject dogmatism (as well as the indirect result of those antinomies themselves, as I noted above).

Hegel certainly does not do justice to Kant’s account of the antinomies in the way that Kantians may expect. Nonetheless, he offers a critique of Kant’s account (as well as of his transcendental idealism) that is ultimately driven by one of Kant’s own philosophical imperatives: anti-dogmatism. Hegel interprets Kant’s antinomies as imperfect anticipations of his own insight into the presuppositionless, immanent dialectic within thought through which contradictions in and between categories arise and are then resolved. From Hegel’s point of view, however, (as Gueroult puts it) “pressing the *Kantian* system is enough to let Hegelian dialectic emerge from it as if by itself”.⁴⁸

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¹ See also SL 46 / LS 28–9; EL § 48 Add.

² See also EL § 28 and Remark.

³ The German text reads: “Widersprüche, auf welche die Vernunft notwendig *stoßen* (nach Kantischem Ausdrucke) müsse”. See CPR B 449 (though Hegel does not reproduce Kant’s wording exactly). On SL 46 / LS 29 Hegel speaks of the “mistake of thinking”, or “misunderstanding”, (*Mißverständnis*) that reason is “in contradiction with itself”, but on SL 191 / LS 199 he affirms the “antinomial” nature of reason.

⁴ See Houlgate (2006), pp. 29–53.

⁵ For Hegel's use of the term "presuppositionless", or rather "presuppositionlessness" (*Voraussetzungslosigkeit*), see EL § 78 Remark.

⁶ See EL §§ 46 Remark, 48 Remark; SL 56 / LS 41. Gueroult (1978, pp. 282–3) appears to miss the fact that Hegel saw this.

⁷ See SL 191 / LS 199; EL § 41. See also Düsing (2004), p. 55, and Sedgwick (2012), p. 173.

⁸ See also Gueroult (1978), p. 272.

⁹ Throughout this essay I have replaced Miller's "Notion" with "concept" as the translation of "Begriff".

¹⁰ See also Houlgate (2006), pp. 423–7.

¹¹ See also EL § 48 and Remark, and Düsing, p. 41.

¹² For a detailed study of the logic of being (from the category of being to that of true infinity), see Houlgate (2006), pp. 263–435.

¹³ See also Gueroult (1978), p. 274.

¹⁴ See Düsing (2004), p. 55.

¹⁵ See Houlgate (2006), pp. 23–8.

¹⁶ See also EL § 48 Remark.

¹⁷ See SL 55–6, 100–1, 197–8 / LS 40–1, 93–4, 207–8.

¹⁸ Other influences on Hegel include, of course, Aristotle, Spinoza, Leibniz and Schelling, but they do not require philosophy to avoid presuppositions in the way that Greek scepticism and Kant's thought do. Other influences pushing Hegel towards presuppositionlessness include Descartes, Fichte and modern freedom more generally in the moral, political and religious spheres; see Houlgate (2006), pp. 23–71.

¹⁹ See also Llewelyn (1987), p. 100.

²⁰ Hegel distinguishes between determinations of being and of reflection, but thinks of both as categories; see SL 409 / LW 25, and EL § 114 Remark.

²¹ For Hegel, contradiction as such can also be expressed as the "law" that states "*all things are in themselves contradictory*" (SL 439 / LW 59, trans. altered).

²² See Houlgate (2006), pp. 24–8, and Houlgate (2015), pp. 37–9.

²³ Gueroult (1978), p. 272.

²⁴ See Gueroult (1978), p. 279. Hegel describes both dividedness and divisibility as "absolute" or "infinite", but he does so to emphasise that each moment is asserted "absolutely" by itself in abstraction from the other. He knows that for Kant the thesis of an antinomy asserts a finite, limited series, whereas the antithesis asserts an infinite series; see VGP 356–7. See also CPR B 532–3, and Grier (2001), p. 212.

²⁵ See also CPR B 39, 463.

²⁶ See also Sedgwick (2012), pp. 172–3.

²⁷ Grier (2001), p. 202.

²⁸ An "apagogical" proof of a proposition is one that proceeds "through the refutation of its opposite" (CPR B 821), and the proofs of both the thesis and antithesis in an antinomy are supposed to take this form.

²⁹ Sedgwick (2012), p. 170, emphasis added.

³⁰ See CPR B 387: "reason attains to a cognition through actions of the understanding [*Verstandeshandlungen*] that constitute a series of conditions".

³¹ See also Allison (2004), p. 391.

³² On transcendental realism, see CPR A 371, Grier (2001), p. 101, and Allison (2004), p. 386.

³³ See also Allison (2004), p. 359.

³⁴ See Allison (2004), pp. 388–95, and Winegar (2016), p. 88.

³⁵ On B 534 the indirect proof of transcendental idealism is slightly different. It goes like this: if the world is a whole in itself, it must be either finite or infinite; but both claims are false (as has been shown by the arguments in the antinomies); therefore, the claim that the world is a whole in itself is also false. On B 535, however, Kant argues that this latter claim is false, not because the thesis and antithesis are false, but because they constitute a "conflict" (*Widerstreit*). The thesis and antithesis are then shown to be false, because the claim that the world is a whole in itself is false, not vice versa.

³⁶ Sedgwick (2012, p. 170) finds Hegel's remark "bewildering", but it is in my judgement perfectly intelligible, given Kant's commitment to the principle of contradiction.

³⁷ For Hegel, such a justification would have to entail deriving the principle of contradiction, without presuppositions, from the very nature of thought and being. In Hegel's own presuppositionless logic, however, he demonstrates that contradiction is actually an integral feature of being itself; see SL 431–43 / LW 50–64.

³⁸ See also Sedgwick (2012), p. 167. Note that in all four antinomies of pure reason the thesis and antithesis are both shown to be false insofar as their shared assumption, namely transcendental realism, is shown to be false. There is, however, also a difference between the "mathematical" and "dynamical" antinomies. The theses and antitheses of the "mathematical" antinomies cannot be true at all, since the series of appearances and their

conditions can never form a totality, but is given only in a regressive “empirical synthesis” (CPR B 527). By contrast, the theses and antitheses of the dynamical antinomies could conceivably be true, if transcendental realism were abandoned, since they would then simply concern things in themselves (a free cause and a necessary being) that are possible but, whatever their status, beyond our cognition. The thesis and antithesis in each case would still contradict one another, but either could be true. See CPR B 559–60, and also Wood (2010), p. 259.

³⁹ See Allison (2004), p. 387.

⁴⁰ See also CPR B 436, and Grier (2001), pp. 121–2.

⁴¹ See also VPG 358.

⁴² See also Grier (2001), pp. 132–3, and Allison (2004), p. 317.

⁴³ See also Grier (2001), p. 136.

⁴⁴ For a fuller account of the formation of the cosmological ideas, see Allison (2004), pp. 362–4. Note that not all such ideas are the ideas of series of *causes*; see CPR B 439ff.

⁴⁵ Such other categories include, for example, discreteness and continuity (in the second antinomy) and necessity and contingency (in the fourth).

⁴⁶ See Düsing (2004), p. 41.

⁴⁷ See Houlgate (2015), p. 38.

⁴⁸ Gueroult (1978), p. 273: “Es genügt, das Kantische System zu pressen, um wie von selbst die Hegelsche Dialektik aus ihm hervortreten zu lassen” (emphasis added to translation). Gueroult’s remark that Hegel’s thought draws more on an “hegelianised Kant” than on Kant himself suggests that he is actually sceptical of Hegel’s claim to be taking Kantian thought to its logical conclusion. In my view, by contrast, in the respect I have outlined (though admittedly not in every respect) Hegel is right.