

## Volume I

# David Friedrich Strauß: Gospel Critic Who Sparked a Populist Revolution



Part I:

On the Explosive Mix of History and Myth  
in the Gospels



## Chapter 1: Methodology:

Walter Jens on Tübingen: Tübingen is "[...] young town; young because here every fourth person is a student but young also because of those many deceased whose work – incomplete, open, and provocative, as it is – wants to be completed."<sup>1</sup>

### Chapter Overview

Three themes structure this chapter: 1) the 'Methodology' of the project: Threefold Mimesis structures a 'close' reading of Strauß' texts and a 'deep' reading of his sources, 2) Strauß' 'Unrealized Paradigm Revolution' in gospel scholarship and metaphysics, and 3) themes of 'Metaphor Interference and Anachronisms' that provide a segue into his work.

David Friedrich Strauß is no fossil from a past geological age. As different as the epoch and the pace of life is between Strauß and us today, the real difference is that Strauß is not a fossil dependent upon the 'voice' of a paleontologist. Rather, Strauß speaks for himself. Understanding him, though, requires more than just listening; just as understanding a fossil requires more than keeping one's eyes open. Strauß' language is no longer ours, the issues of his day that drove him to speak are not only, at least in part, strange to us, but also they are as opaque to him as the issues of our day to us. In other words, we can no more 'hear' Strauß' voice merely by having the luck of encountering his texts than the paleontologist gives a voice to a fossil simply by having the luck of stumbling onto it.

Yet, there is a further, asymmetrical, difference between the fossil, which needs a voice, and a text, which is a voice. Those voices worthy of our time are voices who understand their 'debt' to those who have gone before them. However, they do not express the debt simply by parroting voices from the past. It is not simply by being repeated that a thought is valuable. A thought is valuable that gives its thinker illuminating insight into the thinker's own world, physically and socially, and (!) empowers the thinker to assume personal responsibility for the reader's own thoughts. Thinking is not the mere polishing of a brand name.

Strauß can be important for us, but he doesn't deserve our attention because he was a leading member of the 'genius promotion' out of the Protestant Gymnasium in Blaubeuren, Germany. or 'Prius' in his class at the Protestant Seminary in Tübingen.

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1. Andreas Rumler, *Literarische Spaziergänge durch Tübingen. Auf den Spuren von Hölderlin bis Härting* (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag GmbH, 2013): 8.

Strauß acknowledged that, although 'genius' is the inexplicable gift of a (technical) skill set, it *must be cultivated*.<sup>2</sup> Once it is on the way to fruitful achievement, though, it cannot be ignored (although it can be suppressed by oneself and/or one's community). Furthermore, 'genius' can be a burden as much as a blessing, and it certainly does not mean 'always getting everything right.' Although not a child of 'privilege,' Strauß knew that the opportunities available to him made him 'privileged.' If there's anything extraordinary about his ordinariness, it is that he 'took advantage creatively' of the opportunities available to him, and he sought, across his career, to improve his understanding.

Strauß is also not 'important' simply because by the age of 32 he had produced two two volume works (together some 3,000 pages) on the Christian gospels (the *LJ*) and the history of Church Doctrine (*Die christliche Glaubenslehre in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung und im Kampfe mit der modernen Wissenschaft; Christian Doctrine in its Historical Development and in Conflict with Modern Science*). Literally gallons of ink have been spilled on the gospels and Church Doctrine, which aren't worth one's time. In Strauß' case, even the key insights that guided his scholarship, unsurprisingly, if we're honest, did not come only from him. *What distinguishes this now silent voice from so many other silent voices is the insight, acuity, and faithfulness by which he listened to others while meticulously connecting dots across themes, texts, and ages.* He rewards his reader in that he has done the groundwork, which saves his reader valuable time!

Given, though, that, if at all, the meaning of his work is limited for the most part to the issue of 'myth' in the gospels and his ground breaking work in gospel criticism. However, his criticism of 'liberal' Rationalism, his criticism of the history of Church Doctrine, and his criticism of the dominant metaphysics (Hegelianism) of his age was and remains so good as entirely ignored.

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2. On 'genius,' see Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 307–319, *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1055–1066; Olms ed.: 233–245, especially Starke's footnote *Menschenkunde* in the Olms ed.: 246\*, and *Anweisung* Olms ed.: 20, 30–31. In dramatic contrast, Strauß' definition of genius is far more 'consequentialist' than Kant's. "The harmony of the powers of the soul, which, each strong and active in its own right, never interfere with the other in the most lively interplay or thwart its effectiveness, but unsearched, without anxious choice or arduous struggle, harmonize in the accomplishment of what is appropriate in every case.

[... One recognizes] the genius by a great idea which forms the keynote of his life, from which all his thinking, speaking and acting proceeds and towards which it strives, for the sake of which he disregards everything else, even his own external well-being [...]

[...] [G]enius shows itself further in the force with which it acts on its surroundings, in the magnetic attraction, as it were, with which it knows how to bind to itself all those who feed on it ingenuously; yes, it shows itself no less on the other side in the strong contradiction which it arouses against itself, the black storm clouds of passion and hostility which it draws up against itself, like a powerfully shining sun from damp ground.

[...] [T]he surest test of true genius lies in the effects it succeeds in exerting on posterity" Strauß, "Vergängliches und Bleibendes in Christenthum. Selbstgespräche." 102–103.

Beginning in 1837 when the liberal government of the Canton of Zurich, Switzerland, first attempted to appoint him to the chair for Biblical Theology, Church History, and Dogmatics at their new university founded in 1831, Conservative Christians over the course of two years were in uproar in the Canton. The ever escalating rage among conservative Christians against Strauß reached fever pitch when the government in its second attempt succeeded in appointing him to the faculty in January of 1839. Six months of red hot, *ad hominem* rhetoric and misrepresentations of Strauß' work, the *LJ*, culminated in September 5/6, 1839, in Conservative Christians under the leadership of their pastors succeeding in a bloody political coup in Zurich. The replacement government pensioned Strauß before he had ever entered the classroom.<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, Strauß remains significant not solely for biblical scholars interested in the history of the crucial mileposts in gospel criticism that now are deemed irrelevant. Yet, even 'liberal' scholars recognize Strauß as merely an interesting case of intellectual martyrdom whose gospel criticism has been supplanted by 'form,' 'redaction,' more sophisticated 'literary,' and 'sociological' criticism of the text.<sup>4</sup>

Rather than having been left on the trash heap of biblical exegesis, though, Strauß both silently shapes 'critical,' exegetical scholarship, clearly in Rudolf Bultmann's program of 'de-mythologization' of the gospels,<sup>5</sup> as well as provides untapped resources

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3. He donated his pension to the poor. See Jörg F. Sandberger, "David Friedrich Strauß (1808–1874)" in *Theologen des Protestantismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, 2 Vols., Martin Greschat ed (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1978) I: 94.

4. 'Form' criticism arises out of 'source' criticism, which sought to establish the historical sequence of gospel authorship. In the search for the original, historical accounts of the ministry of Jesus, the gospels were evaluated with respect to the sources that they had and/or shared in common. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> C, Johann Jakob Griesbach proposed the 'two-gospel' hypothesis (indebted to Henry Owen and Friedrich Andreas Stroth) (1783) that Matthew was the original gospel, followed by Luke, with Mark employing both for the composition of his gospel. In 1786, Gottlob Christian Storr had proposed that Mark was the first gospel to be written, which both Matthew and Luke possessed when writing their gospels. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> C First Testament scholars developed 'form criticism' that identified pericopes in the text that existed and were circulated prior to their appearance in the scriptures. Rudolf Bultmann most famously applied 'form' criticism to the gospels. Identification of these earlier pericopes shared among the gospels (particularly, the synoptic gospels) allowed scholars to identify the redaction activity (called 'redaction' criticism) of the individual gospel authors, which, in turn, led to recognition of the specific theological agendas or voices of the gospel authors. 'Literary' criticism, already proposed by G. Henry Ewing in 1890, focuses on each individual gospel as a theological whole. Redaction criticism's identification of the individual voices of the gospel authors to speak of the theological claims of the authors enhanced the insights of literary criticism. Since the 1970s, 'sociological criticism' has employed the social sciences to identify the social world in which the gospel texts are embedded.

5. Bultmann's reading of Heidegger can be viewed as the futile continuation of Strauß' search for an 'existential theology' that is 'historically based' in light of the inadequacies of Strauß' reductionist materialism. Yet, Heidegger's acknowledged ambiguity with respect to the notion of 'authenticity' leaves the individual trapped in the expectations of her/his social world. See especially, Heidegger, *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson trans. (New York: Harper and Row, 1962): H 43 and 167. Granted, those who took the alternative route from that taken by Bultmann out of Martin Kähler emphasized the 'Christ of faith' over the 'Jesus of history' by turning to Heideggerian 'Word event' theologies of 'faith' (e.g., Gerhard Ebeling and D. Ernst Fuchs), which would appear to Strauß as having

for moving both scriptural criticism and theology off their comfortable complacency grounded in pluralistic ‘tolerance’ rather than identification of the required, universal conditions for experience, understanding, and responsible agency.

In addition, as with the case with his two volume study of the gospels in the *LJ*, his two volume criticism of the history of Christian doctrine remains an incredibly detailed source book for the issues at issue in the gospels and in the history of Church Doctrine. Not only the two volume *LJ* can yet save the reader valuable time but also the two volume *Glaubenslehre*, as well.

Finally, Strauß’ criticism of Hegelian Absolute Idealism and his embracing of Feuerbachian, Reductionist Materialism and Nominalism make him a crucial resource for understanding the history of metaphysics that shapes understanding (for good or ill) today. Strauß’ *The Old and the New Faith* is a remarkable prediction of social development. However, despite all that he ‘accomplished,’ Strauß’ significance rests as much, if not more, on what he didn’t achieve than in what he claimed to be ‘objective truths.’

### On Understanding as Three-fold Mimesis: A ‘Method’ for a Close and Deep Reading of Strauß

Strauß anticipates (explicitly, with the *genetic mythical principle* and, implicitly, with his rigorous reading of the history of Church Doctrine) the hermeneutical perspective of Paul Ricoeur and Hans Georg Gadamer in the 20<sup>th</sup> C that takes texts to contain seeds of *ever expanding understanding and generative creative agency* that is summarized by Ricoeur’s notion of the ‘hermeneutical arc.’<sup>6</sup> This ‘arc’ always commences with *pre-figured* ‘language’ already present in one’s social and intellectual context, which is then *con-figured* in a new form by an author/artist and, then, must be *re-figured* by the ‘reader’/audience.

The ‘intentional fallacy’ maintains that the reading of a text is governed by the ‘intention of the author.’ In *The Aims of Interpretation*, E.D. Hirsch, Jr., defended precisely the notion, though, that the ‘intention of the author is the governing principle of *moral obligation that a reader owes to the author of a text.*’<sup>7</sup> Yet, if there is anything that is inaccessible to a reader, it is access to the ‘intention’ of an author. Paul Ricoeur

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returned to an unhinged, speculative, ‘gnostic’ escapism from the historical world analogous to Hegel. See Heidegger’s own suggestion of the possible compatibility of his notion of the Being-of beings (*Sein der Seienden*) with Negative Theology (i.e., the ‘influx’ of Gnostic teaching) in *Being and Time*: 499, n. xiii (German: 427, n. 1).

6. On Ricoeur’s ‘hermeneutical arc,’ see: 35, n. 6

7. See E. D., Hirsch, Jr., *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976): 89 ff.

contrasts the "romantic conception of hermeneutics in which interpretation aimed at recovering the intention of the author behind the text" with focusing on "the sort of world which the work opens up *in front of* the text."<sup>8</sup> As Hans-Georg Gadamer wrote in *Truth and Method* (1960): "Neither is the mind of the interpreter in control of what words of tradition reach him [*sic.*], nor can one suitably describe what happens here [in the process of understanding a text] as the progressive knowledge of what exists, so that an infinite intellect would contain everything that could ever speak out of the whole tradition."<sup>9</sup> Not only is reading not reducible to the determination of the author's intention that a reader can establish through reading of the text, but also, Gadamer points out,

[...] always, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author. That is why understanding is not merely a reproductive, but always a productive attitude as well. Perhaps it is not correct to refer to this productive element in understanding as "superior understanding" [...]. Understanding is not, in fact, superior understanding, neither in the sense of superior knowledge of the subject because of clearer ideas, nor in the sense of fundamental superiority that the conscious has over the unconscious nature of creation. It is enough to say that we understand in a different way, if we understand at all [*Es genügt zu sagen, daß man anders versteht, wenn man überhaupt versteht*].<sup>10</sup> (emphasis added)

To be sure, one must be equally wary of the 'affective fallacy' that allows the text to say whatever the reader wishes that the text says. Gadamer insisted that the "strangeness" of the text holds the interpreter accountable to it.

If we examine [...] more closely [...] we find that *meanings cannot be understood in an arbitrary way*. Just as we cannot continually misunderstand the use of a word without its affecting the meaning of the whole, so *we cannot hold blindly to our own fore-meaning of the thing if we would understand the meaning of another*. Of course, this does not mean that when we listen to someone or read a book we must forget all our fore-meanings concerning the content, and all our own ideas. *All that is asked is that we remain open to the meaning of the other person or of the text [...]* [It is the case that meanings represent a fluid variety of possibilities [...], but *it is still not the case that within this variety of what can be thought [...]* everything is possible, and if a person fails to hear what the other person is really saying, he (*sic.*) will not be able to place correctly what he has misunderstood within the range of his own various expectations of meaning.<sup>11</sup> (emphasis added)

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8. Paul Ricoeur, "Biblical Hermeneutics" *Semeia* 4 (*Paul Ricoeur on Biblical Hermeneutics*), John Dominic Crossan, ed. (Missoula: University of Montana, 1975): 82.

9. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Garret Barden und John Cumming, trans. (New York: Seabury Press/Continuum, 1975): 419.

10. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*: 264.

11. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*: 238.

Ricoeur takes a similar position expanding Monroe Beardsley's criteria for deciding if one has made a "good" reading of a text.<sup>12</sup> A good reading, according to Beardsley, involves "congruence and plenitude," i.e., coherent accountability to the text and insightful suggestiveness. Ricoeur adds that a "poor" reading of a text as one that is "narrow and far-fetched."<sup>13</sup>

Ricoeur speaks of the '*hermeneutical arc*' of understanding that stretches from the author's world over a text to the reader's world. With the metaphor of a 'hermeneutical arc,' Ricoeur draws on the analogy of the living dialogue to claim that the reader's understanding, in fact, occurs as a consequence of the entire arc leading from the author's world to the reader's world (even if s/he is unaware of the arc).

Truly adequate understanding, though, has a responsibility incapable of exhaustive achievement because one must seek to understand the author *to the extent possible*, not merely duplicate her/his words. However, the need to seek understanding involves more than grasping the author's vocabulary and themes. Understanding recognizes that the author's intention in its totality is beyond the reach of the reader as are most of the motivations and possibilities of the author because they were not even clear to the author her-/himself at the time of writing. In addition, however, one must seek to understand the original world of the text as well as those linguistic and structural meanings immanent to the text. Equally, one must be sensitive to what has happened to the text in the interval between writing and reading which requires that the reader engage in a quest for awareness of her/his presuppositions or prejudices inherited as a consequence of the temporal gap between the author and the text's original world/audience and the reader's world. Finally, the reader must rigorously examine the influence of, and possibilities in, the new world of reference and application that the text now has in its new "present," the present 'now' of reading.<sup>14</sup> Rather than 'simplifying' the task of interpretation by merely focusing on the author's words or intention, the recognition of the presence and demands of the elements of this 'hermeneutical arc,' functioning whenever one is reading a text (or hearing an address, looking at a work of art, attempting to make sense of an event) *increases one's awareness of both the complexity of the event of meaning (not to speak of truth claims) as well as the responsibilities challenging the reader.* In short, *one must avoid the "intentional fallacy" as well as the "affective fallacy" that allows the text to say anything that the reader wants it to say.*

A proper reading of the text, then, is one that is accountable to the text, i.e., congruent, but also is generative of "imaginative variations," that is, evocative of a

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12. See William K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Monroe C. Beardsley, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1954).

13. See Paul Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics" in *New Literary History*, VI/1 (1974): 104.

14. Gadamer speaks of this process of understanding across the "hermeneutical arc" as a process of "fusion of horizons." See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*: 258, 271–274.

plenitude, informing the reader's possibilities for living in a space made possible by the acting and suffering of Others to whom a debt on our part is owed.

In *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur formulated this hermeneutical arc in terms of what he calls 'three-fold mimesis' of the *pre-figured*, *con-figured*, and *re-figured*. The three moments describe the process of the production of meaning by the author's authorship by *con-figuring* for her-/himself the already *pre-figured* mediations of language inherited by the author. Nonetheless, understanding of the text is a creative activity on the part of reader, who *re-figures* that which was initially *con-figured* by the author. This *refiguration* consists of the reader's application of the text being read to her/his world of actualities and possibilities. Note, however, how the three mimetic moments are always and already linguistic (embedded in symbol systems), that is, they are concerned with mediated ("figured") experience and understanding. Furthermore, the author is no more in control of the meaning of her/his text than is the reader for there is no primary, un-mediated or non-figured experience or language to which either can appeal. An author encounters an already "pre-figured"<sup>15</sup> world, which s/he then has "con-figured" by the writing of the work, which is completed only when a reader "re-figures" the text through application to her/his world.<sup>16</sup>

The three-fold mimesis of Ricoeur's hermeneutical arc can be viewed as a core element of 20<sup>th</sup> C hermeneutics in a *post-metaphysical world* that acknowledges that there is no direct access to external 'reality' (either subjective or objective) that absolutely grounds the 'truth.' If there is legitimacy to this dynamic of historical understanding, though, then it should not be surprising that the insight can be found pre-figured in earlier time periods. This is the case already with the acknowledgement that 'reality' is mediated only by appearances, which is the starting point of Immanuel Kant's epistemology. There is no direct access to things-in-themselves.

David Friedrich Strauß' groundbreaking *Life of Jesus Critically Examined* of 1835 is also an example of the 'hermeneutical arc' when it comes to its central theme of 'myth' in the gospels. Strauß' account of the generation of the gospel myths by means of the 'genetic mythical principle' is a profound illustration of his own *configuration* of themes *pre-figured* in earlier writings (in the case of the gospels, the earlier First Testament documents).

However, the requirement of *re-figuration* by the reader as s/he attempts to apply the *con-figured* text of a prior author emphasizes the reader's existential investment in reading. A text is cherished to the extent that it opens up possibilities in the life-world of the reader. Given the metaphor interference as a consequence of the polyvalence of meaning, myth can mean not only 'non-factual' in the sense of non-historical but also merely 'story' in contrast to a 'rational' account of an event. When one adds the

15. See Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1, Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985): 53, 182.

16. See Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1: 53 and *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 2: 10, 20, 27, and 164, n. 20.

degree of the reader's self-interest, which wants the gospel stories to be literal accounts of events in the life and ministry of Jesus because it is the lynch pin of one's personal salvation, one can readily recognize why such a reader reacted so powerfully (and violently) to Strauß' labeling the gospels 'myths.' Populist conservatives are blinded by 'metaphor interference' that takes myth to mean 'mere story' rather than literal facts. Their *re-figuration* of the text is concerned with their personal, eternal self-interest. Strauß' usage of the term 'myth' clearly indicated, for them, that Strauß was denying the 'truth' of Christianity.

It is no surprise that the focus of that rage was directed into an *ad hominem* attack on its author, whom conservatives concluded must have been 'deranged' or 'morally pernicious' to aim to destroy 'the faith' of Christianity. This is what happened with Strauß, and its destructiveness is manifest in the political revolution that Strauß' work sparked in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1839.<sup>17</sup> The populist Christians of the Canton of Zurich revolted against the Canton government as a consequence of its reform efforts in education, generally, with the straw that broke the camel's back for the populist Christians being the Liberal government's appointment in January of 1839 of the 'anti-Christ,' Strauß, to the crucial chair for Biblical Theology, Church History, and Dogmatics at the new University of Zurich established in 1833 by the 'radical liberal' government. This government had come to power in the first elections under the first democratic constitution of the Canton held in 1831.

*The populists were not alone in drawing the conclusion that reading the gospels is a question of 'fact' or 'fiction.'* In fact, it is not Strauß who stresses this simplistic alternative between 'fact' and 'fiction' but, rather, the 'liberal' Friedrich Schleiermacher took the core issue of gospel studies to hinge on whether the narratives of the 'Second' Testament are 'history' or 'myth' with the latter term meaning the denial of their historical status.<sup>18</sup> Even Strauß' beloved professor from the Gymnasium in Maulbronn

17. See the "Historical Reader" of materials related to the 1839 Zurich revolution in Vol. I Part II!

18. See the opening sentence to § 152 "Relation of the Critical and Speculative Theology to the Church" in Strauß, *LJ*: 781. Strauß quotes from Schleiermacher's lectures on the life of Jesus in *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History*, Leander E. Keck, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977): 97: "[...] our judgment concerning miracles must be such that through it the credibility of the Gospels is not injured; for otherwise our faith in the person of Christ would be ruined, and he would become for us a *mythical* person!" [Keck's text emphasized 'mythical']. Edgar Quinet in his Quinet "Review of Strauss's 'Life of Jesus' in *Voices of the Church, in reply to Dr. D.F. Strauss, Author of "Das Leben Jesu," comprising Essays in Defence [sic.] of Christianity, by Divines of Various Communion*, J.R. Beard, ed. (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1845): 59, quotes Schleiermacher's letter to his student, Gottfried Christian Friedrich Lücke, wherein Schleiermacher asks: "[...] how much longer will this idea [the idea itself of 'creation' not the 'seven days' of the Genesis account] prevail against the strength of theories, founded on scientific combinations [...]? And our gospel miracles [...] – how long will it be before they again fall in their turn, through better-founded and more honourable reasons than those of the French Encyclopedists? For they will be reduced to this dilemma – either the entire history to which they belong, is a fable in which it is impossible to discern truth from fiction; and in this case Christianity no longer appears to proceed from God, but from nothingness itself, or on the other hand, if these miracles be real facts, we must agree, that, since they have been naturally produced, they must still have analogies in

and the Tübingen Protestant Seminary (the ‘Stift’) in Tübingen, the ‘liberal’ Ferdinand Christian Baur, who initially charged Strauß with shattering the history of the gospels, according to his son-in-law Eduard Zeller,<sup>19</sup> defined myth as the substitution of ‘images’ for ideas<sup>20</sup> without grasping the ‘Mythic School’s’ husk/kernel structure to myth that can have a historical event, an idea, or a symbol at its core. Zeller presents Baur’s criticism of Strauß under the rubric of ‘destructive criticism’ with ‘insufficient constructive criticism’ ‘especially when it came to the importance of the ‘person of Jesus.’ I point out in Part I, Chapter 3 “Academic Controversy and Reaction to Strauß’ *Life of Jesus* of 1835, though, that Baur’s charge that Strauß destroyed the historical foundation of Christianity is not because of Strauß’ emphasis upon the mythic character of the gospels. Rather, for Baur, the historical foundation of Christianity is the Christian community itself, which Paul called the ‘body of Christ’ (for example, I Corinthians 12:12 ff.: Ephesians 2:15–16 [to create a New Humanity], 3:3–6 [pagans included in the new body], 4:9–16, and 5:30; and Colossians 1:15–18; and which is precisely the key to the Eucharist for Paul in I Corinthians 10:16–17). Baur invoked the ‘body of Christ’ metaphor to mean that the Christian community was the historical incarnation of the God/Man.<sup>21</sup> The history of the God/Man is not limited, in Baur’s reading, to the issue of an objective conviction that the God/Man was exclusively limited to the individual, Jesus of Nazareth.

By *re-figuring* in new understanding of inherited narratives as well as the *con-figuring* of new insights and narratives, the reader demonstrates her/his ability to ‘see things that aren’t there’ (possibilities) in the phenomena that, in turn, drive the individual’s own (intentional) transformation of her/his world. This process is the very condition that makes it possible and necessary for us to assume personal accountability for our reading. Not only does understanding and creative agency require the ‘hermeneutical arc,’ but it is the origin of the two forms of ‘meaning’ in life: 1) the ‘making sense’ of phenomena and 2) the ‘sense of life being worthwhile.’

Each of us ‘makes sense’ of our experience, and each of us, regardless of limitations, is capable of creating things (e.g., write texts) that nature on its own could

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*nature, and then the very idea of a miracle will be destroyed.* What, then, my dear friend, will be the result? [...] *Will history be divided into two parts, – on the one side, Christianity leagued with barbarism on the other, science hand-in-hand with impiety?*” (emphasis added).

19. Eduard Zeller reports this from a letter of Baur’s of February 10, 1836, in “Ferdinand Christian Baur” in *Vorträgen und Abhandlungen geschichtlichen Inhalts* (Leipzig: Fues’s Verlag [R. Reisland], 1875): 464.

20. See F.C. Baur, *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung* (1838), Vol. I (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004): 143.

21. See Baur, “Die Hegel’sche Religions-Philosophie” in F.C. Baur, *Gnosis*: 721, See as well, *ibid.*, 685, 696, 706, n. 30 (actually 709–710), and 734–735. Identification of the ‘Church’ with the ‘body of Christ,’ was taken by Ignatius of Antioch to be achieved through partaking of the Eucharist. The ritual for him was a literal consumption of Christ’s flesh and blood that one’s own flesh and blood be transformed into Christ’s so that one be united with Christ in Spirit.

never accomplish. Nonetheless, only when the individual's *awareness* of the effort and rigor with which s/he has exercised her/his creative agency is combined with her/his intentional commit to the universal lawfulness of theoretical and practical reason, is it possible for her/him to know whether s/he is worthy of the trust s/he owes, to, and asks of, her/his 'readers.'<sup>22</sup> This worthiness of trust, not the claim to possess absolute truth, is more important than any applause or remuneration, and, because of it, the individual is driven to apply the highest standards upon her-/himself as criteria for adjudicating her/his creative efforts.

The 'hermeneutical arc' of three-fold mimesis is, unquestionably, methodologically valuable for illuminating Strauß' relationship to his sources and the production of his own texts. Nonetheless, it has serious limitations when it comes to 'blind pluralism' and a 'blind' eye to the problem of systematic distortion given the limits to human reason. These limitations are at the core of anti-metaphysics addressed in section "A Call for a Re-engagement of 'Metaphysics'" in the "Introduction" to Volume II. as well as in the "Conclusion: John Dewey and the Enduring Need to De-mythologize." Given the profound limits to objective truth claims, the emphasis on particularities to the eclipse of universalities has led to an un-reflective embrace of all difference at the expense of 'necessary/required' identity. By acknowledging only 'differences', one fails to grasp the significance of universal, human capacities that are the condition for the differences in and among human beings. Differences (particular identities) are the consequence of the 'articulation' of those universal capacities as a result of the differences in objective contexts. In addition, the profound limits to objective truth claims has led to the surrendering of any genuine strategy for confronting systematic distortion in understanding other than to depend upon the capricious recognition of anomalies in perception. With only an alternative between Idealism and Empiricism,

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22. If Kant's use of the 'lie' along with 'be consistent with humanity as an end in itself,' 'develop one's talents,' and 'respond to the suffering of others' as examples of the categorical imperative (see for example, *Groundwork*: AA IV: 429–430) is not sufficient to remind the author of her/his accountability to her-/himself as well as her/his reader, Paul Ricoeur emphasizes the significance of *trust* in the other when he writes: "I expect that each will *mean what he [sic.] says*. This confidence establishes public discourse on a basis of trust where the other appears as a third party and not just as a 'you'. In truth, this fiduciary base is more than an interpersonal relation, it is the institutional condition for every interpersonal relation." Paul Ricoeur, *The Just*, David Pellauer, trans. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000): 6. Ricoeur stressed this obligation of verisimilitude even more forcefully as a 'debt owed' not just to one's readers but also to the past: "[...] [D]oes not the difficult law of creation, which is 'to render' in the most perfect way the vision of the world that animates the narrative voice, simulate, to the point of being indistinguishable from it, history's debt to the people of the past, to the dead?" Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*. Vol. 3, Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer trans. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988): 192. Without the 'Copernican Turn' to the necessary (1) *a priori conditions of possibility* of experience, understanding, and agency, there are no criteria for discerning between a 'mis-informed,' an intention distortion, and a 'trustworthy' reading. Absent a 'passion' for imperceptible, universal lawfulness there are only relative, social constructions that can only engage in criticism but have no authority of critique.

there was no 'ear' for Kant's 'middle way' of Critical Idealism whose 'ground' is not 'objective content' (neither as ideas or 'things,' content or form, in terms of substance or cause; nor even general, concealed possibilities) but *a priori* conditions of possibility and universal capacities of finite, transcendental consciousness that are 'required' for there to be any experience of 'content' and 'representations' in the first place. Ricoeur's 'hermeneutical arc' and Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons' are no exception as is also the case with Deconstruction's attack on philosophies of 'presence.' In a word, they are all trapped in 'traces' with no investigation of the universal conditions that are required for there to be *an experience of a 'trace.'*

Critical Idealism emphasizes finite, transcendental consciousness' responsible agency, grounded in the absolute worth of each individual as a unique location of creative openness in nature's 'blind' determinism, regardless of 'skill sets' and 'skills.' I document in Volume II the trajectory across his career of Strauß' metaphysical 'crisis.' However, he overlooked Critical Idealism's 'middle way,' which stands in dramatic contrast to what Strauß came to view as the meaninglessness 'indifference' that constitutes the particularities of history for Hegelian Idealism and in dramatic contrast to the Empiricism that Strauß embraced at the end of his life.

### **Strauß from the Perspective of Subsequent Gospel Criticism**

It is particularly beneficial to examine the response (more accurately, the lack of response) on the part of gospel criticism to Strauß' work because it aids in understanding why he was so hated by conservatives and reduced to the mere status of a martyr by liberals.

The reaction of conservative Christians to Strauß' work comes as no surprise, of course. The "Historical Reader" on the 1839 revolution in Zurich, Switzerland, in this volume documents their reaction, and I leave it to the reader to decide its accuracy and value other than to point out that the "Historical Reader" documents what can happen when one acts in the belief that one (or one's mentors) has understood one's 'opponent' without having read her/him.

Already with Strauß' Hegelian understanding of myth as 'husk'/'kernel' in the *LJ*, even 'liberal' scholars recoiled in the face of the 'aridity' and 'abstractions' of Strauß' work. Liberal Christian gospel criticism of the day (the Rationalists) believed it could find sufficient evidence of history to justify identification of a 'historical' Jesus capable of grounding Christian faith without having to invoke Hegel's mystery of the 'Double Negation' on the part of Absolute Spirit. Hegel's meta-narrative has Absolute Spirit 'emptying itself' (Kenosis of '*emanation*') by a First Negation of its Absolute Oneness by means of a process that begins with an 'indivisible two' that initiates a logical process of division that results in the material world and the establishment of the

conditions for emergence of consciousness. With the 'logically necessary' finite consciousness eventually came the 'logically necessary' understanding that only in finite consciousness can Absolute Spirit/Oneness 'return' to Itself by a Second Negation of all multiplicity to think One-ness (a Gnostic return '*influx*'). This 'Second Negation' Hegel referred to as the 'absolute point of indifference'<sup>23</sup> consists of the 'formal Idea of identity' between the ideal (*Ideellen*) and the actual (*Reellen*)<sup>24</sup> at which the difference that arose out of indifference is nullified.<sup>25</sup> This nullification 'destroys' (*vernichtet*) the actual (*das Reelle*)<sup>26</sup> in which consciousness of individual autonomy (*Selbstständigkeit*) is a 'dream.'<sup>27</sup> This 'point of indifference' is 'positive' in two respects: because it confirms the establishment of specificity (*Bestimmtheit*) both subjectively by God and objectively with the creation of particularity, but the 'point of indifference' is, ultimately, 'purely negative' in that the multiplicity of particularity 'returns' to indifferent unity.<sup>28</sup> This 'point of indifference' for individual consciousness, then, is 'death,' which is beneficial in two respects: it liberates the individual from nature's 'necessity' (pain and suffering) and constitutes the individual's Absolute Freedom from sensuousness.<sup>29</sup> "Oh, death, where is thy sting?" Although Strauß was an enthusiastic defender of this Hegelian Christology in the *LJ*, by 1838 and "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity" he abandoned his use of the Hegelian meta-narrative for understanding religion.

Religion in "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity" is manifest in the 'religious genius'<sup>30</sup> no longer defined by Hegelian 'Absolute Reason' of Double Negation, but as contemplation ( $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\acute{\alpha}$ , *theoria*).

[...] neither the statesman nor the ruler of the field, neither the philosopher nor the poet, neither the painter nor the musician, neither the inventor of the plow nor of the printing press, [have] rendered so essential a service to mankind as those who have turned the gaze of people upward and taught them to feel, to recognize, and to revere ever more deeply and ever more correctly the power, wisdom, and love which rules over all existence. Neither by his [*sic.*] ear, which is open to harmony, nor by his eye, which is receptive to beauty, neither by the sociability which founds states, nor by the ability to produce and assimilate

23. Hegel employed both meanings of the term 'indifference: 'non-difference' (or unity) and 'affectless' (or meaningless). See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: (unity) 456, 501, (affectless) 496–497, 499–500.

24. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 456.

25. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 501.

26. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 487–488.

27. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 496–497.

28. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 479.

29. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 479.

30. Strauß defines the 'religious genius' as one in possession of the "harmony of mental powers," "[...] which, each for itself strong and active, in the most lively interplay never disturbs the other or thwarts its effectiveness, but unsearched, without anxious choice or laborious struggle, unite in the accomplishment of that which is each time appropriate." Strauß. "Vergängliches und Bleibendes im Christenthum" (1838): 102–103.

thoughtful entities, neither by agriculture nor by book printing, is man human, but by that of which all these different faculties are only as many emanations: by reason. The philosopher is formed by [... reason] [...] not insofar as it is trained to one-sided theoretical virtuosity,<sup>31</sup> but insofar as it [reason] is the drive and the faculty of the finite subject to relate itself and everything given to a higher and highest, to make this relationship as intimate and lively as possible, and out of it to determine harmoniously all its feeling, thinking, and willing.<sup>32</sup>

Nonetheless, although Strauß leaves the Hegelian circle, his analytical criticism of the gospels remains valid independent of his Hegelian dogmatic conclusions in the *LJ* Strauß and his subsequent distancing himself from Hegel's meta-narrative as of "On the Transient and Permanent in Christianity."

It is important to note that Strauß examined the pericopes of the gospels as isolated elements. He did not engage the pericopes as sets of material employed by the evangelist to make a theological point. For example, Strauß compares and contrasts the 'miracle of the loaves and fishes' in Matthew 14:13 ff., 15:32 ff.; Mark 6:30 ff., 8:1 ff.; Luke 9:10 ff.; and John :1ff., paying attention to the double accounts in Matthew and Mark (see "§ 102. The Miraculous Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes,"<sup>33</sup>). However, he doesn't examine the duplicate accounts in Matthew and Mark as a composition of their respective evangelists that serve a particular, theological purpose for the early Church's relationship to non-Jews.

For example, one can view the first account of the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 with its 12 baskets as a reference to 'feeding' the 12 tribes of Israel and the second account of the miraculous feeding of the 4,000 with its 7 baskets referring to 'feeding' the 7 'Greek churches' at the time of the author of Mark. When one does so, a theological agenda on the part of the evangelist who, between the two accounts, presents Jesus saying that "Nothing that goes into a man from outside can make hi unclean; it is the things that come out of a man that make him unclean," followed with Mark's account of Jesus traveling through the 'Gentile/Greek' Decapolis region on a route geographically impossible, and concluding with the second feeding as anchoring in the ministry and teaching of Jesus the rejection of the Jewish food laws for Gentile Christians.<sup>34</sup>

Although Perrin's 'literary' criticism of the gospels in the 20<sup>th</sup> C emphasized the arrangement of pericopes as indicative of the redaction of the pre-figured 'texts' (oral and written) on the part of the author's agenda *as a theologian*, not historian, the so-called 'advance' in gospel criticism by 'historical science' that resulted in form,

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31. A clear rejection of Hegelianism!

32. Strauß. "Vergängliches und Bleibendes:" 107–108.

33. Strauß, *LJ*: 507–519).

34. I encountered this reading of Mark's stories while a grad student at The Chicago Theological Seminary, but I can no longer find from whom it comes.

redaction, literary, and sociological criticism leaves us no closer to a 'historical' Jesus<sup>35</sup> than the ambiguities of the multitudinous, internally inconsistent claims that Strauß already clearly had identified in the text.

In other words, as Strauß had previously understood, whatever legitimacy there is to historical criticism, it is primarily 'negative,' not 'positive.' Historical evidence credibly allows judgments about what Jesus of Nazareth wasn't (a wealthy landlord, a member of the Priestly class, a Roman collaborator, etc.). However, just who Jesus of Nazareth was or taught will always remain ambiguous because we can't establish certainties on the basis of even so-called 'clear and distinct,' empirical evidence alone much less empirical evidence that has been translated across multiple linguistic frontiers and intentionally shaped by figurative language of texts, as in the case of the gospels.

Although there is sufficient evidence for the claim that Jesus of Nazareth existed, each of the gospels portrays a different Jesus according to its author's theological orientation.<sup>36</sup>

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35. Especially, 'literary' criticism took a turn to pseudo-linguistic theories (especially Ferdinand de Saussure) that distinguished between 'synchronic' and 'diachronic' readings which led to 'reader-response' criticism focused not on the 'origin' of the text but the reader's discovery of themes in the text that meet her/his theological and existential needs. See for example, Lamulani B Ngwenya's "Literary Critics Call Their Approach To Texts as 'Synchronic' Rather than 'Diachronic' with Examples Demonstrate How This Is True in Regard to Genre Criticism and Reader Response Criticism of the Bible?" (5 May 2024). The consequence is a 'you say,' 'I say' exegesis that fits well into the climate of unbridled pluralism (reading the text is a love fest of different perspectives), but it leaves off the screen the 'historical' nature of the text as itself the product of an author's theological shaping of *pre-figured* narrative material. On post-Perrin 'literary criticism' and an embracing of the love feast of pluralism, see Koog P. Hong, "Synchrony and Diachrony in Contemporary Biblical Interpretation" in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 75 (2013): 521–539. Merely substituting a 'liberal pluralism' for a 'conservative doctrinalism' doesn't justify reading the 'received' text in a vacuum. All it does is perpetuate the embracing of the 'affective fallacy,' which takes the text to mean what the reader wants it to mean. Strauß observed that already in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> C Reimarus three classes of people with inadequate reflection on their religious convictions: 1) The largest are those who don't, and don't want to, think, only believe. 2) Others are reflective about other aspects of their experience/understanding, but not when it comes to religion. To examine their religious convictions with the same rigor would lead to a disturbance of their 'peace of mind'. 3) Others begin to question and quickly encounter issues. They simply wish that the conclusion of the textual investigation will always, in the end, confirm the truth of with what they leaned in Sunday School (Catechism) – [either as conservative or liberal doctrine]. See Strauß, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus*: 263. What is needed is a strategy, which avoids this 'third rail' of 20<sup>th</sup> C hermeneutics, that is, all forms (conservative or liberal) of 'systematic' distortions. See in the "Conclusion" the section "A Blind Spot in Dewey's Hermeneutics: The Unrecognized and Dangerous Third Rail:" "818 ff.

36. See Norman Perrin's *The New Testament: An Introduction – Proclamation and Parenthesis, Myth and History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1974). One can read the gospel of Mark as an 'apocalyptic drama' that 'corrects' the disciples (particularly, Peter) with respect to the destruction of the temple inaugurating the New Age to view Christianity as the individual's being 'delivered up' to

Furthermore, when one attempts to establish who Jesus himself was, as portrayed in the gospels, he can be (and was) taken to be a political messiah, a Cynic, an Ebionite, a Docetic mirage adopted by God for a special, spiritual task, the second person of the Trinity as the two-fold Logos: 1) as the internal thought of God (Logos endiathetos/λόγος ἐνδιάθετος) and 2) as the external, spoken Word of God (Logos prophorikos/λόγος προφορικὸς) incarnated as the Christ, a Gnostic redeemer, etc.

Even were we to focus merely on the ‘teaching’ of Jesus, not the historical details of his activities, Strauß pointed out in *The Old and the New Faith* of 1872 that we are incapable of determining with any certainty what that teaching was.<sup>37</sup> First, everything that the gospels give us as Jesus’ teaching is in Greek. However, there is no ‘objective’ evidence what-so-ever that Jesus of Nazareth spoke Greek, and his audience of ‘common folk’ surely didn’t speak Greek, but Aramaic, just as he did. Consequently, the very language of the teaching establishes an inescapable limit to our certainty about what Jesus ‘actually taught.’ Anyone who has even limited experience of working across a ‘linguistic’ frontier between two or more languages, knows that translation is never ‘literal’ but an ‘interpretive construction.’

German theologians, following Martin Kähler and gospel scholars at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> C, attempted to avoid the ‘problem of history’ in the gospels by making the simplistic distinction between ‘fact’ and ‘meaning.’ They accused attempts to ground the Christian gospel in elusive ‘facts’ as ‘dogmatic speculations’ and substitutions of ‘philosophy’ for the ‘clear,’ coherent ‘meaning’ of salvation inescapable in the text (encouraged, of course, by Paul’s dismissal of all philosophy of this world in I Corinthians 2:18–21). Absent F.C. Baur’s work on ‘vertical’ Gnosticism and Hegel’s ‘horizontal’ meta-narrative ‘Gnosticism’ of Absolute Spirit, one would miss entirely the *pre-figured* discussion that stands behind, for example, Martin Kähler’s equating of ‘Byzantine theology’ and ‘modern philosophical speculations.’<sup>38</sup> What one encounters in the gospels, according to Kähler, is not factual history but a call to ‘faith’ in the Christ as

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martyrdom as their Lord; the gospel of Matthew as a ‘new revelation of divine law’ (in the sense of Jeremiah’s prophecy 31:33 that the external law is to be written on the heart); the gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles as a ‘salvation history’ that shifts its center from Jerusalem to Rome to convert ‘the world;’ and the gospel of John and the letters associated with it as the teaching of a ‘school’ of ‘Greek Christians’ based on the Stoic teaching of the Logos. All of these readings consists of theological framing of a story about Jesus of Nazareth. The respective gospels are not concerned with historical facts but with theological meaning.

37. Strauß writes in 1872 that we know too little about the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth to say with certainty what it was. See: 93, n. 44.

38. See Martin Kähler, *The So-called Historical* [historische, factual] *Jesus and the Historic* [geschichtliche], *Biblical Christ* [of meaning], Carl E. Braaten trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970): 43: “[...] the historical Jesus of modern authors conceals from us the living Christ [italics from Braaten]. The Jesus of the ‘Life-of-Jesus movement’ is merely a modern example of human creativity, and not an iota better than the notorious dogmatic Christ of Byzantine Christology. One is as far removed from the real Christ as is the other. In this respect historicism is just as arbitrary, just as humanly arrogant, just as impertinent and ‘faithlessly gnostic’ as that dogmatism which in its day was also considered modern.”

the savior of humanity. In short, this theological strategy over against Schleiermacher and Hegel was to place one's head in the sand of 'faith,' which is the epitome of irony in light of the meaning of Strauß' name in German, Ostrich. The consequence is a startling, classic example of a vicious hermeneutical circle out of which it is impossible to escape as long as one holds onto its assumptions.

Without 'historical criticism' of the gospels, not to mention the transcendental critique of Kant's Critical Idealism, the focus on 'meaning' rather than 'facts' is trapped not only in the capriciousness of its dogmatic slumbers but in its own, inescapable anthropomorphic projections and rapturous dogmatism. The defense of one's meaning is simply: "the bible tells me so."

Martin Kähler, Karl Barth (faith 'beyond' history), Rudolf Bultmann (faith 'over' nature), and 'Word event' theologians for whom the 'Word' alone contained the challenge and call of 'faith (Gerhard Ebeling and Ernst Fuchs) performed an end-run maneuver around the theological issues raised by Spinoza's and Böhme's *objective Immanentism* that sought to replace 'Personal Theism.' In other words, Kähler et al. silently passed over Schleiermacher's *subjective* mysticism as well as Hegel's (and the early Strauß') *objective* meta-narrative, which were meant to provide an alternative to Personal Theism. Kähler et al.'s theological strategy was simply a claim to have drained the swamp without any concern for the crucial theological conundrums that the 'feeling of absolute dependence' and Immanent Indifferentism had attempted to 'solve.'

With Martin Kähler, gospel theology took a remarkable turn away from history, and this turn has shaped Traditional Christian Theology since. Historical facts alone cannot ground theological meaning. However, Kant had distinguished among 'field' (*Feld*), 'territory' (*territorium*), and 'domain' (*ditio*) in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* (1790). A 'field' consists of clarity and distinctness of perception without any hope of causal explanation (e.g., nocturnal dreams).<sup>39</sup> A 'territory' consists of clarity and distinctness of perception where one has not yet grasped the causal explanation appropriate for the perception. A 'domain' consists of both clarity and distinctness of perception as well as causal explanation based upon the grasp of imperceptible 'lawfulness' governing the causal system. Facts are the domain of the natural sciences to the extent that the empirical data can be 'seen' to conform to imperceptible 'lawfulness.' 'Meaning' alone that ignores causal explanation for the sake of 'redeeming faith' is

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39. Kant explicitly discusses nocturnal dreams in this manner. The events in the dream are not governed by physical causality (*Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 995 [Olms ed.: 163]) because they have no direct connection to the waking state (*ibid.*, AA XXV,2: 996 [Olms ed.: 164]). In contrast, agency in the waking state requires the conscious determination of aims in a coherent world. (*ibid.*, AA XXV,2: 996 [Olms ed.: 164]). "When someone says that s/he didn't dream, it is because the sequence of her/his representations are so intertwined that they have no [causal or teleological] coherence" (*ibid.*, AA XXV,2: 1003–1004 [Olms ed.: 173]). As with Rousseau's *Emil*, Kant proposes that the purpose of dreams is "[...] to recognize what capacities [*Keime*] lie in human nature in order to distinguish them from what man has become accustomed to through art (*ibid.*, AA XXV,2: 1005 [Olms ed., 175]).

not even a territory but is merely a field of dreams. Kähler and those who insist that religion singularly addresses 'life meaning' in the sense of 'what makes life subjectively worthwhile' to the neglect of the 'lawfulness of causal systems' are trapped in fanciful dreams.

To be sure, the follies on the part of the Rationalists demonstrated that in a one-on-one between scientific materialism and religion based on scriptures, religion has no defense for its miraculous claims. However, rather than engage the issues at issue of 'history' and 'nature' that were starkly formulated in Strauß' *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History* and *The Old and the New Faith* and, foremost by Critical Idealism, authors such as Kähler, Barth, Bultmann, Ebeling, and Fuchs elevated 'faith' above history in a manner that, ironically, echoed Hegel. Kähler's response to Strauß' *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History* completely ignored the theological issue raised by Schleiermacher's Christology that views the Christ event as a new, absolute, eminent causality. Rather, Kähler, unawares (?), embraced 'historical indifference' because 'facts don't matter' in a strategy analogous to Hegel's Christology that views the Christ event as having occurred with the experienced resurrection as *an event of faith beyond history*.<sup>40</sup> However, Kähler's 'historical indifference' wanted nothing to do with Hegel's meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit. Kähler focused on subjective, redeeming 'faith' as the exclusive significance of the gospels *rather than* seek a direct, 'historical' foundation for the Christian *kerygma* (Proclamation of the 'Good News' as the forgiveness of sins and resurrection) rather than a final cause that is the Second Negation of Absolute Spirit's narrative logic of Double Negation (Hegel), and rather than, even less, Schleiermacher's new, eminent causality in history of perfect God-consciousness.

Kähler's vicious hermeneutical circle is the result of making lemonade out of lemons. If there is not enough history in the gospels to prove one's faith, nothing in the text can prevent one from dogmatic commitment to one's faith given that it can neither be proved nor disproved by the text. The fly in the ointment, though, is what, then, guarantees the 'truth' of one's faith? Furthermore, Kähler's problem is complicated when the pseudo-facts in the gospels are patently false. One is left

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40. For Hegel's Christology, see Strauß, "Hegel's Ansicht über den historischen Werth der evangelischen Geschichte" in *Streitschriften* III: 76–94, especially 80–86, 92–94.

Kähler writes in his *The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ*: 74–75: "If historical research is meant to 'lay the foundation' – the one and only foundation [footnote to I Cor. 3: 10–11] – it will soon become clear that such a foundation [in historical facts] will provide no real support [for faith]. For historical facts which first have to be established by science cannot *as such* become experiences of faith. Therefore, Christian faith and a history of Jesus repel each other like oil and water [...]"

[...] [W]hen it finally comes to making a distinction [between history and faith], it will be clear to the Christian that 'we do not believe in Christ for the sake of the Bible but in the Bible for the sake of Christ [...]' [W]e put our trust in the Bible as the Word of our God for the sake of its Christ."

The vicious hermeneutical circle of 'faith's' confirmation of itself can't be more trenchantly formulated.

with 'empty faith' floating in some fantasy land, and, when it comes to the false pseudo-facts, one leaves them to 'blind perception' without reflection.

Whereas Kähler focused on faith over against 'historical facts,' Bultmann viewed the theological issue to be 'faith over against materialism.' Especially Bultmann viewed the gospels *not 'historically' but 'theologically':*

One is able to say, that at some point it had to come to a connected representation of the life of Jesus on the basis of the available tradition from individual pieces and small collections [...] and that one apprehended the tradition, in whose center stood a historical person, in the form of a connected, historical, biographical story. This does not suffice, however, as an explanation of the uniqueness of the synoptic gospels. Of course, their deficiency in terms of an actual biography and their gaps in the life story of Jesus are already explained due to the fact that their representation had to be created on the basis of the available tradition. However, their distinctive (and by Mark created) character permits itself to be understood only out of the character of the Christian kerygma, to whose supplementation and demonstration the gospel had to serve [...] *The Christ, who is proclaimed, is not the historical Jesus, but the Christ of faith* and of the cult. In the foreground of the Christian proclamation, therefore, stand the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the redemptive facts, which in faith are confessed and in baptism and communion are operative for the believer. The Christ-kerygma is Cult-legend as well, and the gospels are expanded Cultlegends [...] This all means: that in the Cult-kerygma is the one who speaks, that in it from him is spoken, who as God's Son on earth lived, suffered, died, rose, and was elevated to heavenly power. In addition, of course, the weight had to fall on the end of the representation, on the passion and resurrection. Mark created this kind of gospel. The Christmyth gives his book, the book of the secret epiphany, of course, no biographical but an established unity in the myth of the kerygma.<sup>41</sup> (emphasis added).

As is well-known, Bultmann employed Martin Heidegger's philosophy to formulate the meaning of the *kerygma* for modern humanity:

Above all *Heidegger's existentialist analysis* of the ontological structure of being *would seem to be no more than a secularized, philosophical version of the 'Second' Testament view of human life.* For him the chief characteristic of man's Being in history is anxiety. Man exists in a permanent tension between the past and the future. At every moment he is confronted with an alternative. Either he must immerse himself in the concrete world of nature, and thus inevitably lose his individuality, or he must abandon all security and commit himself unreservedly to the future, and thus alone achieve his authentic Being. Is that not exactly the 'Second' Testament understanding of human life? Some critics have objected that I am borrowing Heidegger's categories and forcing them upon the 'Second' Testament. I am afraid this only shows that they are blinding their eyes to the real problem, which is that the philosophers are saying the same thing as the New Testament and saying it quite independently.<sup>42</sup> (emphasis added)

41. Rudolf Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, 9. Auflage (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979): 395–397.

42. Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology" in *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, Hans Werner Bartsch ed., Reginald H. Fuller trans. (London: S.P.C.K., 1953): 24–25.

Yet, according to Bultmann, both theology and philosophy acknowledge humanity's 'fallen state.' However, only the gospels give an answer to humanity's 'fallen state' whereas philosophy, erroneously, only can claim, 'self-confidently,' that humanity can free itself from its 'fallen state' merely by its own efforts.<sup>43</sup>

*The question is not whether the nature of man can be discovered apart from the New Testament [...] No; the question is whether the 'nature' of man is realizable. Is it enough simply to show man what he ought to be? Can he achieve his authentic Being by a mere act of reflection? It is clear that philosophy, no less than theology, has always taken it for granted that man has to a greater or lesser degree erred and gone astray, or at least that he is always in danger of so doing [...] At the same time, however, these philosophers are convinced that all we need is to be told about the 'nature' of man in order to realize it [...] Is this self-confidence of the philosophers justified? Whatever the answer may be, it is at least clear that this is the point where they part company with the New Testament. For the latter affirms the total incapacity of man to release himself from his fallen state. That deliverance can come only by an act of God. The New Testament does not give us a doctrine of 'nature,' a doctrine of the authentic nature of man; it proclaims the event of redemption which was wrought in Christ. That is why the New Testament says that without this saving act of God our plight is desperate, an assertion which existentialism repudiates.<sup>44</sup> (emphasis added)*

Faith generates faith in the *kerygma* without consideration of any subjectively psychological (Schleiermacher) or objectively historical (Hegel and the early Strauß), much less metaphysical, accounting for the 'origin' of 'faith' itself. Having focused on the 'arrogant' speck in the eye of 'historicism' and 'modern dogmatism,' Kähler et al., including Bultmann, failed to see the log in their own eye: It turns out that, for them, Christian theology is a 'love feast' of arrogant (!), anthropomorphic projection that firmly establishes humanity on the throne of God. 'God' is re-established, once again, as a 'Personal Deity' (anthropomorphic) who offers the salvation that humanity believes is 'best,' that is, the anthropomorphic God fulfils human self-interest with the gift of eternal salvation that alone liberates humanity from its 'fallen state.' Anthropomorphic projections are not in-and-of-themselves false.<sup>45</sup> Yet they are no solid foundation for constructing a system of Absolute Dogma or Absolute Knowledge, and they involve not only a limitless hubris on the part of humanity that its experience

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43. This is clearly not Heidegger's conviction. Although he emphasized the 'anxiety' of 'authentic' decision that rejected the pressures of 'public they' to conform to its wishes, Heidegger points out that 'inauthenticity' always precedes authenticity. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*: 168 (German: 130): "Authentic Being-one's-Self does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from the 'they'; it is rather an existentiell modification of the 'they' – of the 'they' as an essential existentielle."

44. Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology:" 26–27.

45. See the discussion of anthropomorphism as not necessarily false in the "Preface:" 34, n. 4

provides the key for explaining the origin and the goal of the entire universe but also involve the high probability that humanity is only worshipping itself.<sup>46</sup>

For D. Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling, the Christ of faith and the historical Jesus are one and the same not because that can be determined historically in the text but because of theological consistency (logic). Christ himself is the originator of the biblical picture of the Christ. Fuchs writes:

The so-called Christ of faith is in fact no other than the historical Jesus. However, much more important is the statement that God himself wants [McG: anthropomorphic] to encounter us in the historical Jesus. The question of the historical Jesus converts itself now appropriately into the question concerning the reality of an encounter with God in preaching.<sup>47</sup>

‘Preaching’ is equivalent to Heidegger’s ‘Word-event,’ which, for Fuchs requires embracing a ‘pre-understanding,’ which he fails to recognize as a vicious hermeneutical circle: “I am in agreement with Bultmann, that the exegete must have a relationship to the thing that he investigates as the content of the text. He [*sic.*] will have to bring with him a stirring ‘pre-understanding’ of faith because the text concerns itself with faith.”<sup>48</sup>

In this I am also in agreement with Bultmann. I proceeded like him from the What and insisted immediately on the How so that the Pauline theology took on an especially important meaning, as it did for Bultmann, for the entire procedure. Beyond that, I asked explicitly about the existential place of thinking faith, that is, I asked where something like believing thinking occurred, will be, as an event. Therefore, I hit upon the event-character of language in my own manner, as the Word of love and thereby upon the linguistic character of human existence.<sup>49</sup>

For there is, obviously, only one unique proper relationship to God: Jesus as the certitude of God. That is faith,<sup>50</sup> for that conforms to the will of God [McG: anthropomorphic], so that we not only have the right, but also the duty, to call God with the name of God; thereby showing our praise. We are then thinking in the manner that we exist. That is

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46. For example, F.C. Baur points out in his *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung* that the notion of God’s justice can be and was taken to mean: 1) that God was concerned to provide a just strategy to ‘save’ humanity from sin or 2) that God was concerned to protect His (!) own honor by removing the blight of human sin. The first notion of God’s justice, of course, is Traditional Christian doctrine. For his discussion of the second notion of God’s justice, see Baur, *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung*: 157, 170!, and 173. Romans 3:25–26 takes on a radically different meaning when read from the anthropomorphic assumptions of God’s justice is concerned with His own honor. See Baur, *ibid.*: 61, n. 1; 241, n. 1; and 545–546.

47. D. Ernst Fuchs, “Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus” in *Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1965): 166.

48. Fuchs, “Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus:” 400.

49. Fuchs, “Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus:” 402.

50. Note: ‘faith’ here means ‘epistemic’ faith, a ‘certain knowledge’ that one can acquire only by ‘faith’ ‘in conformity with the will of God – ‘as soon as we no longer simply reconstruct but allow ourselves to be led by the text’.

the domain in which the 'Second' Testament interpretation is attained, i.e., as soon as we no longer simply reconstruct but allow ourselves to be led by the text. Here Jesus speaks, because God calls to faith through Jesus.<sup>51</sup>

Ebeling takes a similar position when it comes to the relationship between the historical Jesus and faith:

Christology is nothing other than the interpretive passing on of what came to language in Jesus. The historical Jesus would then be properly understood as nothing other than Jesus himself. And the propriety of belief in Jesus – and that is what Christology is all about – would then necessarily be that faith is such a relationship to Jesus, which is in conformity with the historical Jesus, because it then accords with what has come to language in Jesus.<sup>52</sup>

The encounter with Jesus as the witness of faith is [...] without restriction an encounter with Himself as He was. For the concentration on what comes-to-language in faith — and only that — establishes the unity of 'person' and 'work,' but for that reason as well, the totality of the encounter.<sup>53</sup>

*The historical Jesus is the Jesus of faith.* The Jesusunderstanding of faith must for that reason be made valid as the furthering of the historical understanding of Jesus. For faith itself is the realizing-of-the-goal which came to language in Jesus. Whoever believes, is in the presence of the historical Jesus.<sup>54</sup> (emphasis added).

The circularity of this attempt to escape into 'faith' in order to avoid the conundrums of 'history' (and material 'nature') is complete. For Kähler, faith is not 'history.' For Bultmann, faith is not 'nature.' For Fuchs and Ebeling, the 'Word event of faith' is the 'historical Jesus.' The only startling thing here, though, is the anthropomorphic blindness that drives this vicious hermeneutical circle.

North American gospel criticism, especially in the Westar Institute, emphasized history over against 'faith.' Nonetheless, only to the extent that one can employ the 'criterion of dissimilarity' (that is, material that could not have come either from Judaism or from the Early Church 'in all likelihood' comes from Jesus<sup>55</sup>) can one attribute, *probably*, the parables to Jesus. This apparent 'uniqueness' of the parables, though, are

51. Fuchs, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus:" 404.

52. Gerhard Ebeling, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus und das Problem der Christologie" in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 56 Jahrgang (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1959), Beiheft 1: 21.

53. Ebeling, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus:" 23.

54. Ebeling, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus:" 24.

55. Rudolf Bultmann suggested that we can deny the origin of the saying as the early Christian community, "[...] the less it is possible to perceive a relationship to the person of Jesus or to the fate and interest of the church, and on the other hand, the more it shows a characteristic, individual spirit." Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*: 135. The 'criterion of dissimilarity' is more clearly formulated by Ernst Käsemann. See "Das Problem des historischen Jesus" in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen*. Erster Band. 2. Auflage (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1960): 205: "We have to a certain extent security [*Einigermaßen sicheren Boden haben wir*] in one case namely when the tradition for whatever reason neither is traceable to Judaism nor can be attributed to the early Christian

no guarantee that they are from Jesus, and their figurative structure forbids any literal, singular conclusions with respect to their meaning. The parables are concerned with the 'Kingdom of God'<sup>56</sup> in the form of what Phillip Wheelwright calls a 'tensive' rather than a literal, 'steno'<sup>57</sup> symbol with the consequence that the meaning of the symbol is by no means fixed but open-ended.<sup>58</sup>

In other words, even were we to wish to ground our judgments about Jesus of Nazareth in historical 'facts' of either or both his life and teaching, we run up against the wall of the limits to human reason. We don't have direct access to the 'facts,' especially when they are reports of the experience of others and any 'teaching' based upon figurative language eliminates univocal meaning. Conclusions about just who the 'historical' Jesus was and what he taught will always remain merely 'empty abstractions' driven by the (dogmatic and anthropomorphic) assumptions of the interpreter claiming to draw historical conclusions.

The theme of faith versus history dominated Strauß' corpus to the end of his career. As I present the dynamic of this theme in his work in Volume II, it is clear that, in the end, Strauß chose history over theology. His '*genetic mythical principle*' of the *LJ* functioned for him only within the framework of the search for the 'factual,' not as the indicator of the motor of creative, literary production on the part of the gospel writers.<sup>59</sup> His focus on 'history,' though, led to his seeing that the gospel texts do not provide sufficient material to draw more than an aggregate of fragmentary, factual conclusions. This aggregate was inadequate to ground Traditional Christian doctrine. Furthermore, the Hegelian meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit left over little more than a shadow of history, and *Schleiermacher's understanding of religion as the 'feeling of absolute dependence' not only reduced religion to feeling but also contradicted its own dependence upon reason's Principle of Sufficient Reason that is required to achieve perfect God-consciousness on the part of imperfect, human God-consciousness.* In light of the alternatives that Strauß acknowledged, the ground of all experience increasingly

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community; especially then, when the Jewish-Christian community either mitigated or reversed the meaning of their received material because it was too audacious."

56. The 'Kingdom of God' is an ambiguous symbol as Norman Perrin emphasizes in *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom: Symbol and Metaphor in New Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976). Perrin employs Philip Wheelwright's distinction between 'steno' and 'tensive' symbols in his investigation of this central symbol in the gospels. See *Ibid.*, 29–30.

57. See for example, Philip Wheelwright, *Metaphor and Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press):16–17 where Wheelwright distinguishes between 'tensive aliveness' or fluidity and 'steno block' language.

58. This is the central thesis of my PhD Dissertation at the University of Chicago (1983): "On the Soteriological Significance of the Symbol of the Kingdom of God in the Language of the Historical Jesus" available at <https://criticalidealism.org/phd-dissertation-2/>.

59. As I pointed out above, Strauß examined the pericopes of the gospels as isolated elements. He did not engage the pericopes as sets of material employed by the evangelist to present a theological conviction on the part of the author and her/his community rather than a mere description of historical events.

was viewed by him as material history and religion became the ‘mystery’ of nature’s turning inward on itself to continue its ‘progress’ by means of finite spirit.

In other words, although the *genetic mythical principle* proved to be a prescient recognition of the evangelist as author that arises in 20<sup>th</sup> C gospel, literary criticism,<sup>60</sup> both Strauß and 20<sup>th</sup> C literary criticism overlooked the most earth shaking insight of the ‘evangelist as author:’ theology.<sup>61</sup> The gospels do not ground faith. The reader brings her/his faith to the text/gospels. This is as true of the evangelist as author, who employed a set of theological convictions to determine the choice out of the pre-figured pericopes used to con-figure her/his gospel composition, as it is true of the reader who re-figures the gospel narrative in terms of her/his understanding today. *The text is a vehicle that transports the theological understanding of the reader.*

Only a dogmatist claims that the text creates faith in the sense of objective truth claims as *epistemic* faith (knowledge about objective things beyond rationally grounded experiential claims). In other words, dogmatism is in play even before one undertakes to demonstrate that the text proves or disproves ‘the’ objective content of faith. It is not the text that is decisive. Rather, theology is decisive for the understanding of the text. ‘Theology’<sup>62</sup> (philosophy and metaphysics included) plays the decisive role in determining one’s faith. This unspoken consequence of Strauß’ and 20<sup>th</sup> C gospel literary criticism is what makes both uncomfortable if not threatening for many. The easiest path to take is to believe that simply by reading the text one can arrive at faith. *The notion that one is already underway with faith before one even begins to read the text threatens the authority of the text and the confidence of convictions based on the text.* The question that governed Strauß’ reflections over the remainder of his career was which theological understanding?

I will demonstrate in Volume II that there is a theological, middle way, for the most part silently unexamined in the background in Strauß’ work, between spiritualism and empiricism. That middle way is Critical Idealism’s theology of history that remains within the ‘limits of reason’ not to elevate humanity to the throne of God – that was accomplished by the earliest stirrings of humanity’s attempts to establish ultimate causes. Rather, Critical Idealism avoids literal, anthropomorphic projections onto ‘God’ by restricting itself to identifying the finite (!),<sup>63</sup> required elements (physical and

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60. See, especially, Norman Perrin’s. "The Evangelist as Author:" 5–18.

61. Perrin’s conclusion of "The Evangelist as Author" coyly acknowledges "[...] that I have limited myself quite deliberately to the critical method involved in interpreting the text historically, and I am very well aware that this is only the beginning and not the end of the hermeneutical task." (18) He doesn’t state explicitly that the method he proposes is anchored in the theology of the evangelist/reader, not read out of the text as objective truth.

62. Theology is placed in inverted commas because it is a metaphor, not a label for God as an exclusive, divine Person, an eternal substance, a dipolar entity, a mystical Oneness, but a required, but assumed, Noumenon.

63. The qualification ‘finite’ distinguishes Critical Idealism from all attempts to define theology by means of an ultimately, infinite set of pseudo-‘required’ conditions and capacities. I know of no other

mental/spiritual) that make any and all experience, understanding, and responsible agency possible, in the first place. 'God' is a 'required' presupposition for Critical Idealism only to the extent that there is a fundamental 'givenness' to any and all experience, understanding, and responsible agency. Even when speaking of that fundamental 'givenness,' however, Critical Idealism reminds us that it is at best only figuratively anthropomorphic.<sup>64</sup>

The strength of Critical Idealism is the term 'required.' The finite, 'required' elements spoken of here are not capricious, arbitrary, or merely relative. They are demanded by our experience itself. However, this is a command that leaves it up to the individual/community to decide whether or not it is going to embrace the imperceptible, required elements of experience to govern its understanding and enable its responsible agency. Nonetheless, we risk catastrophe when we choose to ignore the lawfulness of nature and/or the lawfulness of morality.

Critical Idealism's philosophical theology does not have its ground in the 'text' itself, but its 'grounding' is in the required conditions and capacities of transcendental consciousness that make it possible to experience a 'text' in the first place. Having failed to view the '*genetic mythical principle*' as the driving force of human creativity as a manifestation of Kant's autonomous, freedom-for intentional, creative novelty (and not merely freedom-from the determinism of nature), Strauß closed off from the beginning the pathway into the 'metaphysical' understanding that is *Critical Idealism's 'theology of history.'* *Here theology rises 'above' matter, although inseparable from history, with transcendental consciousness and its universal conditions of possibility allowing for a species that breaks the determinism of nature and is capable not only of understanding 'what is' but also of holding its agency accountable according to universal, categorical imperatives of 'what ought to be,' which constitute a set of imperatives that guides transcendental consciousness' cultivation of technical and personal skills that, themselves, are dependent upon relative, hypothetical imperatives of 'how to do' things.*<sup>65</sup>

A valuable element in the understanding of Strauß is that Kant's paradigm revolution in theology was eclipsed by 'faith' in materialism's history because Strauß

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theological project that insists on limiting its conclusions with respect to finite conditions of possibility and finite capacities other than Critical Idealism. All other 'theologies' involve a vicious, hermeneutical circle of anthropomorphic projections whether Animism, Polytheism, Henotheism, Monotheism, Pantheism, Panlogism, Immanentism, Gnosticism, the Personal Theism of Christian Platonism ('Intellectualism') and Aristotelianism, 'Occasionalism'/'Voluntarism,' Mysticism, Hegel's meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit, Schleiermacher's perfect God-consciousness, 20<sup>th</sup> C Process Theology of Dipolar Theism with its Pan-en-theism, etc.

64. See Kant, *Prolegomena AA IV: 356, Critique of the Capacity of Judgment AA V: 353*, and the warnings against anthropomorphic projections onto God in *Religion AA VI: 64\**, 141–142, and 168–169.

65. On the difference between 'categorical' and 'hypothetical' imperatives in Kant, *Groundwork IV: 414–421*. On the difference between 'wide' and 'narrow' obligation, see Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals AA VI: 390–391 and: 791*. See as well, the discussion of 'categorical' and 'hypothetical' imperatives in Chapter 7: 738 and a response to the charge that Kant turns all subjective wishes into categorical imperatives: 790, n. 265, as well as Chapter 8: "Strauß' Reading of Kant Over His Career:" 817, n. 32.

never broke out of the pre-figured Kantian narrative of those who influenced him. Understanding all that prohibited his breakout is among his important contributions to posterity.

Whereas Personal Theism fetishizes the ‘text’ as literal; Rationalists manipulate and distort the ‘text’ to make it compatible with the natural sciences; Hegel spiritualizes the ‘text’ by insisting that its ‘truth’ is not limited by the representations that are the ‘text;’ Schleiermacher subordinates the ‘text’ to a new event of ultimate, eminent causality of Christ’s perfect God-consciousness; and Kähler/Hartlich<sup>66</sup> claim that one can ignore the ‘text’ and cling to one’s faith, Strauß *laid the foundation* for seeing *the inescapable dependence of the text on ‘theology.’* The ‘husk’/‘kernel’ nature of myth eliminates the ‘scientific’ embarrassment of the text by emphasizing the ‘kernels’ of the gospel narratives, and the *genetic mythical principle* acknowledges the evangelist as author gathering, selecting, sorting, and structuring the text *guided by a presupposed theological understanding.*

### Terminology Clarification as Segue into D.F. Strauß’ Work

Unfortunately, Strauß has too frequently been read anachronistically. His understanding of ‘myth,’ ‘science,’ ‘metaphysics,’ as well as ‘criticism’/‘critique’ were and continue to be shaped by the assumptions of their meaning by the reader without careful attention to Strauß’ own work. Of course, the assumption that an author in the past means (at least to a degree) with her/his terminology what we mean by that terminology ‘today’ is necessary for any and all understanding, but a danger of misunderstanding occurs with such an assumption, as well. Strauß’ vocabulary, especially, readily generates anachronistic readings by today’s reader so that it is no surprise that his contemporary readers succumbed to anachronistic understanding of him. Even Strauß’ own work, for example his reading of Immanuel Kant, demonstrates the dangers that lurk beneath the surface of the text when one simply takes the prevailing reading of the text’s metaphors from one’s peers.

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66. See the discussion of Christian Hartlich’s ‘Kählerism’ below: 147.

What follows flags the frequent ‘metaphor interference’<sup>67</sup> of terminology that, especially with Strauß, hinders a serious engagement of him. By explicitly focusing

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67. ‘Metaphor interference’ occurs precisely because of the virtue of language that it is not merely a system of ‘steno’ signs. Nonetheless, ‘tensive’ metaphors both facilitate and inhibit understanding.

At some point, everything ‘literal’ in language was metaphorical, or, one may say, literal language consists of ‘dead’ (or ‘dormant’) metaphors. For example, the ‘leg’ of a table or, in ‘British’ English, one speaks of the ‘bonnet’ or ‘boot’ but in ‘American’ English of the ‘hood’ or ‘trunk’ of a car, etc. Pointing out the different actual uses of a metaphor, though, is not merely an empirical observation about language. Rather, the metaphorical nature of consciousness itself illuminates the very limits of our capacity to understand anything.

Other than immediate self-consciousness, which itself is a conundrum (for example, is consciousness an enduring ‘substance’ or simply a ‘presupposed identity?’), there is nothing that we experience directly or ‘absolutely’. Consciousness is the remarkable capacity to ‘see’ ‘identities’ in ‘differences’ in the incessant ‘flow’ of phenomena. In other words, ‘given’ the flow of appearances (perhaps the ultimate conundrum), consciousness experiences a range of ‘clarity of perception’ (itself, incapable of perception because I can’t ‘see’ my or your ‘clarity of perception’) that always commences by re-cognizing (*re-membering*) from appearances earlier in the flow that, although ‘different’ from one another, some of the differences in appearances, at first, are taken to be ‘similar,’ but, then, over time (repetition of the appearances that are similar to one another) consciousness is able to *dis*-cover ‘identities’ among the similarities. For example, although one set of phenomena has ‘leaves’ (already, a metaphorical judgment) and this other set of phenomena has ‘needles,’ one can conclude that both sets are ‘trees’.

This example of leaf and needle phenomena leading to ‘tree-ness’ illustrates how metaphors build upon metaphors, which can lead to mis-judgment if the metaphors employed in the making of a subsequent judgment are incorrect. An example would be the case of ‘binary’ stars. Here, metaphor helps us to understand what was originally distinguished from other phenomena to be a ‘single set’ (binary stars) turns out with improved technology to be a multiplicity, not an identity. Binary stars are not really ‘binary’ but complex systems of stars (not to speak of the role of ‘dark matter’ in our being able to experience anything like a ‘star’). For millennia, consciousness could ‘see’ only such stars as consisting of ‘two’ stars rather than a ‘single’ star – if it saw anything more than a ‘single’ star. ‘Metaphor interference’ occurs when there is a flaw in the system of metaphors upon which a judgment is dependent. As with the case of ‘binary’ stars, such flaws can occur because the ‘technology’ (or skill) didn’t exist that allows perception the ‘multiplicity’ in this ‘sameness’. However, employment of metaphors is necessary for any and all understanding so that the choice when it comes to understanding whether one employs a ‘steno’ or ‘dead’/‘dormant’ metaphor that is taken to be a ‘fact’ (and possibly distort understanding) or a ‘tensive’ or ‘living’ metaphor that stimulates new understanding.

A ‘living’ metaphor employs misunderstanding, productively. It is that cognitive process that acknowledges an incorrect association (tables don’t have legs; two is not one) to stimulate new insights that can occur when one recognizes ‘difference’. The metaphor exploits the polyvalent nature of terms to enhance understanding by allowing us to substitute one meaning for another that only a ‘tensive’ (not a ‘dead’) metaphor is capable of expressing. Just as we can misunderstand when the substituted meaning is inappropriate, we can also increase our understanding of something new about the phenomena because of a set of ‘insightful’ associations contained in the metaphor itself. For example, ‘spring’ can mean a water source, a bodily movement, a metal coil, as well as a season of the year. We can enhance our understanding by combining ‘water source’ with ‘an annual season’ to evoke an understanding of ‘re-birth’ or ‘re-generation’. Alternatively, if one applies the metaphor ‘metal coil’ to a season of the year, one has to make more of a stretch to grasp any similarity between them.

An inappropriate understanding occurs when one takes a metaphor employed in the past to mean literally the same in any and all circumstances. For example, if one takes the metaphor ‘myth’ to mean ‘false’ or ‘unhistorical’ in contrast to ‘scientific fact,’ one can only ‘hear’ the judgment in Strauß’ claim that the Christian gospels are a set of ‘myths’ that the Christian gospels are false and contain no history.

on the ‘metaphor interference’ in Strauß’ work with respect to the meaning of ‘myth,’ Hegelian ‘metaphysics’ and ‘epistemology,’ ‘science,’ and ‘criticism,’ I believe one acquires a productive segue, as well, for entering his intellectual universe as well as for appreciating what he could have acquired from Kant.

### History or Myth?: On the Role of Hegelianism in the *Life of Jesus*

David Friedrich Strauß is known almost exclusively for his work on the Christian gospels in which he declares them to be mythical. The anachronistic assumption is that his concern was to demonstrate the unhistorical nature of the gospel accounts in order to dismiss Christianity. This conclusion is incorrect on both counts, that is, it is incorrect with respect to his understanding of ‘myth’ as well as with respect to his understanding of the ‘truth’ of the Christian faith in 1835.

Strauß did employ Georg Lorenz Bauer’s definition of mythical narratives from Bauer’s *Hebräische Mythologie des alten und neuen Testaments* (1802), which points to the non-historical character of mythic narratives. Readers in the 19<sup>th</sup> C and today readily and anachronistically takes Strauß’ focus on ‘myth’ in the gospels to intend either to undermine the claim for historical elements in the text, whatsoever, or to serve the purpose of an exclusively historical agenda that seeks to bracket out the unhistorical, hence, untrue miraculous elements in the text. Strauß writes:

[...] following Gabler and Schelling, G.L. Bauer explains a myth] to be recognizable [...], first, when it proceeds from an age in which no written records existed, but in which facts were transmitted through the medium of oral tradition alone; secondly, when it presents an historical account of events which are either absolutely or relatively beyond the reach of experience, such as occurrences connected with the spiritual world, and incidents to which, from the nature of the circumstances, no one could have been witness; or thirdly, when it deals in the marvelous and is couched in symbolical language.<sup>68</sup>

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It takes additional effort and vigilance to ‘see’ that he meant by the metaphor ‘myth’ something very different than simply ‘false’ and ‘unhistorical’. The ‘dead’/‘dormant’ metaphor has to obtain new ‘life’.

I call ‘metaphor interference,’ then, any determination of the meaning of a term that substitutes incorrectly what is, otherwise to be sure, a ‘legitimate’ meaning of the metaphor that, nonetheless, blocks appropriate understanding of the metaphor from the perspective of a different context. As Paul Ricoeur points out in “Study 7” of *The Rule of Metaphor*: 247–248; see as well in “Study 6:” 196, 198–199 and in “Erzählung, Metapher und Interpretationstheorie” in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 84/2 (1987): 232–254, the ‘truth’ of the metaphor is not that it simply says ‘what is’ but that it is able to simultaneously say *both* ‘what is AND ‘what is not’.

In Kant’s language, ‘metaphor interference’ would be the assumption that one’s ‘re-producing judgment’ (*bestimmende Urteilskraft*) is absolute, which cuts the tap-root of creativity that is ‘reflecting judgment’ (*reflektierende Urteilskraft*) when, in fact, reflecting judgment precedes all re-producing judgment. See Kant, *The Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 179–180. On the capacities of reflecting and re-producing judgment, see the “Introduction:” 8686, n. 26.

68. Strauß, *LJ*: 52.

However, Strauß did not employ this definition of ‘myth’ in order to dismiss myth. Not only did he acknowledge that an historical event can be identified at the core of a mythic narrative, but his Hegelian epistemology enabled him to view mythic narratives as ‘representations’ of ‘true’ content. The seduction of myths, though, is that they invite their readers to take the ‘representations’ to be literally true rather than a call to the reader to look more deeply for the truth of their core content.

Horton Harris observes<sup>69</sup> that the most comprehensive account of the application of the notion of ‘myth’ to the bible at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries is Christian Hartlich and Walter Sachs *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes in der modernen Bibelwissenschaft*.<sup>70</sup> Despite its serious limitation, unfortunately, this judgment remains valid. Following in the footsteps of most of Strauß’ 19<sup>th</sup> C readers, Hartlich/Sachs claim that Strauß’ understanding of myth aimed only to eliminate the unhistorical in the text.<sup>71</sup>

In fact, Strauß himself claims that the aim of his ‘critical’ reflections on the text was to defend traditional Christian doctrine on the basis of Hegelian ‘science.’ In the *LJ*, Strauß’ ‘critical’ examination of the gospels is thoroughly Hegelian, and Strauß’ ultimate aim<sup>72</sup> is to restore doctrinally the Christian doctrine that is actually undermined when one reads mythic elements in the texts (e.g., the miracles, especially) as literally true accounts of historical events. its ‘truth’ depends upon the literal reading of the gospel narratives.

In section "1. The Independence of the Critical Position of the *Life of Jesus* from the Specific Assumptions of Hegelian Philosophy,"<sup>73</sup> Hartlich/Sachs, maintain that

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69. See Horton Harris, "The Origin of Strauß’ Mythical Interpretation" in *David Friedrich Strauss and His Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973): 259, n. 2.

70. Christian Hartlich and Walter Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes in der modernen Bibelwissenschaft* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1952).

71. Karl Barth agrees. He writes of Strauß’ *LJ*: "There is no historical core of Jesus’ life and neither is claimed nor proven. Strauss has no interest in history. His work is purely critical. He is only interested in proving the existence and origin of myth [...]" Barth, *Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert*: 507. This is simply inaccurate. Barth along with Harris, Hartlich/Sachs, and Hobson all overlook that the heart of Strauß’ ‘mythic’ reading of the text is Hegelian ‘science’. To be sure, *this is not the ‘science’ of the hypothetico-deductive sciences but of Idealism for which the ‘true’ content is independent of perceptual representations. However, Hegelian science is convinced that ‘content’ and ‘form’ share the same ‘truth’.* Strauß was defending ‘truth’ in the gospels, not merely demonstrating, ‘critically,’ the ‘mythic’ formation of the scriptures. Within three years of the *LJ*, Strauß had given up on the Hegelian meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit *precisely because of its inadequate appreciation of history*, as I demonstrate. As I said above in the "Introduction:" (73), Strauß’ question is not with respect to critical ‘myth’ versus ‘factual’ history but, rather: What epistemology and metaphysics grounds the ‘truths’ of empirical history? In 1872, he had no alternative to ‘materialism’ because he had avoided a serious engagement of Kant across his career.

72. See David Friedrich Strauß, "I. Allgemeines Verhältniß der Hegel’schen Philosophie zur theologischen Kritik" ["On the General Relationship of Hegelian Philosophy to Theological Criticism"] in *Streitschriften III*: 59.

73. See Hartlich/Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes*: 122 ff.

Hegelianism privileges ideas over facts. They claim that, as a consequence, Hegel's philosophy could not perform the 'historical critical' task of establishing the historical elements of the text. They cite to Ferdinand Christian Baur's fifth volume on Church history, *Kirchengeschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* that appeared posthumously in 1862 (under the editorship of Eduard Zeller) for the claim that: "[...] Strauß did not get from the Hegelian school, which had existed for a long time without developing a critical element of this kind, the critical spirit that drives [... the *LJ*]."<sup>74</sup> There is no question that Strauß engaged in a 'critical' reading of the text, but that did not mean a devastatingly destructive reading of Church Doctrine. However, Strauß' distancing of himself from Hegel is only clear with *The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity* of 1838, three years after the publication of the *LJ*.<sup>75</sup> According to Hartlich/Sachs, Strauß' concern in the *LJ* was merely to determine the historical facts to be found in the gospels so that Hegel 'could not have played a central role' in his project.<sup>76</sup>

The crux of his departure from Hegel, according to Hartlich/Sachs, is to demonstrate that no presupposition of Hegelian 'speculative' philosophy can provide the means to adjudicate the historical facticity of what is reported in the Gospels as having

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74. Hartlich/Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes*: 124 (citation by Hartlich/Sachs to F.C. Baur's *Kirchengeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (1862): 359. See Hartlich/Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes*: 125

75. One might want to read *The Transient and the Permanent* as part of Strauß' shift in the third edition of the *LJ* to placate his opponents who found his Hegelianism off-putting and elitist. As I stated above, I believe, to the contrary, that Strauß is formulating an alternative understanding of 'religion' than an escape into an exclusive theoretical reason beyond sensuousness. However, if he were merely throttling down his Hegelian Idealism in the name of 'harmonious reason,' he only would be making the debt of Hegelianism to Scholastic 'Intellectualism' all the more transparent. 'Reason' in *The Transient and the Permanent* perhaps dampens the Hegelian meta-narrative, but it screams Strauß' commitment to the Idealist tradition of Christian Platonism (*via antiqua*'s 'Intellectualism') that stood in contrast to the Christian Aristotelianism (*via moderna*'s 'Occasionalism'/'Voluntarism') with the former stressing God's inability to contradict 'His' own eternal ideas and the latter stressing the ultimate origin of God's 'ideas' to be 'His' will, which 'He' always exercises for 'good' even when 'He' might violate the laws of nature. It is clear with Strauß' references to Feuerbach in the *Glaubenslehre* three years later that Strauß by then is reading Feuerbach, and Feuerbach's incapacitation of all forms of 'idealism' as anthropomorphic projection was not lost on Strauß. Strauß never returned to his religion of reason or the 'religious genius' of *The Transient and the Permanent*. Twenty years after the *Glaubenslehre*, he returned to theology with a modified Kantianism that is profoundly 'natural' in the sense of historical, and where even moral development consists in humanity's discernment of 'new' moral principles to govern its agency in an ever-changing world, not in the individual's ability to overcome 'sensuousness,' which defines Strauß' understanding of 'The Moral World View' of Hegel's *Phänomenologie* since the earliest days of his career. See my discussion of Strauß' "1838 "On the Transient and Permanent in Christianity"" – Religion as 'Rational Order' but a 'Relativized Christ' in Chapter 5: "Traces of an Intellectual Crisis:" 216 ff.

76. See Hartlich/Sachs, "1. Die Unabhängigkeit der kritischen Position des 'Leben Jesu' von spezifischen Voraussetzungen der Hegelschen Philosophie" in Christian Hartlich and Walter Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes* in der modernen Bibelwissenschaft (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1952: 122–134 and 135. Horton Harris agrees. See Harris, *David Friedrich Strauss and His Theology*: 270–271. However, without the 'husk'/'kernel' structure of Hegel's epistemology, Strauß would have only understood myth to be false, which he didn't.

happened historically. What led Strauss to reject Hegel and his school from the get-go, again according to Hartlich/Sachs, is that only the criteria of the historical-critical method can decide on the historicity of the text.

This result [of rejecting Hegel] is the product of Strauss's understanding of the relationship between idea and historical reality in Hegel. Strauß agrees with Hegel that the idea must be realized in history and not only in the mere ideality of the ought vis-à-vis reality – contrary to the Kantian point of view [McG: the erroneous Hegelian claim that Kant's ideas' are 'empty' or 'pure' because they are either merely subjective constructions or entirely abstract from sensuousness]. Strauss, however, denies that starting from the fact that the idea must be realized in history means that one can factually establish how this realization happens. [...] [H]e denies that a certain historical fact or a certain course of history can be proved as necessarily real from the fact that in them the idea finds its realization [...] Granted that in Hegel's philosophy it can be deduced that the idea must be realized in history; granted also that a certain course of history, already secured in its factuality, can be understood with Hegel as the realization of the idea, yet the means of proof of this philosophy fail when the course of history in question is problematic in terms of its factuality.<sup>77</sup> This is precisely the case which it comes to history in the gospels [...]. In order to answer the question that Strauss addressed to Hegel, it is decisive to know whether and to what extent the gospel history occurred as it is reported to us [...]. [The answer to this question requires] other criteria than Hegel's philosophy can provide.<sup>78</sup>

According to Hartlich/Sachs then, Strauß' 'critical' question in the *LJ* was: 'What factually happened?' By concluding that the gospels are non-factual myths, Strauß was demonstrating that Church Doctrine, which is dependent upon their factuality, consists of 'merely empty ideas.'<sup>79</sup>

Strauß' agendas of identifying the 'mythic' in the gospels and restoring of Christian doctrine once the literal reading of the text is exposed as distorting are both rooted in Hegelianism, according to Strauß! One can properly distinguish between the 'husk' and 'kernel' that is myth to identify the historical event, philosophical/theological idea, and/or symbol as the true kernel of the myth when one applies Hegel's epistemology of 'representation' (*Form*) and 'content' (*Inhalt*). Furthermore, Strauß' aim of restoration of Christian Doctrine is itself a version of Hegel's meta-narrative of Dou-

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77. Hartlich/Sachs' account here is correct for the post-*LJ* Strauß. By 1838, Strauß' concern over Hegelian 'Indifferentism,' I point out below, was a key contributor to Strauß' metaphysical crisis that emerged in the second half of the 1830s.

78. Hartlich/Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes*: 125–126.

79. Hartlich/Sachs are not alone with this conclusion, unfortunately. Perhaps the most frequent criticism of Strauß' *LJ* was that his claim that the gospels are 'mythic' meant that he denied any history in the gospels. Representative of such criticism is the assertion by Carl August Eschenmayer that "Strauss is particularly unstable in his use of the term and word myth [...] [H]e puts it on the same line with fairy tales, fables and lies [...]." "Die Herren [Carl August von] Eschenmayer und [Wolfgang] Menzel" (1837). In *Streitschriften* II: 17. More succinctly, Eschenmayer claims: "[...] if the evangelical story was not absolutely historical truth, it would have to be based on deliberate lies [...]." Strauß, *Ibid.*: 58.

ble Negation. Whereas historical, *objective* factuality is epistemologically important in Strauß' understanding of this meta-narrative, what is essential is what Hegel called the *subjective* event that is the Second Negation's 'point of indifference' within consciousness, which is where the Incarnation occurred.<sup>80</sup> In the *LJ* Strauß distanced himself from the Hegelians not with respect to the content (*Inhalt*) of the spiritual divinization of the Christian but, rather, with respect to the significance of *the narrative of Double Negation including the entire human species throughout all of history*.<sup>81</sup>

In 1835, then, both Strauß' understanding of the 'husk'/'kernel' character of the mythic and his understanding of Christian salvation is inseparable from Hegelianism. Strauß' agenda is not Hartlich/Sachs' 'Historical Critical Method,' which has the sole task of establishing the factual truth of the gospels on the basis of merely empirical

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80. See Hegel's "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten 110–111, where Hegel speaks of the 'point of Indifference' (*Indifferenzpunkt*) as the external point at which Absolute Unity negates multiplicity and returns to Itself. See 112, n. 23.

81. This is the significance of Strauß' *universal*, historical, inclusive Christology as he formulates it in *LJ* (see *LJ*: 778 & §151 "The Last Dilemma") and his defense of his Christology over against the Hegelians in "Verschiedene Richtungen innerhalb der Hegel'schen Schule in Betreff der Christologie" in his *Streitschriften* III: 118–119 and 125–126, where he repeats his observation from the *LJ* that an 'idea' does not exhaust itself in a single, particular exemplar.

Strauß doesn't refer to Fichte, but in his *Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* (1805), August Messer, ed. (Berlin: Volksverband der Bücherfreude Wegewiser-Verlag, GmbH, 1924), Fichte takes the role of religion "[...] not to be concerned with [external] acting and deeds but a notion: religion is light, the sole, true light that permeates the inner core of all life and all life formations" (307) (a reference to Plato's Simile of the Sun in Book VI of the *Republic*!). However, as with Strauß, religion is not the divinization of merely the individual but the divinization of the species (*Gattung*) that is able to grasp the imperceptible. See the "Third Lecture" of *Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*: 58–74, 94–95, and 310. 127. A year later in his *Die Anweisung zum seligen Leben* (1806), Hansjürgen Verweyen, ed. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2012) Fichte writes: "The [...] One 'free-I,' which, as reflection, also remains eternally One, is split, as object, i.e. as the reflecting substance occurring only in appearances; [...] into an infinity; [...] into a system of I's, or individuals, to be completed. (This division [...] thus belongs to the absolute basic form of existence, which cannot be abolished by the Godhead itself: As in it Being originally fractured, so it remains split in all eternity; therefore, no individual, which is set by this division, i.e. no really ordered individual, can ever perish) [...]. In [...] these individuals [...], the whole divine being is divided and distributed for the infinite further development out of themselves in time, as it were, according to the absolute rule of such distribution, which is founded in divine Being itself. Whereas, furthermore, every single one of these individuals is determined by its own form freely and independently sustained as a division of the 'One I' and necessarily carries this latter form entirely [...] Each individual, therefore, has in its free power, which cannot be suspended by the Godhead itself, the possibility of viewing and the enjoyment [...] of its sharing in absolute Being, which characterizes it as a real individual. Thus, every individual has first of all his certain share in the sensual life, and its love; which life will appear to him as the absolute, and as the last purpose, as long as freedom, which is in real use, is absorbed in it. However, should it rise through the sphere of rationality to higher morality, then that sensuous life will become to it a mere means; and its share in the higher, supersensuous and immediately divine life will be absorbed by its love." Note, though: for Fichte, the connection to the 'eternally One' is not Absolute Spirit per se but the imperceptible, lawful order of morality that anchors humanity in the one, true Light – a remarkably Platonic claim.

evidence in order that, at least according to Hartlich, the Christian faith, which cannot be established by facts, is not misled by erroneous factual claims, as I point out below.

In fact, though, the 'historical critical' method promises more than it can deliver. According to Strauß, the text includes 'historical' elements alongside and mixed with 'mythic constructions.' However, neither the 'historical' nor the 'mythic' are capable of establishing either the 'historical truth' or the 'mythic lies' of Christianity. They are both employed in the service of the gospel author's aim of communicating her/his theological understanding of Jesus of Nazareth that drove the individual gospel author's shaping of inherited textual materials from the Septuagint and the Christian community.

In other words, the Historical Critical Method is both objectively and subjectively an illusion. Objectively, the historical elements in the text are insufficient to carry the weight not only of a biography but also of the teaching of Jesus. Subjectively, emphasis on the historical elements conceals the historian's theological commitments that drive her/his 'historical' conclusions (e.g., Hartlich's own emphasis of 'faith' over history).<sup>82</sup>

In contrast to Hartlich/Sachs claim that Hegel played little if any role in the *LJ*, Strauß' employment of the category 'myth' in gospel studies depends on Hegelian epistemology. Hegel distinguishes between 'content' (*Inhalt*) and 'representations' (*Form*), precisely the key to Strauß' understanding of myth. Furthermore, only by Strauß' conviction that Hegel's meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit's Double Negation was 'correct' could he achieve his 'critical' aim of the *LJ* to 'restore' Church Doctrine. To be sure, with his radically *inclusive* Christology, Strauß modifies Hegel's (and the Left-Wing Hegelians') Christology, but without Hegelian philosophy Strauß could not have written the *LJ*.

His quarrel in the *LJ* with Hegel and the Hegelians was not that their meta-narrative was incapable of grounding the incarnation in factual history<sup>83</sup> but that the

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82. See below 54 ff. the discussion of Hartlich's Theses 7 and 8 from his "Historisch-kritische Methode in Ihrer Anwendung auf Geschehnisaussagen der Hl. Schrift" in *Zeitschrift Für Theologie und Kirche*, 75/4 (1978).

83. In the *LJ*, Strauß could have claimed (but he didn't) that Hegel's meta-narrative is incapable of grounding the true 'content' (*Inhalt*) of the incarnation in 'actual' 'representations' (*Form*) because Hegel's meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit itself is an 'empty' logical 'canon' without an 'organon' of experience because Hegel's entire epistemology is caught in a vicious hermeneutical circle of Absolute Spirit's externalization of Itself in order to experience Itself. According to this meta-narrative, *the particularities of history, while 'necessary' as the condition for Absolute Spirit to become aware of Itself, are a matter of meaningless 'indifference'*. Historical particularities are merely the logical place-holders for a dialectical logic of Double Negation. In Kantian language (of which Strauß was unaware), the entire dialectical logic of Hegel's meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit is an 'empty', logical 'canon' without any grounding in an 'organon' of experience. On Kant's notions of canon and organon, see: 49S. Hegel and Strauß overlook that Kant had already rejected the adequacy of dialectic to establish the ultimate ground of all 'that is'. On Kant's rejection of dialectic for grounding the ultimate, causal ground of 'what is,' see *Critique of Pure Reason* B 697 and Chapter 6: 670.

Strauß, though, is unaware of Kant's distinction between 'canon' and 'organon'. Only in the course of the second half of the 1830s did Strauß come to question the limitations of Hegel's meta-narrative

Hegelian meta-narrative either restricted the incarnation to a single individual (most likely Hegel's position as 'faith' 'on the other side' of the resurrection<sup>84</sup>) or to those few individuals (Right-wing Hegelians) who were consciously aware of the role of finite consciousness for the Second Negation that is 'the point of indifference' from multiplicity 'back to' Absolute Oneness. Both options Strauß rejected not because the 'incarnation' is an 'empty idea' incapable of 'factual proof' but, rather, because of the 'logic of an idea:' an 'idea' is never exhausted in a single 'particular.'<sup>85</sup> Strauß defended vigorously in the *LJ a universally inclusive* Christology that included all human consciousness as the location of the Second Negation whether consciously recognized or not.<sup>86</sup>

In short, Strauß' understanding of 'myth' as 'husk' and 'kernel' as well as of his *universal inclusive* Christology in the *LJ* (!) were anchored in, and inseparable from, 'Hegelian' philosophy. His issues with Hegel emerge only after the *LJ* although, according to Ziegler, the seeds of doubt had been planted already by Gustav Binder in their 2x weekly discussions of Hegel during their student days in the 'Stift' (the Protestant Seminary) in Tübingen.<sup>87</sup>

### Strauß' Understanding of Myth

To be sure, Strauß' understanding of the nature of 'myth' does not come from him, personally. It was *pre-figured* in the work of many before him. Hartlich/Sachs attribute the origin of the understanding of myth that functioned in biblical scholarship at the time of Strauß to the Englishman Robert Lowth's *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum* (1753), which were lectures Lowth held at Oxford between 1738–1748,<sup>88</sup> and Christian Gottlob Heyne's writings as of 1763. It was Heyne's work, though, whose "[...] investigations of Greek mythology gave a decisively new and influential conception of the essence of

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in terms of the status of 'factual history' (representations in the imagination). However, even here, Strauß did so not with respect to the Absolute Concept is merely an 'empty' idea but with respect to the status of an historical fact (as true or false representations in the imagination) for determining the 'truth' (*Inhalt*) of ideas. The issue was focused for Strauß on the observation: An 'idea' as a universal is inseparable from all of its particularities.

84. See Strauß' *Streitschriften* III: 80–81 83–85, 86, 92–93.

85. See Strauß, *LJ*: 779–780. See as well, Strauß' *Streitschriften* III: 97, 118–119, and 125–126. In his *Glaubenslehre* II, Strauß writes as the conclusion of his account of "Speculative Christology:" "After all this, it may be a lack of understanding, but it is certainly not self-deception when I express the conviction here in conclusion that the first intelligible word still has to be spoken that takes Christology beyond the point of view of my 'Concluding Dissertation' on the *LJ*." Strauß is not embracing his inclusive Christology from the *LJ* here. This is merely a criticism of Hegelian denseness.

86. See Strauß, *LJ*: 778, 179–180.

87. See Ziegler, Vol. I: 51.

88. Hartlich/Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes*: 6.

myth [...].”<sup>89</sup> Heyne proposed a three-fold classification of myths: 1) historical myths, which have at their core an actual event; 2) philosophical myths, which offer ethical or physical, speculative explanations on the part of the myth’s author; and 3) poetical myths, which either creatively ‘correct’ a historical and/or philosophical myth or are free creations by their author.<sup>90</sup>

Strauß adopted this three-fold classification of myths.<sup>91</sup> He points out that there were many authors who distinguished between the ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural’ in the biblical texts, but Strauß calls the Rationalist, Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus,<sup>92</sup> the first ‘Christian Euhemerus’<sup>93</sup> for his insistence on the distinction between the ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural’ elements consisting of the difference between ‘fact’ and ‘opinion.’<sup>94</sup>

Furthermore, Strauß distinguished a philosophical myth from the allegorical precisely on the grounds that the allegorical attributes the narrative to ‘a supernatural source’ whereas the mythical ascribes it to *that natural process by which legends are originated and developed controlled by regard to conformity with the spirit and modes of thought of the people [...] of the age:*

The mythical and the allegorical view (as also the moral) equally allow that the historian [an author in the past] apparently relates that which is historical, but they [the mythical and allegorical both] suppose him [*sic.*], under the influence of a higher inspiration known or unknown to himself, to have made use of this historical semblance merely as the shell of an *idea*—of a religious conception. The only essential distinction [...] is [...] that [...] *the allegorical view attributes the narrative to a supernatural source whilst the mythical view ascribes it to that natural process by which legends are originated and developed* [McG: this is the *genetic mythical principle*]. To which should be added, that the allegorical interpreter (as well as the moral) may with the most unrestrained arbitrariness separate from the history every thought he deems to be worthy of God, as constituting its inherent meaning; whilst *the mythical interpreter, on the contrary, in searching out the ideas which are embodied in the narrative, is controlled by regard to conformity with the spirit and modes of thought of the people and of the age.*<sup>95</sup> (emphasis added)

Strauß’ emphasis on myth, then, involves the rejection of the capriciousness of allegory to insist on viewing the myth with ‘regard to conformity with the spirit and modes of thought of the people and of the age’ in which the narrative arose. This is a tip that Strauß views myths to be governed by ‘the *genetic mythical principle*’ (or the

89. Hartlich/Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes*: 11.

90. Hartlich/Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes*: 18–19.

91. See David Friedrich Strauß, *LJ*: 53.

92. This is the same Rationalist ‘Paulus’ whom Strauß makes the focus of his ridicule throughout the *LJ*. Amazingly, Paulus wrote a powerful letter in support of Strauß’ appointment to the university chair in Zurich in 1839. The letter is included in Part II, ‘The Historical Reader,’ of the first volume of the present work.

93. Euhemerus was the late 4th C Greek author who claimed that many myths were the consequence of historical events about persons being transformed into exalted events and agents of divinity.

94. See Strauß, *LJ*: 49.

95. Strauß, *LJ*: 65

product of a historical process) and not exclusively by means of the ‘husk’/‘kernel’ structure developed by Heyne. Clearly, if only by the acknowledgement that myths are grounded in the spirit and thought of a particular age, Strauß’ commitment to the role of history in myths is confirmed. However, Strauß will emphasize that the texts themselves are the product of a historical process, not merely a literary construction by the gospel author(s). The gospel authors drew, especially, on the ritual practices of the Early Church that gleaned any and every possible hint that Jesus of Nazareth was the fulfilment of divine purposes and promises in the ‘scriptures’ (the Greek Septuagint).

Nonetheless, Strauß insists that when it comes to discerning the ‘kernel’ from the ‘husk,’ *a mythic narrative confronts the reader with the task of determining in each case what the ‘kernel’ of the mythic husk is.* Strauß stresses that this is a difficult task because “[...] the myth which is purely symbolical wears the semblance of history equally with the myth which represents an actual occurrence.”<sup>96</sup> Strauß offers the following strategies for determining the status of the myth’s kernel:

1. The first step is to determine whether the narrative is meant to serve a specific aim [Zweck] and just what that aim is.
2. Where no aim of the narrative could have been invented by its author, the myth can be taken to be historical. Furthermore, it is possible that the kernel is a historical myth because there is independent testimony with respect to the particulars in the myth that clearly are connected to known genuine history "or bear in themselves undeniable and inherent characteristics of probability."<sup>97</sup>
3. However, if the narrative symbolizes a particular truth, that truth is the aim of the narrative, which makes the myth philosophical.
4. A blending of historical and philosophical myths can be recognized when the narrative derives events from their causes.
5. The poetical myth "[...] is the most difficult to distinguish, and [G.L.] Bauer [in his *Hebräische Mythologie des alten und neuen Testaments* (1802)] gives only a negative criterion. If, on the one hand, the story sounds so wonderful that the event could not possibly have happened in this way, but, on the other hand, there is no discernible purpose to symbolize a certain thought, then it must be assumed that the entire story owes its origin to the imagination of a poet."<sup>98</sup>

Contrary to the frequent claim that Strauß denied all history to the gospels or Hartlich/Sachs’ claim that Strauß was only interested in myths as demonstrating the non-historical character of the gospels,<sup>99</sup> this classification of myths clearly acknowl-

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96. Strauß, *LJ*: 53.

97. Strauß, *LJ*: 53.

98. These five points are a summary of Strauß, *LJ* (first edition): 30–31 (McG translation); George Elliot trans.: 53.

99. Hartlich/Sachs distinguish between "the objective historical facts" and myth. See *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes*: 128.

edges that there may be historical elements even in the 'mythic' text. The task, according to Strauß, is to determine just which narratives have a historical 'kernel' rather than reject the myth simply because, by definition, it is assumed to be unhistorical.<sup>100</sup>

In "§ 15. Definition of the Evangelical Mythos and its Distinctive Characteristics" added in the third edition of *The Life of Jesus* and retained in the fourth,<sup>101</sup> even those narratives that Strauß calls an 'evangelical myth' can have an historical element:

[...] [A] narrative relating directly or indirectly to Jesus, which may be considered not as the expression of a fact, but as the product of an idea of his earliest followers: such a narrative [...] is mythical in proportion as it exhibits this character. [An evangelical myth] [...] meets us, in the Gospels [...], sometimes in the pure form [of a 'philosophical' myth], [as] constituting the substance of the narrative, and sometimes as an accidental adjunct to the actual history."<sup>102</sup>

On the very next page, Strauß states explicitly that the conclusion is not that the gospels contain no history but, on the contrary, this analysis "[...] does not involve the renunciation of the *historical* which they may likewise contain."<sup>103</sup>

In other words, *even were we to focus solely on the 'husk'/'kernel' character of myth and the classification of myths as 'historical,' 'philosophical,' and 'poetic,' it is simply incorrect to conclude that Strauß employs the notion of myth with respect to the gospels merely to dismiss them as unhistorical.*

Surprisingly, even Peter C. Hodgson proposes in the "Editor's Introduction" to the *Life of Jesus* that Strauß "[...] is basically uninterested in the historical credibility of the writings. His [Strauß'] true delight and skill is in a dialectical critique of the isolated units of synoptic tradition."<sup>104</sup> This conclusion is incorrect, though, not only because Strauß does not limit his gospel analysis to the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) but is equally, if not more (not only in the third edition), concerned with John's gospel.

Even more significantly, in addition to requiring the reader to be vigilant about acknowledging what is 'history' and what is 'story' (myth) in the text, Strauß' interest in myth in the gospels in the *LJ* was driven not by the aim of destroying Traditional Church Doctrine. Leaving aside his aim of 'doctrinal restoration,' Strauß' criticism of the factual in the gospels is not that there is nothing historical in them but, rather, that it is crucial that one distinguish the factual elements from what the church embellished and exaggerated with its historical literalism *in order to understand the 'true' doctrine of Christianity!*

100. For a list of 'historical elements' that Strauß acknowledged in light of all the ambiguities, see Appendix I: "Likely 'Historical' Elements of Jesus' Life" 985 ff.

101. See Peter Hodgson's note ,86' to § 15 in Strauß, *LJ*: 786.

102. Strauß, *LJ*: 86.

103. Strauß, *LJ*: 87.

104. Strauß, *LJ*: xxx.

In 1835, *Strauß* viewed the ‘true content’ of the mythic elements in the gospels to be most adequately grasped by means of Hegelian speculative metaphysics (what *Strauß* calls ‘objective’ science – see below). In order to grasp his ‘dogmatic restoration,’ then, one has to understand the Hegelian speculative metaphysics that governed his theological understanding at the time of the *LJ*, contrary to the insistence of *Horton Harris* and *Hartlich/Sachs* that *Hegel’s* philosophy placed no substantive role in *Strauß’s* understanding of myth in the gospels.

The claim that *Strauß* is concerned only with ‘critical,’ historical claims (or, more accurately, the non-historical character) of the gospels is the origin of the most central ‘metaphor interference’ in *Strauß* scholarship. *Strauß* not only did not take the three-fold classification of myth to be valuable solely for the mere purpose of demonstrating the non-historical nature of the gospels, but rather he is as concerned in 1835 far more with understanding how the gospel myths were generated by the early Church and the gospel writers. This latter concern is as central, if not more central, to understanding the history of the gospels as is the issue of the degree of factual, historical content preserved in the gospels. He described the generation of myths as occurring in accordance with a historical process that *Strauß* called the ‘genetic mythical principle.’ Nevertheless, even when it comes to the content (!) of myths, *Strauß* was far more concerned in 1835 with the dogmatic significance of mythic elements than he was with the question of the historical or non-historical ‘representations’ of the mythic narratives.

### The ‘Genetic Mythical Principle’

*Strauß* spoke of ‘myth’ in two respects. One aspect of the ‘mythic’ viewed narratives as ‘husks’ that contain at their ‘kernel’ either a historical fact, a philosophical/theological idea, or a poetic symbol. The ‘husk’/‘kernel’ structure of myth when combined with Hegelian epistemology and meta-narrative provided him with a radically new perspective on the Incarnation of the God/Man, which he took to be the core of the Christian faith at the time of his writing of the *LJ* of 1835. The second aspect of myth he called ‘the genetic mythical principle.’<sup>105</sup> which is an accounting for the formation of the gospels as a dynamic of the experiences of Jesus of Nazareth on the part of the gospel authors and their communities informed by their careful gleaning of ‘First’ Testament writings for any possible hint of the nature and aims of God for Jesus of Nazareth as the ‘Messiah’ (the strategy is reflected explicitly, for example, in Luke 24:27 as a strategy employed by Jesus himself).

With the understanding of myth as ‘husks’ and ‘kernels’ in the *LJ*, *Strauß* was convinced on the basis of his Hegelian epistemology that the truth encountered in

105. For an examination of the historical roots of the *genetic mythical principle*, see in Chapter 2: “*Strauß* Who? What? Why does it Matter?:” the section “*Strauß’s* Sources for Application of the Concept ‘Myth’ to the Bible:” 173 ff.

the gospels was the claim of the universally, *inclusive, spiritual* divinization of the human species as the location in which (finite spirit) experiences Absolute, Free Spirit. However, according to Strauß, this divinization does not occur *beyond history* as the case with Hegel but is the universal condition of humanity *in history*. In other words, God-consciousness can occur only in finite consciousness, and it literally consists of God's consciousness of Himself. Strauß claimed in 1835 that finite consciousness of the Absolute Concept fulfils the same religious function of the Incarnation, but 'far more adequately' in his judgment, than is accomplished by reading the gospels as a historical portrayal of the individual, historical Jesus to be the *exclusive* God/Man. Strauß wrote in the *LJ*:

The phenomenal history of the individual [Jesus of Nazareth], says Hegel, is only a starting point for the mind. *Faith, in her early stages, is governed by the senses*, and therefore contemplates a temporal history; what she holds to be true is the external, ordinary event, the evidence for which is the historical, forensic kind—a fact to be proved by the testimony of the senses, and the moral confidence inspired by the witnesses. However, *mind having once taken occasion by this external fact, to bring under its consciousness the idea of humanity as one with God* [as the union of finite spirit and Absolute Spirit in the mind], *such a mind sees in this history only the* [vehicle for the] *presentation of that idea*. [Consequently], the object of faith is completely changed; instead of a sensible, empirical fact, it has become a spiritual and divine idea, which has its confirmation no longer in history but in philosophy. When the mind has thus gone beyond the sensible history, and entered into the domain of the absolute [mind], the former ceases to be essential; it takes a subordinate place, above which the spiritual [mental] truths suggested by the history stand self-supported. It [the history] becomes as the faint image of a dream which belongs only to the past, and does not as is the case of the idea, share the permanence of the spirit which is absolutely present to itself.<sup>106</sup>

Strauß' Christology, though, pulled the Christ event back down into history although in his early writings he shared with Hegel the spiritual, divinization of the God/Man as the key to the doctrinal truth of Christianity. Consequently, Strauß' original plan for the *LJ* was to have had three parts:

[...] *The first, positive or traditional*, [part] should contain an [historical] objective presentation of the life of Jesus according to the Gospels, furthermore a presentation of the way Jesus lives subjectively in believers, and finally the mediation of both sides in the second article of the Apostolic Confession. *The second, negative or critical* part should largely dissolve the life story of Jesus as history. *The third part dogmatically restores what has been destroyed*. [As it turned out, he says:] [...] The projected first part fell away, the third

106. David Friedrich Strauß, *LJ*: 780–781 (see as well, 782–783). Strauß footnotes here to Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion II* [*Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion II*], the Marheineke ed. of 1832: 263 ff.

became a mere appendix [the "Concluding Dissertation"], and the second grew into the actual body of the book.<sup>107</sup> (emphasis added)

Strauß has the notion of the '*genetic mythical principle*' from Wilhelm Krug's article "Versuch über die genetische oder formelle Erklärungsart der Wunder" ("An Experiment with the Genetic or Formal Manner of Explaining Miracles").<sup>108</sup> This principle is not concerned with the content or 'kernels' of the specific narratives themselves but is proposing how the gospels came to be written. Krug's principle is an anticipation of Ricoeur's notion of three-fold mimesis that takes narratives to be constructed on the basis of the three moments of the *pre-configured*, the *con-figured*, and the *re-figured*.<sup>109</sup>

In other words, *rather than treat the historical significance of the texts to consist of their objective claims about Jesus of Nazareth, the texts themselves are viewed as the product of a historical, developmental process within the Early Church.* The narratives about Jesus of Nazareth are demonstrated to be the consequence of gleaning from the 'First' Testament any and all possible references (of the miraculous power of God's chosen agents as well as the prophecies made for a coming 'Messiah') as the basis for reflection on the significance of their experience of this extraordinary individual from Galilee.<sup>110</sup>

Even when there were no explicit prototypes in the scriptures (Septuagint) (for example, addressing demons) Jesus of Nazareth must have (of course, this is a dictum/*Machtspruch*, not anything provable) performed miracles in a superior fashion than any previous miracle worker, and he fulfilled all prophecies applicable to a Messiah, not matter how remote they might be from the usual expectations of Messiahship.

As in the case of the 'metaphor interference' that occurs with Strauß' crucial distinction between 'husk' and 'kernel,' so, too, there is 'metaphor interference' with the second key notion of Strauß' understanding of myth: the *genetic mythical principle*.

Hartlich/Sachs even view Strauß as embracing Heyne's "psychological-genetic" (read, subjectively-generating) account of myth, not (!) the '*genetic mythical principle*' from Wilhelm Krug. Heyne's 'psychological-genetic' understanding views myths as characteristic of the 'childhood' and 'rawness' of humanity with its deficient knowledge and capacity of expression and attachment to direct sense experience, *incapable of abstract thought*.<sup>111</sup> According to Georg Lorenz Bauer as well as Heyne, one can identify a myth

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107. David Friedrich Strauß, "I. Allgemeines Verhältniß der Hegel'schen Philosophie zur theologischen Kritik" ["On the General Relationship of Hegelian Philosophy to Theological Criticism"] in *Streitschriften* III: 59.

108. See the discussion of Krug: 75

109. Ricoeur's *three-fold mimesis* is not limited to 'stories' (*mythoi*) but extended to apply to 'factual' or 'rational' accounts (*logoi*). See above: 93, n. 43.

110. See the "Annotated 'First' Testament Concordance to and Classical Legend References in the 'Second Testament' Gospels" in the Appendix of Volume I of this project.

111. See Hartlich and Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes*: 14–15.

First: when the report is of the origin of the world and the earth for which there are no witnesses; – second: when, instead of natural causes are taken to be what underlie events, everything is traced back to the effects of the gods or heavenly beings who appear as persons and direct agents: – third: when everything is portrayed as occurring in the senses, and people speak and act where they only had thought; – fourth: what is reported to have been created in a manner neither as things now occur nor according to the orderly manner of nature, but all exceeds all [reasonable] faith.<sup>112</sup>

Hartlich/Sachs claim that Strauß agreed with Georg Lorenz Bauer's<sup>113</sup> understanding of the role of mythic criticism in the gospels.<sup>114</sup> Crucial for gospel criticism, according to Heyne, Bauer, and Hartlich/Sachs, then, is the determination of 'real possibilities' or 'real actuality,' not fanciful, subjective (psychological), mythic constructions grounded in supernatural causality.<sup>115</sup>

As I indicated above, the anachronistic reader today draws the same conclusion as many, if not most, of Strauß' contemporaries. 'Myth' is automatically taken to be the opposite of 'science.' Knowledge consists of shattering (popular) myths to discern the 'real possibilities' and 'real actuality' behind or that resulted in the mythic account.

However, here in Hartlich/Sachs we have a classic example not only of 'metaphor interference' but also of the 'affective fallacy' that takes the text to mean what the reader believes the text to mean without attempting to grasp the meaning of the terminology for the text's author (in this case, Strauß).<sup>116</sup>

Hartlich/Sachs not only ignore what Strauß means by 'myth' and ignore that Strauß sought to restore the very Christian doctrine that 'criticism' had 'destroyed.'

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112. From G.L. Bauer, *Entwurf einer Hermeneutik des alten und neuen Testaments* (Leipzig: Weygand, 1799) in Hartlich and Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes*: 77. Hartlich and Sachs add at this point: It is clear that here we have "[...] the point of view of critical rationality according to which nothing is able to be claimed to be actually or really possible that does not conform to the rules concerning the determination of actuality and real possibility as such. Rather the interpreter must not reconstruct any assertion of reality present in the texts unless it can be verified according to such rules."

113. Not to be confused for Ferdinand Christian Baur!

114. See Hartlich and Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes*: 86.

115. Hartlich and Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes*: 78

116. The point is not that we can know what Strauß intended to say, which would be the error of the 'intentional fallacy,' but that the language that he used was embedded in a pre-figured world of thought that he needed in order to share his reflections with others. The reader of Strauß is as obligated to situate his con-figured texts in his acknowledged, pre-figured sources. In other words, the pre-figured linguistic world for Strauß that he, in turn, con-figured with his account of the shaping of the gospel texts was shaped by the 'Mythic School' in Göttingen, Germany, and his 'scientific' Theology was pre-figured by Hegelian epistemology. Strauß' readers, then, re-figured his con-figured reflections out of very different pre-figured traditions. That is the error of the 'affective fallacy'. The pre-figured for populist Christians was the language of Personal Theism. The pre-figured for Schleiermacher was the writings of Rationalist Theologians, and the pre-figured for F.C. Baur was his work on Gnosticism and the Pauline and pseudo-Pauline letters in the Second Testament. The pre-figured for Hegelian epistemology was the Hegelian corpus, particularly, his attack on the 'Enlightenment' and 'Kant' in "Glauben und Wissen" (1802) in *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie* GW II: 287–433 as well as the *Phenomenology* (1807).

They also overlook the fundamental theme of the 'genetic mythical principle' in Strauß' work.

Strauß wrote of the *genetic mythical principle* in the first edition of the *LJ*: "The richest materials for this mythical ornamentation were provided by the Old Testament ..."<sup>117</sup> By the fourth edition that George Elliott used to complete the translation (her translation begins at page 166), Strauß has added an extensive list of materials "ready-made" for the mythic imagination of the early Christian community:

[...] [W]here the whole story is invented, and not any historical nucleus is to be found, [...] unconscious fiction is impossible [...] [I]t is easy to show with regard to the New Testament, that there was the greatest antecedent probability of this very kind of fiction having arisen respecting Jesus *without any fraudulent intention*. The expectation of a Messiah had grown up amongst the Israelitish people long before the time of Jesus, and just then had ripened to full maturity. And from its beginning this expectation was not indefinite, but determined, and characterized by many important particulars. Moses was said to have promised his people a prophet like unto himself (Deut. xviii. 15), and this passage was in the time of Jesus applied to the Messiah (Acts iii. 22; vii. 37). Hence the rabbinical principle: as the first redeemer (*Goël*), so shall be the second; which principle was carried out into many particulars to be expected in the Messiah after his prototype Moses. Again, the Messiah was to come of the race of David, and as a second David take possession of his throne (Matt. xxii. 42; Luke i. 32; Acts ii. 30): and therefore in the time of Jesus it was expected that he, like David, should be born in the little village of Bethlehem (John vii. 42; Matt. xx. 5 f.). In the above passage Moses describes the supposed Messiah as a prophet; so in his own idea, Jesus was the greatest and last of the prophetic race. But in the old national legends the prophets were made illustrious by the most wonderful actions and destiny. How could less be expected of the Messiah? Was it not necessary beforehand, that his life should be adorned with that which was most glorious and important in the lives of the prophets? Must not the popular expectation give him a share in the bright portion of their history, as subsequently the sufferings of himself and his disciples were attributed by Jesus, when he appeared as the Messiah, to a participation in the dark side of the fate of the prophets (Matt. xxiii. 29 ff.; Luke xiii. 33 ff.; comp. Matt. v. 12)? Believing that Moses and all the prophets had prophesied of the Messiah (John v. 46; Luke 14. 21; xxiv. 27), it was as natural for the Jews, with their allegorizing tendency, to consider their actions and destiny as types of the Messiah, as to take their sayings for predictions. In general the whole Messianic era was expected to be full of signs and wonders. The eyes of the blind should be opened, the ears of the deaf should be unclosed, the lame should leap, and the tongue of the dumb praise God (Isa. Xxxv. 5 f.; xlii. 7; comp. xxxii. E, 4). These merely figurative expressions soon came to be understood literally (Matt. xi. 5; Luke vii. 21 f.), and thus the idea of the Messiah was continually filled up with new details, even before the appearance of Jesus [Strauß footnotes to the Midrash Tanchuma]. Thus many of the legends respecting him had not to be newly invented; they already existed in the popular hope of the Messiah, having been mostly derived with various modifications [see Strauß' footnote II here] from the Old Testament, and had merely to be transferred to Jesus

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117. Strauß, *LJ* (First Edition): "Den reichsten Stoff zu dieser mythischen Verzierung lieferte das alte Testament ..." (72).

[Strauß footnotes to George, *Mythus und Sage*<sup>118</sup>], and accommodated to his character and doctrines. In no case could it be easier for the person who first added any new feature to the description of Jesus, to believe himself its genuineness, since his argument would be: Such and such things must have happened to the Messiah; Jesus was the Messiah; therefore such and such things happened to him.<sup>119</sup> (emphasis added)

Nonetheless, Strauß draws clear distinctions *among the uses* of myth in the Greek mythology, the 'First,' and the 'Second' Testament, which is possible because of his own speculative (that is, Hegelian) theology:

The essential difference [...] is that in [...] Greek mythology] the Deity himself is the subject of progression, becomes another being at the end of the process what he was at the beginning, something being effected in himself and for his own sake; whilst in the [...] Old Testament] God remains fixed in his own identity as the I AM, and the temporal is only a superficial reflection cast back upon his acting energy by that course of mundane events which he both originated and guides. In the heathen mythology the gods have a history : in the Old Testament, God himself has none, but only his people : and if the proper meaning of mythology be the history of the gods, then the Hebrew religion has no mythology. [...] The New Testament therefore knows nothing of mythology in the above sense. The state of the question is however somewhat changed from that which it assumed in the Old Testament : for Jesus is called the Son of God, not merely in the same sense as kings under the theocracy where so called, but as actually begotten by the divine spirit, or from the incarnation in his person of the divine λόγος ... The actions and sufferings of such a being are not external to the Deity : though we are not allowed to suppose a *theopaschitic* union with the divine nature, yet still, even in the New Testament, and more in the later doctrine of the Church, it is a divine being that here lives and suffers, and what befalls him has an absolute worth and significance. Thus according to the above accepted notion of the mythus, the New Testament has more of a mythical character than the Old. But [*sic.*] to call the history of Jesus mythical in this sense, is as unimportant with regard to the historical question as it is unexceptionable; for *the idea of God is in no way opposed to such an intervention in human affairs as does not affect his own immutability*; so that as far as regards this point, the gospel history, notwithstanding its mythical designation, might be at the same time throughout historically true.<sup>120</sup> (emphasis added)

"Appendix II" of the second volume of this project presents a summary of elements that confirm the prototype model of the *genetic mythical principle* in the gospels.<sup>121</sup>

118. Johann Friedrich Leopold George, *Mythus und Sage. Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen Entwicklung dieser Begriffe und ihres Verhältnisses zum christlichen Glauben* (Berlin: Verlag von E.H. Schroeder, 1837): 125.

119. Strauß, *LJ*: 83–84. On First Testament archetypes for the accounts of Jesus' miracles, see 413 f; on Matthew and the use of First Testament prophecies for understanding Jesus, see 177; on the influence of First Testament prophecy, generally, see 440, especially, the principle that "[...] the greatest of prophets [i.e., Jesus] must not fall short of the achievements of any one prophet."

120. Strauß, *LJ*: 77–78. God's immutability is preserved, in Strauß' judgment, because God is Absolute Spirit, and the text consists of only a 'representation' of Absolute Spirit.

121. See "Appendix II: Annotated 'First' Testament **Concordance**:" 993 ff.

## Myth ('Faith') and 'Science'

Another element of 'metaphor interference' with respect to Strauß' *LJ* is concerned with his understanding of the relationship between 'myth' and 'science.'

Horton Harris follows Hartlich/Sachs in the claim that "[...] *the mythical principle is entirely independent of Hegelian philosophy.*"<sup>122</sup> (emphasis added) Harris quotes Hartlich/Sachs:

The hermeneutical principles and criteria by means of which Strauss ascertains the mythical element in the Gospels are free from specific speculative [that is, Hegelian] presuppositions. What lies at the bottom of his critical presuppositions was exactly fixed by himself [...] and bears a purely empirical-rational character. *His presuppositions are not those of a particular philosophical standpoint, but those which exhibit a scientific character in the particular realm of historical science.*<sup>123</sup> (emphasis added)

It becomes quickly clear that for Hartlich/Sachs and Harris, 'scientific' and 'science' here succumb to metaphor interference. When it comes to Strauß' *LJ*, there is no light between Hegel and Strauß when it comes to understanding myth and science. Strauß' understanding of 'science' is not to be squeezed into the notion of empiricism that governs the natural science as of mid-19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> C. Although Strauß speaks of scientific 'research,' science, according to Strauß, is not the hypothetical-deductive method searching for lawful order in phenomena by means of the systematic confirmation of hypotheses in the data. For Strauß 'science' means Hegelian philosophy. According to Hegel's Idealism, 'truth' consists in ideas (content), not in 'representations' (appearances). The true accounting for our solar system requires denial of the senses and invoking of imperceptible mathematical laws. To be sure, according to Hegel, an 'idea' is 'empty' without its occurrence in empirical 'representations,' but empirical perceptions do not determine what is 'true.' 'Truth' is eternal and determined by ideas, not phenomena. Heliocentrism is 'true' because its idea is 'true,' not because the appearances confirm that it is true. Were the appearances to determine 'truth,' heliocentrism would have to be judged as 'false.'

Perplexingly, however, when Christian Hartlich defends the role of 'historical science' ('Historical Criticism') as the exclusive tool for determining the 'factual' (or 'non-factual') status of gospel narratives, he doesn't do so on the basis of 'physical laws' but on 'coherence,' as I point out below. However, Strauß wrote not merely of 'coherence' but of 'law,' which allows no external causal power other than its ultimate cause, when it comes to determining the 'facts.' In the *LJ* Strauß writes:

122. Harris, *David Friedrich Strauss and His Theology*: 270.

123. Harris, *David Friedrich Strauss and His Theology*: 270, n. 30. Harris continues in this same footnote to cite Jörg F. Sandberger, *David Friedrich Strauss als theologischer Hegelianer* (Göttingen, 1972): 87: "Historical criticism, according to Strauss' conception, is in no way dependent on speculative [Hegelian] philosophy, but is a rational consideration of history which works in accordance with its own specific laws."

Our modern world [...] after many centuries of tedious research, has attained a conviction, that all things are linked together by a *chain of causes and effects, which suffers no interruption*<sup>124</sup> [...] [T]he totality of finite things forms a vast circle, which, *except that it owes its existence and laws to a superior power, suffers no intrusion from without* [...] God operates on the world only in so far as he gave to it [...] a fixed direction at the creation.<sup>125</sup> From this point of view, at which nature and history appear as a compact tissue of finite causes and effects, it was impossible to regard the narratives of the Bible, in which this tissue is broken by innumerable instances of divine interference, as historical [...]<sup>126</sup> (emphasis added)

Not only does Hartlich *ignore the importance of lawfulness for causal explanations, but he also has his own dogmatic interest in separating 'historical facts' from 'faith.'* In an article that appeared 22 years after *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes in der modernen Bibelwissenschaft* [*Origin of the Concept of Myth in Biblical Studies*], he claims that faith is untouched by 'facts' precisely because it is an epistemic faith whose 'knowledge' is beyond reason. 'Facts' are merely a matter of coherence, for Hartlich – something that is 'absolutely incoherent' is only 'a mere possibility of thinking:'

With reference to historical events, regular experience is only possible on the ground of a partial identifiability of basically repeatable contexts of experience within the phenomena of investigation. This means: An event must principally cohere with other events, that is, it must stand in an ascertainable connection with all other events. *An absolutely incoherent event is not ascertainable as having happened, but a mere possibility of thinking.*<sup>127</sup> (emphasis added)

Yet, coherence alone is no guarantee of a scientific fact any more than correlation between and among effects implies causation in statistics, and this is the insight at the core of Strauß' recognition that 'history' is incapable of establishing absolute truth claims.<sup>128</sup> Strauß' logic in the 1830s is precisely the same as Hartlich's logic, but Strauß' claim is grounded in Hegelian epistemology whereas Hartlich's claim is grounded in the epistemic 'faith' of Church Doctrine. Historical facts can't determine Absolute

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124. This is the claim of the Principle of Sufficient Reason (*Satz vom zureichenden Grund*). However, Strauß is claiming that 'all things' are governed by a closed system of 'formal, efficient causality' with every effect having a cause with at least as much 'reality' as its effect – with the only exception being the ultimate origin of the universe, 'all things' occur without 'eminent, efficient causality' of an ultimate cause possessing 'more reality' than its effect. What Strauß overlooks, though, is Kant's notion of autonomous freedom that is a 'finite, eminent causality' that can initiate sequences of events that nature's 'formal, efficient causality' is incapable of achieving on its own. This is a fateful lacuna in Strauß' understanding of Kant.

125. Note the anthropomorphism here! God is an agent with a plan.

126. Strauß, *LJ*: 78.

127. Hartlich, Christian Hartlich, "Historisch-kritische Methode in Ihrer Anwendung auf Geschehnisaussagen der Hl. Schrift." 475.

128. I will point out that with his increasing disenchantment with Hegel as a consequence of Hegel's historical 'Indifference,' Strauß comes to view Hegel's Absolute Knowledge to be 'empty abstraction,' hence, no more grounding of 'factual' truth than 'historical science'. This is the dilemma that Strauß addresses in his *Der alte und der neue Glaube* in 1872.

Truth, Absolute Spirit, Absolute Knowledge, and/or Absolute Freedom. Consequently, the gospels are open season for 'criticism' as a set of representations because they only 'point to' their 'higher' truth.

According to Hartlich, though, 'historical-criticism' only demonstrates the 'pseudo-historical' character of the gospels. According to Hartlich, the 'truth' of the gospels is not established either by Hegel's Absolute Spirit or by the text as a set of historical claims but by Personal Theism's 'faith' in divine grace.

Thesis 7 of Hartlich's "Historisch-kritische Methode in ihrer Anwendung auf Geschehnisaussagen der Hl. Schrift" ("On the Application of the Historical-Critical Method to Historical Claims") states: "The authors of sacred history, as it is in the Bible, make use of the form of history to call to faith – that is, indirectly-appellatively. Whoever – misguided by a misunderstanding of their [empirical] form – understands the statements of sacred history as assertions of fact, makes a fundamental hermeneutical error."<sup>129</sup>

Thesis 8 states: "The consequence of this hermeneutical misconception leads to a fatal theological error, namely, when 'sacred history,' which wants to serve and be understood as a literary device, is turned into the first object of faith. Belief in God's forgiveness is something essentially different from believing in a story of God's forgiveness."<sup>130</sup> (emphasis added)

Hartlich justifies this thesis by claiming:

*"The Christian proclamation has used the form of the story in the New Testament in the service of the appeal to existential faith. Christian proclamation today may use this form, provided that preachers and listeners understand the sacred story properly, that is, as it wants to be understood. And that means: so long as it is not understood as a reflection of objective events, but as an indirect call to genuine faith, using the form of history."*<sup>131</sup> (emphasis added)

In other words, the purpose of the 'historical critical method' is to expose the pseudo-historical nature of the Christian proclamation in order that the hearer not substitute a 'historical fact' for 'faith in the invisible God's gift of grace.'

[...] just as when it comes to justification, the Pauline-Lutheran doctrine excludes the error which consists in the fact that man wants to base his faith in God's grace on something other than God's grace alone – namely, on his own actions –, so with regard to the knowledge of God's grace, the radically implemented historical criticism excludes the error that humanity can base its faith in God's grace proclaimed to it on something other than God's grace alone – namely, on an advocacy of holy history recognized as pseudo-historical.

In both cases: in wanting to be justified by one's own work as well as in wanting to recognize the truth of pseudo-historical holy history, there is shared desire by humanity,

129. Hartlich, "Historisch-kritische Methode:" 482.

130. Hartlich, "Historisch-kritische Methode:" 482.

131. Hartlich, "Historisch-kritische Methode:" 482.

namely the desire to avoid the radical surrender to God's grace and to find another support for faith [McG: epistemic faith].<sup>132</sup>

The conclusion to Thesis 8 states: "

The radical application of the historical-critical method carries out the concept of faith, as it guides the doctrine of justification, logically in relation to the recognition of grace. It reveals that *the original sin before God consists in not wanting to surrender to the invisible grace of the invisible God: As a sinner, man flees from the holiness of the invisible God into the visible, be it into his own work, be it into a dogmatized pseudo-history.*<sup>133</sup> (emphasis added)

Hartlich's conclusion for the article is:

The critical historian does not use arbitrary [...] presuppositions with his method to determine the truth of statements concerning events from the past. *He [sic.] is also not Cartesian, Kantian, positivist, atheist or whatever [...], which often take the place of argumentative refutation,*<sup>134</sup> but the critical historian merely methodically applies – representative for mankind striving for truth – the conditions of knowledge available to humanity with respect to statements of events of the past.

With this insight, however, the ontological case, which for centuries formed the scientific and systematic safeguard of the Christian faith [McG: by turning a literary device into objective claims of faith] and, measured by the state of knowledge at that time could form, is shaken from the ground up.<sup>135</sup> (emphasis added)

The 'possibility' of faith in forgiveness requires, precisely for Hartlich, the 'mere possibility of thinking'<sup>136</sup> that God has forgiven humanity's sins, not a 'factual' proof. Yet, the reflective reader will recognize that such a 'mere possibility' is an 'empty abstraction' precisely because it is imperceptible and not anchorable in the perceptible.<sup>137</sup>

132. Hartlich, "Historisch-kritische Methode:" 483.

133. Hartlich, "Historisch-kritische Methode: 483.

134. In other words, avoid seduction by sophisticated arguments!

135. Hartlich, "Historisch-kritische Methode:" 484.

136. Christian faith, according to Hartlich, is grounded in an 'imperceptible possibility' made possible by the imperceptible God. He stated under his Thesis 3 that "No amount of effort possible to man, no theological effort either, can make real what is, according to his constitution of knowledge, a mere possibility." Hartlich, "Historisch-kritische Methode:" 474. He makes this claim in the context of the determination that historical facts cannot provide knowledge of the possibility of salvation (the forgiveness of sins).

137. Kant says in the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 75–76: "Without sense perception, no object is given, and without understanding, no object is understood. Thoughts without [sensible] content are empty. Perceptions without [imperceptible] concepts are blind [...] Understanding is incapable of perception, and perceptions are incapable of thinking. Knowledge can arise only by uniting them [uniting thought and perceptions] [...] Because this is so, we distinguish [McG: but do not dualistically separate] the science of the rules of sensuality in general, i.e. aesthetics, from the science of the rules of understanding in general, i.e. logic." These are the rules that govern 'theoretical' reason. 'Practical' reason's causal system of autonomous agency is governed by the 'rules'/principles of morality. Together

This conclusion by Hartlich places him squarely in the Kähler camp for whom the determination of ‘historical facts’ in the gospels has no role to play when it comes to the ‘truth’ of the Christ of faith.<sup>138</sup>

The ‘possibility’ of faith in forgiveness requires, precisely for Hartlich, the ‘mere possibility of thinking’ that God has forgiven humanity’s sins, not a ‘factual’ proof. Yet, ironically in light of Hartlich/Sach’s rejection of Hegelian epistemology for reading the gospels, such a ‘mere possibility’ is, in Hegelian epistemology, an ‘empty abstraction.’

Unlike Hartlich for whom the ground of ‘faith’ is the ‘possibility of forgiveness,’ though, in the *LJ* of 1835 Strauß’ claim is that the Absolute Truth of the gospels is established by ‘science,’ that is, Hegelian philosophy. The ‘truth’ of Christianity is its doctrine of incarnation of the God/Man. For Strauß in the *LJ*, this truth was a Hegelianized, *inclusive* Christology that included all finite consciousness as the ‘location’ where Absolute Spirit, either in awareness or not, experiences itself through the negation of multiplicity as the ‘point of indifference.’<sup>139</sup>

Finally, were Harris, Hartlich/Sachs, and Sandberger correct that Strauß’ aim in the *LJ* was to establish the historical ‘facts’ by demonstrating that the gospels are ‘myths,’ Strauß would have to be classified as a Rationalist, and, if there was a position that he ridiculed and purloined the most, it was Rationalism – even the half- or two-thirds Rationalist, Schleiermacher, as I will present in Chapter 4: “Why Schleiermacher was not an Option.”

## History versus Myth: A False Dichotomy

Hegel’s epistemology distinguishes between ‘Spirit’ as ideational ‘content’ (*Inhalt*) of knowledge and ‘actuality’ [*Wirklichkeit*] as concrete ‘representations’ (*Vorstellungen*) of

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‘theoretical’ and ‘practical’ reason constitute a single ‘architectonic’. See “The Architectonic of Pure Reason” in the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 860 ff.

138. See Kähler, *The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ*: 43 (quoted in footnote 38 above) and *ibid.*: 74–75 (quoted in footnote 40 above).

139. In his *Streitschriften* in response to the opponents of his *LJ*, Strauß attributed the ‘blessings’ of Christianity not to the miraculous elements of the Gospels but to the spiritual impression that his personality evoked in Jesus’ followers: “The blessing, which Christianity brought, I do not derive from the gospel legends, but as the source of that blessing I consider partly the personality, partly the fate of Jesus, [and] the ideas partly communicated and partly caused by him, among which the latter also includes the belief in his resurrection. When we compare these elements with their letters and the reports of their original proclamation in the Book of Acts, we see that the Apostles were not satisfied with applying those blessings only to themselves, but they had to win others for Christ; and by means of them they believed themselves giving mankind all the blessings of Christianity. Thus, those blessings will also remain unabridged for us even if we drop that mass of narratives, which the Apostles [in their letters and the Book of Acts] also nowhere emphasize. If we also give up the resurrection of Christ as an external fact, then we attribute his impact all the more on account of his personal impression, which was able to work such faith in his disciples.” *Streitschriften* I: 88.

perception.<sup>140</sup> The latter, actual representations, according to Hegel and the Hegelians (including Strauß in 1835), are what ensure that ideational content is 'true' and not merely 'empty abstraction.' With his "On the Transient and the Permanent in Christianity" of 1838, that is, within three years of the publication of the *LJ*, it was clear to Strauß that the claim to avoid 'empty abstraction' ('one-sided theoretical reason') by asserting that the idea is actually represented in the text is the Achilles heel of Hegelianism. Representations are recognized by Hegel as a matter of 'indifference' when it comes to the 'Indifference' (non-difference/unity) of Absolute Spirit. In other words, it is not the representations that matter but only Absolute Spirit that liberates consciousness from representations.

Neither abstract ideas alone nor empirical data alone are adequate criteria for truth claims. One must beware of 'empty abstractions' because facts alone without ideas can be deceptive, but that does not mean, as Hegel claimed, that merely any perception of brute data can serve as a vehicle for communicating their truth by means of their deception. According to Hegel, only the philosopher who grasps the Double Negation of speculative metaphysics is capable of distinguishing the 'false' from the 'true.'<sup>141</sup>

What guarantees this 'real truth?' Hegelian epistemology claims that 'truth' is guaranteed by the Idea, not the representations of a (mythic) narrative, and this is what Strauß believed in the *LJ*. Ignoring the significance of Hegel's epistemology for Strauß in the *LJ* as Hartlich/Sachs do conceals a profound limit to understanding that Strauß came to grasp only in the course of his writings in the second half of the 1830s.

There are two issues in play here: Given that the representations of perception are required to ensure that ideas are not empty abstractions, 1) *do representations ground directly the 'truth' of the idea that governs them?*, or 2) *do representations ground indirectly the idea they seek to communicate?* Hartlich claims that the historical-critical method's purpose is to determine the former, that is, the method determines when the gospels are merely pseudo-narratives that constitute a threat to epistemic faith.<sup>142</sup> Hegel (and Strauß in 1835) claim that representations only indirectly affect the 'truth' of the idea that governs them. The 'truth' for Hegel (and Strauß in 1835) is the 'idea,' which can be other than the representations that are taken to ensure that the 'idea' is not an empty abstractions.

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140. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 366–367. See as well, Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik* I (1832): GW V: 43–44, 119–122, 164–166; especially on "Form und Inhalt" ("Form and Content"), see *Wissenschaft der Logik* II (1832): GW VI: 94–95, 460–461; Hegel, review of "Aphorismen über Nichtwissen und absolutes Wissen im Verhältnisse zur christlichen Glaubenserkenntnis.—Ein Beitrag zum Verständnisse der Philosophie unserer Zeit. Von Carl Friederich G[öschel]" in *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik*, Bd. 1 (Mai/Juni) (1829): 810–811; see also, Angelica Nuzzo, "Begriff' und Vorstellung' zwischen Logik und Realphilosophie bei Hegel," *Hegel-Studien*, Vol. 25 (1990): 41–63.

141. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 516–517.

142. According to Hartlich, the identification of the historical in the gospel narratives in no way affects the 'truth' of the Christian proclamation of epistemic faith in God's grace, as I pointed out above. The historical-critical method merely guarantees that the Christian proclamation of grace not be dependent upon verifiable factual representations.

According to Hegel (and Strauß in 1835), *historical facts can be directly, untrue and yet they can, nonetheless, indirectly confirm the 'truth.'* For example, Santa Claus is 'true' in the sense of an ideal of selfless giving (not merely an 'empty abstraction') even when the narrative (myth) of Santa Claus as a distributor of presents to children across the globe in a single night is false. In other words, 'myths' are capable of presenting 'truth' in the form of 'false' representations. The truth of the myth depends upon something more than its empirical representation.

Hegel (and the early Strauß) claim that *the 'truth' of the gospels is not that the narratives are historical facts but that the narratives are representations in consciousness that present spiritual/mental truths – once one 'moves beyond' mere representations to grasp the role of Spirit in understanding.* In short, the gospel myths are 'true' in Spirit.

The problem that became increasingly pressing for Strauß in the second half of the 1830s was: What grounds the truth of the myth if its representations are 'false?' Furthermore, if 'false facts' can convey a 'truth' as well as 'true facts,' what, if anything, is the real role of empirical phenomena and just what confirms the determination that one's 'ideas' are not 'empty abstractions?'

Hartlich/Sachs cite Strauß' article "Hegel's Perspective on the Historical Worth of the Gospel Story,"<sup>143</sup> but they conveniently overlook a crucial point about Hegel's understanding of the truth of the gospel story that Strauß makes several times in the article. For Hegel, yes, *the truth of the gospel story does not depend upon historical facts (not even the 'facts' of the resurrection and the ascension<sup>144</sup>), which are 'merely husks,' but upon faith in the Christ as the God/Man that arises only after his death (as the surrendering of the finite, sensuous form of a human being), which is the 'true kernel' to the entire gospels. Truth is beyond and 'above' historical facts.* It is this spiritual, *kerymatic 'kernel'* and not simply kernels of historical 'facts' in the individual stories that the gospels portray.<sup>145</sup> Strauß writes:

The conception of the resurrection and ascension as external, *sensual facta* is not the true one at all [...] According to Hegel, the resurrection of Jesus is everywhere only this, that the God/Man, "as he stood [among other human beings] before as sensual existence for consciousness, so now he arose in Spirit,"<sup>146</sup> i.e. he has become the "general self-consciousness of the community." Jesus' ascension and elevation to the right hand of God only means the canceling out of its otherness (sensual presence [as a human being]) by which Jesus

143. Strauß, "Hegel's Perspective on the Historical Value of Gospel History" ["Hegel's Ansicht über den historischen Werth der evangelischen Geschichte"] in *Streitschriften* III: 76–94.

144. See Strauß, "Hegel's Perspective" in *Streitschriften* III: 91–92.

145. Strauß emphasizes this out at several points in his essay. See "Hegel's Perspective" in *Streitschriften* III: 80, 81, 83, 84, 86, 92, 93. Ironically or in a moment of self-deception (?), Hartlich's claim for 'grace' in his "Historisch-kritische Methode" is based on the same logic. Epistemic faith, ultimately, doesn't depend upon historical facts but on spiritual truth.

146. Strauß employs a wordplay between "*Aufstand*" (arise, stand up) and "*aufgestanden*" (risen, resurrection) here to establish the two 'moments' of the God/Man. The first moment is Spirit becoming 'a human being;' the second is the shedding of the human body to become 'Spirit/God'.

was "the absent (divine) being," which by its appearance as man "was alienated from itself, had natural existence, and self-existent reality. The canceling of its otherness (the sensual presence) by means of the second, becoming different (in this case, death)," leads God, who has stepped out of Himself, back into Himself [...].<sup>147</sup>

Notwithstanding this indifference and the skeptical attitude towards the most important aspect of evangelical history [with respect to the human Jesus], Hegel [...] maintains that the appearance of God in the flesh, "came forth in this man (Jesus), in this place, in this time."<sup>148</sup> [...] the spirit knowing itself as Spirit, or, what is the same, man knowing himself as God, is in its first, unmediated appearance a "single, [individual], self-consciousness opposed to the universal One, which excludes [all particularities]." This difference is not only to be understood in such a way that men merely imagine it, but, simultaneously, that that consciousness really first appears as consciousness in a single individual, through which it immediately communicates itself to other individuals. However, even *this explanation, which seems to be quite definite, is again rendered ambiguous, or at least very limited, when we read passages like the following. "What manifesting Spirit is in and for Itself is not brought about by turning [...] back to the first, imperfect (Christian) community's [...] ideas [concerning Jesus], or even to what the real human being, Jesus, said. This [... turning back] confuses the origin in the sense of the immediate existence of the first appearance [as a human being] with the simplicity of the Concept [the Idea that cannot be an appearance].*<sup>149</sup> Through this impoverishment of the life of the Spirit [...] there arises, therefore, instead of the Concept, the pale exteriority and singularity, the historical manner of the immediate appearance and the spiritless memory of a single imagined figure along with its past. One can almost say that *if one traces Christianity back to the first appearance, it is brought to the point of spiritlessness.*"<sup>150</sup> (emphasis added)

Contrary to Hartlich/Sachs, according to Hegel the truth of the God/Man, or what Hegel calls the very definition of religion,<sup>151</sup> does not rest upon distinguishing between

147. Strauß footnotes here to Hegel's *Phenomenology*: 573, 583 f., 589.

148. Strauß footnotes here to Hegel's *Religionsphilosophie* (Marheineke version 1832), II: 240.

149. Hegel's formulation here is „Sabellian” or ‘Modalistic Monarchian’. Dynamic Monarchianism and Modalistic Monarchianism are two alternatives thinking about the Trinity already in the 2<sup>nd</sup> C: Dynamic Monarchianism is "Adoptionism" or the claim that Jesus was a human being chosen by God and confirmed by the descent of the Holy Spirit on him at his baptism (that is, Jesus was not always God's Son, he was adopted by God at a point in historical time) – NOTE: The Holy Spirit is active in the divinization of Jesus; Modalistic Monarchianism views the Godhead as temporally sequential: God existed first as Father, He ceased to exist when He became the Son, and the Son ceased to exist when the Holy Spirit became the activity of God as the Paraclete. Strauß points out that Schleiermacher's Trinity is Sabellian, but he does not specifically call Hegel's Trinity Sabellian. On Schleiermacher, see Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub, in ihrer Bedeutung für die Theologie unserer Zeit" in *Charakteristiken und Kritiken. Eine Sammlung zerstreuter Aufsätze aus den Gebieten der Theologie, Anthropologie und Aesthetik* (Leipzig: Verlag von Otto Wigand, 1839): 180.

150. Strauß, "Hegel's Perspective" in *Streitschriften* III: 92–94. Strauß footnotes here to Hegel's *Phenomenology*: 574 f. and *Geschichte der Philosophie, Streitschriften* III: III.

151. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: "Religion [according to Hegel] in its ultimate sense, then, is not an affair of a human being but essentially the highest definition of the Absolute Idea Itself to the degree that It has to make Itself finite in order that by means of this limitation it achieves knowledge of Itself." (514)

‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ in the gospels. According to Hegel (and Strauß in 1835), truth (*content*) can only be ‘represented’ in historical facts and is not limited to them. Historical facts alone for themselves are ‘spiritless’ and must be ‘negated’ in order to arrive at the truth of the Spirit. Strauß concludes, then:

The individual narrated incidents of the life of Jesus are to be distinguished from their absolute meaning, which is *independent of their historical reality or non-reality*, and therefore *the investigation of the latter point is to be left completely free to criticism*, which, however, according to the nature of the matter *can never reach a completely secure result*.<sup>152</sup>

[...] Therefore, the meaning of the person of Jesus remains that in him, as in no other, the unity of the divine and the human has become manifest; only that the how and to what extent is, partly, left undetermined by Hegel and, partly, limited by the fact that he declares the content [*Inhalt*] of Christ’s consciousness when compared with that which over time developed little by little in the community was imperfectly [represented].<sup>153</sup> (emphasis added)

The ‘higher’ truth of the gospel narratives is their ‘Idea’/‘Concept,’ according to Hegel (and Strauß in 1835). Salvation for Hegel (and Strauß in 1835) consists in the liberating of humanity from the temptations of ‘sensualism’ and its ‘prison of the soul’<sup>154</sup> by negating one’s own finite spirit/mind to become one with infinite Absolute Spirit and achieve ‘true,’ Absolute Freedom that is represented in the Incarnation (the God/Man).

However, Christian Hartlich defines salvation as the ‘idea’ of the ‘forgiveness of sins.’ He defends an understanding of the ‘truth’ of the Christian faith whose ‘logic’ is remarkably similar to Hegel and Strauß (in 1835) even if the content (salvation by grace) is different from Hegel and Strauß (in 1835) (freeing from ‘sensualism’ into Absolute Spirit). Hartlich is claiming as did Kähler and, ironically (or in a moment of self-deception?), exactly as did Hegel and Strauß (in 1835), that the truth of Christianity cannot be determined by ‘historical facts,’ only by faith.

One is not saved because the biblical stories are ‘historically, true facts.’ That constitutes, for Hartlich, an example of the ‘original sin’ of humanity: “[...] *the original sin before God is not wanting to give oneself up to the invisible grace of the invisible God [to embrace the possibility of forgiveness]: As a sinner, man flees from the holiness of the invisible God into the visible, be it into his own work, be it into a dogmatized pseudo-history.*”<sup>155</sup>

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152. Strauß, “Hegel’s Perspective” in *Streitschriften* III: 94. This judgment was articulated by F.C. Baur in his section “Die Schleiermacher’sche Glaubenslehre” in *Gnosis*: “Historical observation can always show us only the relatively best, but between the relatively best and the absolute perfect there is a gulf that history can never bridge.” (638)

153. Strauß, “Hegel’s Perspective” in *Streitschriften* III: 94

154. In the *Cratylus* 400b-c, Plato spoke of the body as the ‘grave’/‘prison’ of the soul and as the ‘tomb’ of the soul in *Gorgias* 493a.

155. Christian Hartlich, “Historisch-kritische Methode:” 483.

However, Hartlich presents an insurmountable conundrum for any claim that faith is independent of facts. Granted that one cannot prove an invisible possibility by a visible 'fact,' on what grounds would one embrace an invisible possibility *if it has no correspondence in facts?*

This is precisely the conundrum that Strauß found in Hegel in the second half of the 1830s. Hegel (and Strauß in 1835), too, make faith a matter of belief in an invisible possibility that cannot be established by historical facts. Belief in the God/Man, the spiritual divinization of humanity, only arises after the death of Jesus as belief by the Church in the resurrection.<sup>156</sup>

In 1835, Strauß is not concerned with distinguishing between true and false gospel narratives. At this point in time, his dissatisfaction with Hegel rested only on the *exclusive* claim of Hegel's Christology. An exclusive God/Man is, in Strauß' words, "inappropriate" for any idea/concept, much less 'the' Idea/Concept of the God/Man. Strauß writes in the *LJ*:

If reality is ascribed to the idea of the unity of the divine and human natures, is this equivalent to the admission that this unity must actually have been once manifested, as it never had been, and never more will be, in one individual? This is indeed not the mode in which Idea realizes itself; it is not wont to lavish all its fulness on one exemplar, and be stingy towards all others—to express itself perfectly in that one individual, and imperfectly in all the rest: it rather loves to distribute its riches among a multiplicity of exemplars which reciprocally complete each other—in the alternate appearance and suppression of a series of individuals. And is this no true realization of the idea? Is not the idea of the unity of the divine and human natures a real one in a far higher sense, when I regard the whole race of mankind as its realization, than when I single out one man as such a realization? Is not an incarnation of God from eternity, a truer one than an incarnation limited to a particular point of time?<sup>157</sup>

It is precisely Strauß' universally, *inclusive* Christology based on Hegelian speculative philosophy that 'corrects' Hegel's epistemological 'error' that limits the God/Man to a specific individual or group and 'corrects' Hegel's epistemological 'error' that ties universal content (*Inhalt*) to particular individuals, in Strauß' judgment.

Nonetheless, within three years of the *LJ* in "On the Transient and Permanent in Christianity," Strauß jettisoned the Hegelian meta-narrative of Double Negation that made divinization or Absolute Knowledge the ultimate goal of all finite experience. In the *Glaubenslehre* of 1841, he called this meta-narrative Hegel's logical, immanent

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156. On Hegel's post-resurrection Christology, see Strauß, "Hegel's Perspective on the Historical Worth of Gospel History" (Hegel's Ansicht über den historischen Werth der evangelischen Geschichte") of *Streitschriften* III: 80, 92–94. This is Karl Barth's thesis in *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, Douglas Horton trans. (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1978) as well as Wolfhart Pannenberg's thesis in *Jesus--God and Man*, Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe trans. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974). For both Barth and Pannenberg, the Christ event is not an event in history but 'above' history.

157. Strauß, *LJ*: 779–780.

or 'horizontal' Gnosticism that, far from providing the concrete representations that made the content of Absolute Knowledge real and not an empty abstraction, constituted a profound historical Indifferentism with respect to the actual details of history for faith.<sup>158</sup> In 1839, Strauß criticized this historical Indifferentism<sup>159</sup> by means of Kant's analogy that history was, in fact, only lightly touched by the Dove imagining flying in a vacuum would be easier (the dove being 'Absolute Knowledge').<sup>160</sup>

When it comes to 'metaphor interference' with respect to Strauß' claim that the gospels are 'myth,' both Strauß' opponents and his defenders, alas, are victims. Myth does not mean falsehood, according to Strauß, and Strauß' hermeneutical interest is not to separate history and myth.

### Speculative Metaphysics and Science

Five years after the publication of the two volume (circa 1,500 pages) *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, Strauß published a two volume (circa 1,500 pages) his *Die christliche Glaubenslehre in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung und im Kampfe mit der modernen Wissenschaft*<sup>161</sup> (*Christian Doctrine in its Historical Development and in its Conflict with Modern Science*). The title suggests to today's reader that Strauß understood Christian doctrine to be in conflict with empirical, natural science. Yet, in the 1,500 pages there is no mention of what we today understand by the methodological assumptions of empirical, natural science. Even a shallow reading makes it clear that

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158. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 500–501.

159. This is no capricious judgment by a Hegelian opponent. It is Hegel's label for his own logic that governs Double Negation. See Hegel's "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten 110–111, where Hegel speaks of the 'point of Indifference' *Indifferenzpunkt*) as the external point at which Absolute Unity negates multiplicity and returns to Itself. Hegel's paper was published in the *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*, II/2 and II/3 (Dec. 1802; May 1803) jointly edited by Hegel and Schelling. The articles in the journal all came from Hegel and Schelling but without the author's (or authors') names specifically attached to the individual articles. According to Herman Nohl's work on Hegel's first *curriculum vitae*, Hegel wrote this article. See *Ibid.*: xv.

160. Already in "Schleiermacher und Daub," Strauß criticized both Daub and Hegel by invoking the analogy of their historical Indifferentism is like the dove imagining flying in a vacuum would be easier: "In [...] its] witty, allusive manner, which in the swallow's flight of the concept touches the given real only approximately with the tips of its wings, without settling anywhere on it, the present Daub book [*Die dogmatische Theologie jetziger Zeit, oder die Selbstsucht in der Wissenschaft des Glaubens und seiner Artikel* dedicated to Hegel 124] perfectly resembles Hegel's Phenomenology, among whose finest charms belongs precisely this manner." Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 128. In criticism of such flights of intellectual fancy, Kant also employed the analogy of a dove trying to fly in a vacuum. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 8–9. See the use of the metaphor of the impotent flapping of wings in empty space in the *Groundwork* AA IV: 462.

161. David Friedrich Strauß, *Die christliche Glaubenslehre in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung und im Kampfe mit der modernen Wissenschaft* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009 [1841]).

Strauß is working with a different meaning for the term ‘science’ than is meant by the ‘natural sciences’ today.

In a nutshell, Strauß means by ‘science’ ‘speculative metaphysics.’ However, he no longer means that the ‘truth’ (*Ideelle* content) of Christianity is ‘beyond history’ expressed in ‘actuality’ (*Reelle* representation) as a ‘post-resurrection’ experience (Second Negation) of the logical meta-narrative of Double Negation. Rather, what Strauß retains as the ‘science’ of ‘speculative metaphysics’ is the Hegelian epistemology of ‘actual’ ‘husk’ (*Reelle*) as representations whose ‘true’ ‘kernel’ (*Ideelle*) is their abstract, lawful content.

Today’s reader reads ‘speculative’ to mean that there was little, if anything, empirical about his notion of ‘science’ because we take ‘speculative’ to mean ‘merely wager’ or even ‘fanciful.’ If there is anything that the 20<sup>th</sup> C taught us it is that ‘metaphysics’ is meaningless if not imperialistic precisely because it is dogmatically ‘speculative.’ We ‘have left’ the metaphysical fantasy and speculation of meta-narratives on the trash heap of history. The consequence of our understanding today is that metaphor interference can occur in reading Strauß when it comes to what the term ‘science’ means for him. He does not mean that science is a flight of fancy of some untethered realm of empty abstraction (what became his criticism of Hegel). ‘Speculative Science’ for Strauß consists in the anchoring of perceptions in the imperceptible lawfulness of physical events.

Metaphysics has not always meant enthusiastic speculations by flights of mental fancy. When one only reads a tradition of thought with the intent of justifying why one can ignore it, one is easily susceptible to distorting it.<sup>162</sup> In order to understand Strauß’ notion of ‘speculative metaphysics,’ one needs to be concerned that the baby not be thrown out with the bathwater in the name of empirical reductionism or radical, Deconstructive, Pyrrhonian skepticism. Although I find Platonic ‘Realism’ as problematic as ‘empirical reductionism’ and Deconstruction’s ‘traces’ ‘all-the-way-down,’ in my judgment, there is, nonetheless, a valuable insight to be drawn from Platonism that assist our understanding the inescapable significance of ‘metaphysics’ for our experience, understanding, and the exercising of responsible agency in the world.

From Plato down to the 19<sup>th</sup> C, metaphysics referred to all conscious experience that is not accessible to the senses. In contrast to the ‘brain,’ the mind is nothing that one can see, taste, touch, smell, or physically touch. In Platonic metaphysics, mind is imperceptible, immaterial, indivisible, immeasurable, and grounded in unchanging

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162. Heidegger’s aphorism is: “One thing is necessary [...] for a face-to-face converse with the thinkers: [...] Basically, there are only two possibilities: either to go to their encounter, or to go counter to them. If we want to go to the encounter of a thinker’s thought, we must magnify still further what is great in him [*sic.*] Then we will enter into what is unthought in his [*sic.*] thought. If we wish only to go counter to a thinker’s thought, this wish must have minimized beforehand what is great in him [*sic.*]. We then shift his [*sic.*] thought into the commonplaces of our know-it-all presumption.” Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, Fred D. Wieck and J Glenn Gray, trans. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968): 77.

‘ideas’ (Being) The physical world that one can see, taste, touch, smell, and touch, in contrast, is exactly the opposite: perceptible, material, divisible, measurable, and incessantly changing (Becoming).

Kant, too, had rejected the Platonic notion of innate, permanent ideas.<sup>163</sup> Nonetheless, he saw what was valuable in the notion of the concept that, although imperceptible, they are a ‘*necessary*’<sup>164</sup> imperceptible condition that is required for us to experience, think, and act as we do. These imperceptible, necessary conditions of possibility are for Kant, on the one hand, ‘speculative’ because they cannot be proved themselves by sense data, but, on the other hand, they possess a degree of certainty that borders on their being undeniable. Without them, it would be impossible to experience the phenomenal world as we do, in fact, experience, reflect, and act.

For example, Plato’s (or at least Platonism’s) claims that ‘ideas’ constitute a mental dimension (for him, not for Kant) independent from the physical world and consisting of universal, eternal ‘paradigms’ (models) after which all transient particulars in experience are ‘copies’ are speculative claims and by definition incapable of proof in the senses. However, we could have no experience, much less understanding, were we to deny our dependence upon ‘ideas’ that remain the same throughout the transience of particular phenomena. To be sure, Kant rejects them as ‘innate ideas’, but he accounts for them by what he calls ‘the law of Association (*Gesetz der Vergesellschaftung*)’ which deduces the universal ‘concept’ as the relationality/function uniting the appearances of a set of particulars.<sup>165</sup> We take these ‘ideas’/‘concepts’ with us, *wherever they come from and whatever their ultimate status*, wherever we go in space and time. Their status as unchanging is crucial for us to be able to say in a particular space and at various times that this ‘object’ is the ‘same’ as an object experienced in a different space and time – even if they don’t ‘look’ exactly the same.

The necessary, imperceptible conditions of possibility for the experience of the phenomenal world are also appropriately called ‘transcendental,’ but the perceptible and the transcendent constitute no dualism<sup>166</sup> although the imperceptible elements

163. See the section “Rejection of Idealism” in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* B 274 – B 294.

164. Necessary, here, does not mean causally determining but conditions required merely for experiencing. What the individual actually *does* with these conditions and capacities is caused *to a degree* by nature but also, *to a degree*, by the individual’s *autonomous, creative freedom* ‘above’ nature. See the “Preface:” 42, n. 22.

165. On the ‘Law of Association’ and the deduction of concepts out of the relationalities of particular appearances, see “On Imagination, the Law of association, and Reflecting Judgment” at: 86, n. 26,

166. Although Kant acknowledges that there is a necessary difference between the *sensible* and *intelligible* realms on the basis of the distinction between sense perception and what cannot occur in sense perception and must be ‘added to’ sense perception in order for there to be any understanding, he explicitly rejects the notion that this is a *dualism*. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 311–315. Kant writes here: “Understanding and sensibility, with us, can determine objects only when they are employed in conjunction. When we separate them, we have intuitions without concepts, or concepts without intuitions—in both cases, representations which we are not in a position to apply to any determinate object.” B 314 Kant applies this insight to the imperceptible notion of the soul in the

are in consciousness and irreducible to physical nature. To be sure, unlike physical objects in nature, these transcendental conditions of consciousness are imperceptible, immaterial, indivisible, immeasurable, and, compared to physical phenomena, unchanging. Nonetheless, the fact that they are ‘speculative,’ ‘transcendental’ elements of finite consciousness does not mean that they are the product of ‘fanciful raptures’<sup>167</sup> (*Schwärmerei*). In other words, simply to label them ‘transcendental’ does not mean that they are gibberish illusions. The *a priori* synthetic conditions of possibility of transcendental consciousness are *required by the experience of sense perception* (empirical phenomena) itself.

Unicorns and centaurs, to be sure, are the product of fanciful raptures (*Schwärmerei*) because they are not materially perceptible. In short, proper understanding begins with sense perception, but it is not limited to sense perception – even as it must ‘return to’ sense perception for the determination of its adequacy.<sup>168</sup> Furthermore, simply because one can think something, doesn’t make it ‘true.’<sup>169</sup>

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*intelligible* realm: "For were I to enquire whether the soul in itself is of spiritual nature, the question would have no meaning. In employing such a concept, I not only abstract from corporeal nature, but from nature in general, that is, from all predicates of any possible experience, and therefore from all conditions requisite for thinking an object for such a concept; yet only as related to an object can the concept be said to have a meaning." *Critique of Pure Reason* B 711–712

167. On the difference between ‘enthusiasm’ and ‘rapture,’ see: 27, n. 10.

168. Kant writes of fantasy and order: "Liveliness [the directing "of the imagination towards novelty, vivacity/liveliness" (*Lebhaftigkeit*) (Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1062: Olms ed. 240)] contributes to knowledge and is to be highly valued. However, it often detracts from clear unity of mind; it is sensual and arises from experience; for it causes our imagination to be stimulated, it does not adhere to the limits of reason. Order is based on the ability of our wit and our imagination to pair judgments. Multiplicity [*Mannigfaltigkeit* of appearances] is the [indexing] most necessary thing that we can seek in knowledge, for it brings the greatest facilitation [*Erleichterung*] to the mind. Order is more disconcerting (*peinlicher*), but when it is properly understood, it seems to us even more delightful than multiplicity; for *with multiplicity we abandon ourselves to the play of different objects, but order forces us to remain steady* (*regelmäßig*). Finally, combination (*Verknüpfung* (see "On Imagination, the Law of association, and Reflecting Judgment" at: 86, n. 26) is the most important part of cognition, but it is also the most difficult to grasp that which is parsed (*Gegliederte*) [diaresis]." *Menschenkunde* XXV, 2: 885; Olms ed.: 38

169. In proleptic anticipation of Hegelian ‘science,’ Kant explicitly rejects the point of view of those in his day who speak of the phenomenal and noumenal as a dualism in which the phenomenal is merely the perceived and the noumenal as a system of logic as if Copernicus and Newton merely applied an understanding in ‘conformity with the laws of understanding’ (logic) to phenomena. Kant writes: "In the writings of modern [philosophers] I find the expressions *mundus sensibilis* [the sensible world] and [*mundus intelligibilis*] [the intelligible world] used with a meaning altogether different from that of the ancients—a meaning which is easily understood, but which results merely in an empty play upon words. *According to this [current] usage* [of *mundus sensibilis*], *some have thought good to entitle the sum of appearances, in so far as they are intuited [perceived] [angeschaut], the world of the senses* [die *Sinnenwelt*/*mundus sensibilis*], *and in so far as their connection is thought in conformity with laws of understanding, the world of the understanding* [die *Verstandeswelt*/*mundus intelligibilis*]. The first, [theoretical] astronomy [*theoretische Astronomie*], which teaches merely the observation [*die bloße Beobachtung*] of the starry heavens, would give an account of the former [*mundus sensibilis* or *die Sinnenwelt*]. The second, [contemplative] astronomy [*contemplative Astronomie*], in contrast (as

Thoughts without perception are empty, just as perceptions without thoughts are blind.<sup>170</sup>

Many philosophers in the post-Kantian world grasped this notion of ‘necessary, transcendental conditions of possibility as concerned with elements that cannot be given directly in perception and required in order for finite consciousness to experience as it does. However, there was a major difference between Kant and, for example, the Hegelians with respect to what one may claim to be the case on the basis of the ‘necessary conditions of possibility.’ For the Hegelians, they invoked ‘necessary conditions of possibility’ to provide a *causal explanation* for Absolute Knowledge and the creation of the world.<sup>171</sup> For Kant, causal explanations are *a priori* synthetic

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the case) with the Copernican system, or according to Newton’s laws of gravitation would give an account of the intelligible world [intelligible Welt]. But [sic.] such a twisting of words is a merely sophistical subterfuge. It seeks to avoid a troublesome question by changing its meaning to suit our own convenience. Understanding and reason are, indeed, employed in dealing with appearances; but the question to be answered is whether they have also yet another employment, when the object is not a phenomenon (that is, is a noumenon); and it is in this latter sense that the object is taken, when it is thought as merely intelligible, that is to say, as being given to the understanding alone, and not to the senses. *The question, therefore, is whether in addition to the empirical employment of the understanding (even in the Newtonian account of the structure of the universe) there is likewise possible a transcendental employment of the understanding that has to do with the noumenon as an object. This question we have answered in the negative.* [McG: that is, the intelligible world is no collection of ‘objects’ independent of the sensible world]

"When [...] we say that the senses represent objects as they appear, and the understanding grasps objects as they are, the latter statement is to be taken, not in the transcendental, but in the merely empirical meaning of the terms, namely as meaning that the objects must be represented as objects of experience, that is, as appearances in thoroughgoing interconnection with one another, and *not as they may be apart from their relation to possible experience* (and consequently to any senses), as objects of the pure understanding. *Such objects of pure understanding will always remain unknown to us; we can never even know whether such a transcendental or exceptional knowledge is possible under any conditions* —at least not if it is to be the same kind of knowledge as that which stands under our ordinary categories.

"*Understanding and sensibility, with us, can determine objects only when they are employed in conjunction.* When we separate them, we have [perceptions] [*sinnliche Anschauungen*] without concepts, or concepts without [perceptions] [*intellektuelle Anschauungen*]*—in both cases, representations which we are not in a position to apply to any determinate object.*" (emphasis added) *Critique of Pure Reason* B 311–314; see as well, B 75.

170. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 75 (see as well, B 165–166 and 178). This applies to ‘logic,’ as well, Kant says in his *Logic* AA IX: 13–14. Logic is concerned with the rules (the canon) that govern abstract thought abstractly, but it cannot determine what ‘should’ be the case (logic is no organon). To be sure, Kant divides logic into ‘analytic’ and ‘dialectic’. Analytic logic, then, are the rules required for proper thinking. "Dialectic, which contains the characteristics and rules according to which we could recognize that *something does not agree with the formal criteria of truth*, although it seems to agree with the same. The dialectic in this meaning would thus have its good use as a cathartic [καθάρτικος] of the understanding." *Ibid.*, AA IX: 16. Note: For Kant ‘dialectic’ in logic can determine what ‘does not’ fit with the abstract rules of logic, not what proves or does fit with the rules of logic.

171. The invocation of logic of ‘conditions of possibility’ for establishing knowledge, shared by Hegel and Schleiermacher to ground Absolute Knowledge (Hegel) or to ground belief in the God/Man (Schleiermacher), is inappropriately attributed to Kant. See, for example, Strauß "Schleiermacher und

judgments because they are not directly given in perception and belong in the table of the categories of the understanding concerned with the 'relations' among phenomena. Furthermore, causal explanations are an aspect of *theoretical* reason that is concerned with understanding phenomena, not ultimate cause.<sup>172</sup> When it comes to the 'idea' of God, Kant acknowledges that it is a 'necessary' assumption as a *regulative idea* (an assumption)<sup>173</sup>, not an ultimate, causal explanation.

Whereas Hegel takes logic to be a metaphysical and ontological causal order of dialectic that creates all 'that is', Kant takes logic to be merely an aide of thought, not a causal explanation. As stated above, Kant says in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 75, s. B 165–166, 178) that "Thoughts (*Gedanken*) without content (*Inhalt*/perception) are empty; perceptions (*Anschauungen*) without concepts (*Begriffe*) are blind.<sup>174</sup>" It is clear that Kant is reading 'content' as sense perception (*sinnliche Anschauung*). If one reads Kant's formulation within the framework of Hegelian epistemology that 'content' (*Inhalt*) is the abstract idea (*ideelle*) of intellectual perception (*intellektuelle Anschauung*), whereas representations (*Form*) are actuality (*reelle*) as sense perception (*sinnliche Anschauung*), then Kant would be saying, literally, that, without ideas, ideas would be empty. However, although Hegel's epistemology of content (*Inhalt*) and representations (*Form*) claims to agree with Kant's use of content (*Inhalt*) here as sense perception (*sinnliche Anschauung*), that 'representations' are the actual (*reelle*) that guarantee that ideas (*ideelle*) are not empty abstractions, this would mean that Hegel's entire meta-narrative of Double Negation is an 'empty abstraction.' Yet this is what Hegel explicitly denies. 'The' ultimate content for Hegel is Absolute Spirit, and representations are only empty place setters for Absolute Spirit's final aim of awareness of Itself.

Nonetheless, Hegel's absolute epistemology goes much farther than Kant's theoretical reason. Hegel's meta-narrative is a narrative of causal explanation, not merely an epistemology that finite consciousness requires in order to experience, understand, and exercise responsible agency in the world, as Kant maintained. The 'truth' of histo-

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Daub:" 41. Hegel and Schleiermacher are speaking of the 'necessity' of a *causal explanation* for these ultimate elements (Absolute Knowledge and the God/Man). In contrast, Kant's Copernican Turn to 'necessary' conditions of possibility is to account for our experience, understanding, and responsible agency of a world of appearances for limited reason.

On Kant's use of the term 'necessary' with respect to the transcendental conditions of possibility and capacities identified by the Copernican Turn, see the "Preface:" 42, n. 22.

172. Categories require perception (*sinnliche Anschauung*) and are inappropriate when applied to a Noumenon (God). See *Critique of Pure Reason* B 311–312. See as well, Kant's rejection of categories of the understanding (theoretical reason) for speaking about God at *Critique of Pure Reason* B 724. He does not call into question the reality of God here or elsewhere, but he does say that all God-talk is analogical (B 724) and at best 'symbolically' anthropomorphic. See above footnote 64.

173. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 699.

174. In contrast to Norman Kemp Smith's translation, I prefer to translate *Anschauung* as perception, not intuition, because the term intuition can anachronistically be taken as a 'sixth' sense whereas the term *Anschauung* literally means 'to look at'.

ry, according to Hegel, requires the causal necessity of Absolute Spirit's grounding in actuality. Otherwise, Absolute Spirit is an 'empty abstraction.' The ultimate relationship between the 'true' content of ideas and the 'actual' representations of thoughts is caused by the Absolute Idea as it establishes the finite conditions for the experience of representations. Were the Absolute Idea not to be the cause of a process of Double Negation, it would merely be an 'empty' abstraction. However, *a description is not a causal explanation any more than statistical correlation is causality.*

Hegel claims that the process that results in the Absolute Idea 'appearing' in 'representations' is a *dialectical, logical, causal process* of Double Negation. However, in his *Logic*, Kant already pointed out that logic is only capable of establishing the rules of thought, not what factually 'is' or 'ought to be'.<sup>175</sup>

In light of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (B75) that 'thoughts without perception are empty' and 'perceptions without thoughts are blind,' we can say: A canon without an organon is *empty*; an organon without a canon is *blind*.<sup>176</sup> "As a canon of the understanding and reason, logic cannot borrow any principles either from any particular science nor from any particular experience. Its laws must contain entirely a priori, which are necessary and apply to understanding, generally."<sup>177</sup> Logic only consists of abstract, theoretical principles without practical, moral principles.

'Representations' in themselves cannot ground 'concepts' because 1) no set of particulars can exhaust an idea<sup>178</sup> and 2) 'representations' can mislead because they don't present the things-in-themselves to us. Reason has two aspects: 1) the deduction of lawfulness (*legislatoris*) and 2) the application of lawfulness (*administrans*). Kant wrote in the posthumous *Menschenkunde*:

We need [...] a reason that is grounded in application [...] This application by reason (*Gesetzgebung der Vernunft*) is essential and constitutes the primary activity as well as the entire dignity of reason. – Humanity achieves knowledge through understanding, the capacity of judgment applies one's knowledge, and with reason we extend our concepts.<sup>179</sup>

Causal 'explanations' belong to the categories of the understanding, which are heuristic constructions for understanding, not a direct account of ontological reality.<sup>180</sup> In order to avoid 'empty abstractions,' one needs *the lawfulness* (theoretical principles and

175. See Kant, *Logic* AA IX: 13–14 and 49.

176. On 'canon' and 'organon,' see 49, n. 36.

177. Kant, *Logic* AA IX: 13.

178. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 649.

179. Kant, *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1036–1043; Olms ed.: 213.

180. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 106.

practical principles) of the two, complementary 'domains' of nature and freedom<sup>181</sup> in addition to 'coherent' representations of an *architectonic*.<sup>182</sup>

For the Hegelians (in this respect, also Strauß of the *LJ*<sup>183</sup>), the necessary, transcendental conditions of experience were not limited to finite conscious experience itself but concerned with an ultimate cause of all experience as well as the 'logic' of the events that 'had to have occurred' in order for there to be a consciousness in the world and for this consciousness to experience Absolute Knowledge. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Geist* (*Spirit/Mind*), then, seeks to give a causal explanation for the experience of Absolute Knowledge or the consciousness of an Absolute Unity and experience of Absolute Freedom 'above' nature.

In short, Hegel is caught in an *inescapable*, 'vicious' circle of causal explanation. 'Given' the experience in finite consciousness of what is taken to be Absolute Knowledge, the causal conditions necessary for the experience of Absolute Knowledge had to have occurred before it could be experienced. Rather than attribute the creation of those spiritual and physical conditions to a Personal Deity,<sup>184</sup> the Hegelians described those spiritual and physical conditions in terms of a series of events driven by the 'logic of negation,' which accounts for the spiritual and physical conditions for particular, finite experience by the individual of the Absolute, which is immanent to the world.

The 'logic of negation' is bookended by the 'Double Negation'<sup>185</sup> of a narrative above all finite narratives (that is, a *meta-narrative*). Hegel's meta-narrative begins with an Absolute Oneness that is an Absolute, 'indivisible-I'<sup>186</sup> without even the divisibility of intellectual perception (*intellektuelle Anschauung*), which together with

181. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* XX V: 174–175.

182. On the significance of an architectonic, see Kant's "Transcendental Method" in *Critique of Pure Reason* 735 ff.

183. Strauß recognized in the *Glaubenslehre* of 1841 that 'knowledge of the Absolute' as the ground for arguing that its condition of possibility is the Absolute involves a vicious circle. See *Glaubenslehre* I: Hegel says of Spirit: "[...] our [finite!] concept (*Begriff*) of an absolute essence (*Wesen*) is this [absolute] essence itself." 399 "The Hegelian ontological argument is conclusive, only insofar as for him the being of God, which he wants to prove, is no other than the idea of God, from which the argument begins." 400

184. Hegel acknowledges his agreement with Descartes' argument for God. See Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* §77: GW VIII: 167\*. See Descartes 'ontological argument' on the basis of the experience of the idea of 'perfection' in finite consciousness for the 'necessity' of a 'perfect' Personal Deity in the *Third Meditation* in *Meditations on First Philosophy in which the Existence of God and the Distinction of the Soul from the Body are Demonstrated*, Donald A. Cress trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., Inc., 1983): 31–34 based on the "Principle of Sufficient Reason" (*ibid.*, 27) and the insistence that there cannot be an infinite regress (*ibid.*, 28). To be sure, Hegel is not employing the logic of eminent causality to 'prove' the existence of a Personal Deity of Traditional Theism but of an Immanent Deity.

185. On Strauß' employment of the notion and logic of 'Double Negation,' see *LJ*: 777 and 781.

186. On the 'principle of exception' (*das eigentümliche Prinzip*) above the sphere of knowledge and freedom (*über der Sphäre ihres Erkennens und ihrer Freiheit liegt*) in Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten." GW II: 434–435.

the Absolute Concept constitute the 'divisible-I'.<sup>187</sup> This Absolute One must logically negate Itself into the multiplicity of intellectual perception before it's dialectical, causal logic can produce the 'divisible non-I' of the material world. which logically commenced with a *First Negation* when the Absolute One, which has no content (*Inhalt*), and is not even an 'empty' intellectual intuition (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) prior to the First Negation of ideas, denied its unity and externalized itself into the multiplicity of ideas. That initial negation, which established a difference between a 'this' and a 'that' (or what one called in Gnosticism the 'indivisible two') commenced a logical process by which the original 'this' and the 'that' produced by the Absolute Unity negated themselves in an open-ended process of 'negation' that generates the physical universe.<sup>188</sup> In that the 'this' and 'that' themselves were 'negated' (distinguished) from one another, they continued the process of division by means of further negation (separations) not only to generate the physical world but also to establishment of the physical conditions for the emergence of finite consciousness (finite spirit) in the midst of physical phenomena. With the emergence of finite consciousness, the process initiated by Absolute Spirit's 'First Negation' was complete because there is nothing that can be 'higher' than spirit/Spirit.

Once finite consciousness (that is, self-awareness) occurred, though, the logic of negation achieved the long historical process of emerging awareness not only in terms of knowledge of the world but, most importantly, in terms of the establishment of the conditions required for *the final goal of all of history*: the Second Negation, which can only occur in particular consciousness (finite spirit). This Second Negation consists in negating multiplicity to think/experience Absolute Oneness/Absolute Knowledge in consciousness, the only place where the Absolute One can experience Itself.

Unequivocally for the Hegelians, the necessary, transcendental condition of Absolute Oneness/Knowledge was '*proved*' not because it can be directly experienced in perception, which would be a contradiction. Rather, it was '*logically proved*' because they claim that finite consciousness experiences Absolute Knowledge and Absolute Knowledge cannot be generated by finite knowledge without violating the Principle

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187. On the divisible-I of Absolute Spirit and the divisible non-I of the material world, see Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 455–456.

188. Hegel describes this origin of Absolute Oneness in the *Phenomenology*: "Pure insight has [...] no content [*Inhalt*] within it because it exists for itself by negating everything in it; to faith, on the other hand, belongs content [*Inhalt*], but without insight [that is, pure consciousness] [...] [Faith] is, then, pure consciousness of essence, that is, of ordinary inwardness and is, therefore, thinking, which is frequently overlooked. The immediacy by which the essence is in faith consists in its object is essence, that is, pure thought. However, in so far as thinking enters consciousness or pure consciousness enters self-consciousness, it acquires the significance of a being-in-the-world that lies beyond consciousness. It is by means of this significance [of objectivity], which contains the immediacy and simplicity of *pure thinking* in *consciousness*, that the essence of faith falls out of thinking as *representation* and becomes a supersensible world, which is essentially an *other* to self-consciousness." Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 394.

of Sufficient Reason (*Satz vom zureichenden Grund*) according to which every effect must have a cause as great as the effect or else 'something can come from nothing.' Again, given that Absolute Knowledge is not only possible but has occurred (if not in the philosopher who claims to experience Absolute Knowledge, then, at the least, in the Christ event, according to Hegel), the meta-narrative of Double Negation *must be* the conditions that make it possible. Without these conditions of Double Negation, Absolute Knowledge would be impossible.<sup>189</sup>

The Right- and Left-Wings of Hegelianism distinguished themselves from one another by claiming that this Absolute Knowledge in a human being occurred exclusively in the Christ event, according to the Right-Wing, or inclusively to the extent that a philosopher could experience the same Absolute Knowledge as had the Christ, according to the Left-Wing.<sup>190</sup> Strauß' *universal, inclusive Christology in the LJ*, though, claimed that the occurrence of Absolute Knowledge is possible, universally, for all finite consciousness. He argued at the time, again on the basis of logic, that an idea never expresses itself in a single particular (Right-Wing Hegelian exclusive Christology) or among a few in the same set of particulars (Left-Wing Hegelian, partially, inclusive Christology) but in all particulars (Strauß' universally, inclusive Christology).<sup>191</sup>

In dramatic contrast, for Kant, by definition the necessary conditions of experience are limited to *finite* (!), conscious experience – explicitly rejecting anything remotely like "Absolute Knowledge." Beyond *immediate, yet transient, self-consciousness and our dependence on the ultimate 'givenness' of the universe*, there is nothing absolute about finite experience. This immediate, transient self-consciousness, which he called the soul and its experience of an indivisible, imperceptible unity of 'apperception,' is by no means absolute. Kant stresses that it is no enduring substance and is incapable of proof/disproof. He calls the soul and its apperception a 'regulative idea' (a necessary assumption) that is required as the condition of possibility for us as finite consciousness to experience a finite world.

We misapprehend the meaning of this idea [of 'infinite systematic unity' – *ens rationis ratiocinatae* or inferred reason of 'apperception'] if we regard it as the assertion or even as the assumption of a real thing, to which we may proceed to ascribe the ground of the systematic order of the world. On the contrary, what this ground which eludes our concepts may be in its own inherent constitution is left entirely undetermined: *the idea*

189. There is a profound difference, as I noted above, between employing the logic of 'necessary conditions of possibility,' as in the Kant's case, for understanding how there can be a finite consciousness that experiences a finite world and employing the logic of 'necessary conditions of possibility,' as in the Hegelians do, for claiming to prove *the absolute cause* of creation and the goal of history, that is, the achievement of Absolute Knowledge.

190. As I pointed out above on page 24, footnote 21, F.C. Baur took a position on the far Left-Wing of Hegelianism by maintaining an inclusive Christology that includes all Christians with proper spiritual understanding who make up the 'Body of Christ' in history.

191. See Strauß, *LJ*: 779–780. See as well, the final sentence of § 149, *ibid.*: 777 and "The Different Schools of Thought on Christology among the Hegelians" in *Streitschriften* III: 95–126.

is posited only as being the point of view from which alone that unity, which is so essential to reason and so beneficial to the understanding, can be further extended. In short, this transcendental thing is only the schema of the regulative principle by which reason, so far as lies in its power, extends systematic unity over the whole field of experience. The first object of such an idea is the 'I' itself, viewed simply as thinking nature or soul.<sup>192</sup>

Two pages later, Kant adds that it is inappropriate even to apply the notion of 'spirit' to the soul and its unified apperception:

No windy hypotheses of generation,<sup>193</sup> extinction, and palingenesis [transmigration] of souls will be permitted. The consideration of this object of inner sense will thus be kept completely pure and will not be confused by the introduction of heterogeneous properties. Also, reason's investigations will be directed to reducing the grounds of explanation in this field, so far as may be possible, to a single principle. All this will be best attained through such a schema, viewed as if it were a real being; indeed it is attainable in no other way. The psychological idea can signify nothing but the schema of a regulative concept. For were I to enquire whether the soul in itself is of spiritual nature, the question would have no meaning. In employing such a concept, I not only abstract from corporeal nature, but from nature in general, that is, from all predicates of any possible experience, and therefore from all conditions requisite for thinking an object for such a concept; yet only as related to an object can the concept be said to have a meaning.<sup>194</sup>

We must note carefully here this last qualification by Kant: "only as related to an object can the concept be said to have a meaning." In short, *Kant has delivered a fatal blow here to Fichte's dualism,<sup>195</sup> Schelling's Absolute Freedom, and Hegelian Absolute Knowledge before their respective positions were formulated.*

Kant is a 'Critical Idealist,' not a (Platonic) 'Transcendental Realist.'<sup>196</sup> Idealism is a schema of regulative (that is, assumed) requirements only for finite empirical perception of phenomena. Idealism cannot serve as anything like an absolute explanation or accounting for a dimension of 'things' independent of the empirical world of experience by finite transcendental consciousness *because of the limits to finite consciousness*. When dualism or an absolute capacity or absolute knowledge are offered to explain finite consciousness and its capacities, in Kant's terminology, they are *merely raptures (Schwärmerei) and by no means the conclusions of legitimate, metaphysical speculation.*

Nonetheless, Hegelianism claims to be 'science' (*Wissenschaft*) because it understands knowledge (*Wissen, Erkenntnis*) of phenomena to depend on the 'true' con-

192. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 709–710.

193. Such 'generation' includes Hegel's 'logic of Double Negation'.

194. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 711–712. See Kant's rejection of dualism at B 311–315.

195. Ernst Cassirer stresses that Kant's Critical Idealism involves no dualism. See Cassirer, *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1910): 392, 428, 430, 450–451, 455.

196. See the "Refutation of Idealism" in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* B 274–287. At A 378–379, Kant calls himself a 'skeptical idealist'. In *On a Discovery, whereby any new Critique of Pure Reason is to be made Superfluous by an Older One* (1790): AA VIII: 210, Kant employs the label 'critical idealism'. See as well, "Ergänzungen II," *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XXIX: 928.

tent (*Inhalt*) of the imperceptible idea of perceptible actual ‘representations’ (*Vorstellungen*). For the Hegelians, ‘representations’ are grounded in the imperceptible Idea/Concept of Absolute Knowledge that, ultimately, must lie behind all phenomena even when not consciously grasped. Absolute Knowledge is attributable only to the required, causal, transcendental Idea/Concept.

It is this conception of ‘science’ that Strauß took to be in ‘conflict’ with Church Doctrine in the *Glaubenslehre*. The conflict, though, is not a conflict about the ultimate ‘truth’ of Christian doctrine because Hegelianism understood itself to be re-covering/un-covering/dis-closing of the ‘truth’ of Christian doctrine ‘above’ the actual representations of the gospel narratives. Rather, *the conflict was over the status of the ‘representations’ (Vorstellungen) upon which Christian doctrine depended*. Traditional Personal Theism confused the ‘representations’ (the perceptible *Vorstellungen/ Formen*) of its scriptures to be the true content (*Inhalt*) of Church Doctrine whereas Hegelian epistemology and speculative metaphysics viewed knowledge content (*Inhalt*) generally to be independent of ‘representations.’ Knowledge gained from the text, in particular, consists in the imperceptible metaphysical ideas that lead ultimately to the Absolute Idea/Concept, which can be experienced only in Spirit, never (!) directly in representations (*Vorstellungen*) or ‘words’ of the text. Even though Strauß had come to reject the meta-narrative of Hegelianism, he remained an adherent of Hegelian epistemology, which is grounded on the difference between content (*Inhalt*) and representations (*Vorstellungen*) down to his writing of *Der alte und der neue Glaube*.

Hegelian ‘science’ drives Strauß’ understanding of myth as husk/kernel, which, in turn, allowed him in the *LJ* to view ‘speculative metaphysics’ as providing the ‘higher,’ spiritual meaning of the destroyed historical grounds for Personal Theism. It, especially, is the key to the understanding of Strauß’ universally inclusive Christology. *It is Hegelian ‘science,’ not the knowledge of ‘historical science,’ as Hartlich/Sachs claim, that is the motive and the content behind Strauß’ gospel criticism.*

### ‘Criticism’ and ‘Critique’

Another example of metaphor interference that can negatively influence one’s reading of Strauß is his use of the term ‘criticism’ [*Kritik*]. The German title of Strauß’ first life of Jesus is: *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined (Das Leben Jesu kritisch [!] betrachtet)*. Kant had said of the term ‘*kritisch*,’ which is not to be confused for ‘critique’ (*Kritik*), that ‘*kritisch*’ (‘criticism’) “ [...] confines itself to pointing out that in the making of the assertion something has been presupposed that is void and merely fictitious; and it thus *overthrows the theory by removing its alleged foundation without*

claiming to establish anything that bears directly upon the constitution of the object."<sup>197</sup> This is the sense in which Strauß employs the term *kritisch* in the *LJ*.

Strauß' terminology has nothing in common what Kant called 'critique' (*Kritik*) (for example in the title to his three *Critiques*: *Kritik* [!] *der reinen Vernunft*, *Kritik* [!] *der praktischen Vernunft*, and *Kritik* [!] *der Urteilskraft*). A careful distinguishing between Strauß' understanding of 'criticism' and Kant's notion of 'critique' will illuminate how little Strauß grasped of Kant – although Strauß' writings are saturated with references to and dismissive judgments about Kant.

Strauß views *kritisch* (criticism) in the Kantian sense, yes, as a 'destructive' method but not in the sense that it demonstrates the content of the gospels to be false. Rather, he undertakes a critical analysis of the gospels to demonstrate the indefensibility of treating the gospels as historical facts to serve as the foundation of Church Doctrine. However, only once one has *critically* demonstrated that they are mythical narratives (*historical, philosophical, or poetic*) can one undertake the task of restoring their dogmatic significance, which Strauß provides in the "Concluding Dissertation" of the *LJ*. In other words, *criticism* for Strauß is driven by the logic of dialectic: a negative '*thesis*' (although acknowledging that there are genuine historical elements in the gospels) with respect to the status of the gospel narratives as myths rather than factual, historical accounts (as maintained by Personal Theism) calls for the '*anti-thesis*' of Hegelian, speculative metaphysics and epistemology to demonstrate the genuine, common '*synthesis*' between traditional dogmatics and speculative truth.

However, *in contrast to 'destructive' criticism* in the sense of undermining the assumptions (not necessarily the content) of a point of view or of an argument, Kant takes '*critique*' (*Kritik*) to be *positive and constructive*. '*Critique*' is concerned with the imperceptible, transcendental (because not derived directly from phenomena) conditions of possibility that are necessary for finite conscious experience of phenomena. To be sure, as I pointed out above, the Hegelians (and in this respect, the Strauß of the *LJ* is included) appropriated Kant's 'critique' of transcendental conditions of possibility of experience, but they limited it to *the ultimate cause (!) that is required in order that there can be a conscious experience of Absolute Knowledge and achieve Absolute Freedom above sensuous nature*, which, the Hegelians claim, the Idea/Concept alone can possess.

The Hegelians (and Strauß) took Kant's *a priori* synthetic judgment to be concerned only with 'empty abstractions'<sup>198</sup> because, in the judgment of the Hegelians, they are not grounded in representations (actuality/*Wirklichkeit*). Their judgment of Kant is correct only to a limited degree that is, in the end, inconsequential. It is correct that, for Kant, not all concepts are directly derived *a posteriori* from

197. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* A 389.

198. See George Elliot trans.: 779: "We should thus have fallen back again to Kant's point of view, which we have[...] found unsatisfactory: for if the idea have no corresponding reality, it is an empty obligation and ideal."

representations/perception because some are *a priori* and are required assumptions. Nonetheless, those *a priori* elements not directly given in representations/perception serve as assumptions, *not to determine absolutely what the ultimate cause* that drives historical events (representations), vague and indefinite as they are, which for Hegel had to occur in order for there to be an experience of Absolute Knowledge. In other words, Kant's *a priori* assumptions do not ground a 'speculative' metaphysical 'logic of negation' (cunning of reason) that 'causes' the actual historical process regardless of historical particularities. Rather, Kant's *a priori* synthetic judgments don't blindly determine anything but are what are required in order for *finite thought* to experience and understand, particular, concrete representations. *In short, Hegelian speculative metaphysics and logic of negation are concerned with Absolute Knowledge. Kant's a priori synthetic judgments are concerned with the only experience that finite consciousness can have in light of the limits to reason: namely, particular, concrete representations (phenomena) in history.*

In *Metaphysik Mrongovius* we find "all concepts are acquired but not all come from the senses."<sup>199</sup> Some concepts are *a priori* synthetic judgments, which we acquire/learn only because they are required by appearances in order for us to experience the appearances. Yet, Kant then adds: "*Concepts presuppose representations of objects, and are abstracted from their characteristics, they cannot, therefore, be innate, but are acquired, or made, but this cannot happen other than through the faculty of the soul, which so operates here.*"<sup>200</sup> (emphasis added)

In short, *it is the Hegelians, as I pointed out above, who succumb to 'empty abstractions' because the representations that are supposed to ground their thoughts are inconsequential to the thought process itself. For Kant, representations are essential for thought because all thought ultimately arises out of and/or is in the service of representations.*<sup>201</sup> Again, "only as related to an object can the concept be said to have a meaning."<sup>202</sup> As a consequence, the Hegelians have no grasp of the significance of Kant's Copernican Turn that is 'critique' and not 'criticism.'<sup>203</sup>

Again, Strauß takes criticism to be a negative methodology that challenges the indubitable status of representations for dogmatic claims by turning myths into facts. However, treating the myths as myths, not facts, is no call for dismissing the gospels as false, according to Strauß. Nonetheless, Strauß does not apply the insights of Kant's

199. Kant, "Ergänzungen II, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XXIX: 949.

200. Kant, "Ergänzungen II, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XXIX: 949.

201. Hegel took Kant's philosophy to be 'weak' and 'barbarous' because it failed to place Absolute Spirit, Absolute Knowledge, and Absolute Freedom at the pinnacle of reason. See Hegel, *Glauben und Wissen* GW II: 287–288. As I present in Chapter 9, "Missing Aesthetic Judgment:" "VIII) On Hegel's Insistence that Kant's Reason is 'Weak,'" 911 ff., Hegel entirely distorts Kant's notion of aesthetic judgment so that he is incapable of grasping the significance of 'beauty' and the 'sublime' as illuminating the significance of beauty and moral culture (far from barbarous) and the sublime's infinite power even over nature.

202. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 711–712. See as well, Kant's rejection of dualism at B 311–315.

203. On Kant's 'Copernican Turn,' see the "Preface:" 47, n. 35

three 'critiques' (*The Critique of pure Reason*, *The Critique of Practical Reason*, and *The Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*) to religion, generally, and Christianity, specifically, as Kant does in his *Religion within the Limits of mere Reason*.

To the extent that Strauß in the *LJ* adheres to *Hegelian epistemology* and a *speculative and enthusiastic meta-narrative*, rather than Kant's transcendental reason and practical reason, he only generate 'criticism' of Kant's Copernican, not a 'critique.' Yet, it is already clear in *The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity* and explicit in the *Glaubenslehre* that Strauß came to realize that the Double Negation of the Hegelian meta-narrative contradicts the claim that 'representations' matter to knowledge even if they are claimed to be 'logically necessary.' For Hegel, 'representations' are merely accidental and indifferent moments for Absolute Knowledge. As of the end of the 1830s, Strauß struggled to find the 'positive' grounds for the restoration of traditional Church Dogmatics that he so confidently thought he possessed with Hegelian epistemology in the *LJ*.

By *The Life of Jesus Examined for the German People* (1864), Hegel's meta-narrative of Double Negation that was leading humanity to Absolute Knowledge was replaced by the notion of moral improvement of humanity. However, faith in moral improvement, according to Strauß, did not refer to the progressive moral improvement of the individual, which Hegel's moral and ethical theory denied, but to the species, as whole, which *appears* to come (at least indirectly through Strauß' friends) from Kant. However, Strauß embraced to the end Hegel's understanding of morality (heteronomous duty) and ethics (the curtailment of the fulfilment duty by the circumstances of one's life) from "The Moral View of the World" of the *Phenomenology*.<sup>204</sup> To be sure, he modified Hegel's 'Moral View of the World' with a 'genetic moral theory' in which moral development applied to the species identification of new moral principles in history, not the moral improvement of the individual.

As of *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (1872), Strauß' confidence in Hegelian epistemology's rendering value to concrete, historical events had also crumbled. Without the Idealism of 'true content' over against 'actual representations' and without having reexamined his inadequate grasp of Kant, he turned to a quasi-Reductionistic Materialism. This materialism reflected his confidence in the worth of history and offered Nominalism as a substitute for his lost Hegelian Absolute Idealism. Nonetheless, Strauß acknowledges that there are serious limitations to materialism.<sup>205</sup> In *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, human consciousness is taken to be material nature's turning

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204. See Hegel, *Phänomenologie*: "The Moral View of the World." GW III: 449–452 (Baillie trans.: 623–626). For a summary of Hegel's "The Moral View of the World," see Vol. II "Introduction:" "Hegel on 'I should, but I can't' in Contrast to Kant's 'If I should, I can':" 550 ff. and Chapter 7: "Practical Reason Elevates Theoretical Reason" the section "Hegel's Account of 'The Moral View of the World' is not Kant's Morality:" 727 ff.

205. See Strauß, "Ein Nachwort als Vorwort zu den neuen Auflagen meiner Schrift: *Der alte und der neue Glaube*" (Bonn: Verlag von Emil Strauß, 1873): 24 ff.

inward on itself in nature's onward push for improvement.<sup>206</sup> Humanity's 'culture of skill'<sup>207</sup> is combined by Strauß with the notion of the moral improvement of humanity as a species that takes moral progress to consist in the development of appropriate social rules for humanity's ever changing circumstances. However, Strauß' conviction that human agency is defined by sensuousness and self-interest clearly indicates that Strauß had no sense of Kant's notion of 'culture that promotes the (moral) will',<sup>208</sup> morally but not heteronomously!

### Neither Grace Nor Hegel's Cunning of Reason

As much as Strauß came to reject Hegel's meta-narrative, I will demonstrate that Strauß never jettisoned, Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" from the *Phenomenology of Mind/Spirit*.<sup>209</sup> Nonetheless, Strauß neither embraced Personal Theism's notion of grace nor Hegel's substitution of the 'cunning of reason'<sup>210</sup> for Personal Theism's notion of grace.

According to Hegel, the 'cunning of reason' [*List der Vernunft*] silently and unobtrusively functions in the background of all events to lead all actuality to the 'objective' truth of Absolute Knowledge and its reconciling unity.<sup>211</sup> Hegel's 'cunning of reason' is yet only another example of Hegel's historical Indifferentism. Not only do particular, concrete events ultimately have no significance, the 'true' significance of events occurs in spite of those or any other concrete events.

206. See Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 240.

207. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 431–432.

208. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 431–432.

209. Already in the 1835 *LJ*, Strauß employed Baur's criticism of Kant as a 'subjectivist' who embraced only 'empty abstractions' when it came to humanity's moral effort. Strauß had Baur's criticism from Baur's *Gnosticism* in 1835, but Baur formulated it even more powerfully in his *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung* of 1838. See the "Preface:" 51, n. 47.

210. Strauß ridicules Hegel's thesis of the 'cunning of reason' in the "Introduction" to the *Glaubenslehre* when he speaks of humanity's 'dark urge' that was 'yet aware of the right way' (see *Glaubenslehre* I: 21–22 and the "Introduction:" 89, n. 35) and when he compares Hegel's Spirit to Böhme's God, the Father, "not as already something, but only as a desire for something as the dark urge of self-revelation (see *Glaubenslehre* I: 488–489). He employs the expression of the 'cunning of reason' in his review of three works on the origin of the gospels wherein Strauß concludes by invoking Hegel's definition of the 'cunning of reason'. However, The conclusion Strauß draws in light of the 'one-sided' tendentiousness of the scholarship that by dictum (*Machtspruch*) prioritizes one gospel, the ambiguities and problems that arise by careful analysis of the gospels internally, as well as the untrustworthiness of external claims (e.g., Papias) is formulated by means of an alternative: one is left with either the 'cunning of malice' (*List des Argen*), which "leads to the undermining of faith" or the 'cunning of reason' (*List der Vernunft*), which "is the schooling of humanity away from the literal text to Spirit." See Strauß, "Schriften über den Ursprung des ersten kanonischen Evangeliums" in *Charakteristiken und Kritiken. Eine Sammlung zerstreuter Aufsätze aus den Gebieten der Theologie, Anthropologie und Aesthetik* (Leipzig: Verlag von Otto Wigand, 1839): 285.

211. See Hegel, "Introduction" to the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: GW XII: 45–46, 53 (Sibree trans.: 31–32, 38).

Strauß did supplement Hegel's "Moral View of the World" with a 'genetic' ethical principle<sup>212</sup> to account for humanity's dependence on new moral teaching to apply to its ever changing experience in the world.

The 'genetic' ethical principle here is that ever-new contexts of human agency require not only the retention of the moral insights (the *pre-figured*) of the 'great' ethicists of the past (here, he privileged Jesus but by no means placed Jesus at the pinnacle or even made him an exception) but also require the generating of new moral principles (the *con-figured* in conformity with the *pre-figured* insights) to guide human agency in its ever changing world. For this reason, he embraced a notion of the 'moral improvement' of humanity not as the ethical perfection of the individual in agreement with Hegel but as a species. As I will demonstrate, Strauß' 'scientific' view expressed at the end of his life in *Der alte und der neue Glaube* consisted of the conviction that physical laws govern experience and that humanity constitutes that location in the material order where nature has 'turned inward on itself' to consciousness, which along with living organisms itself is a product of natural causes according to Strauß, whereby nature continues its drive toward material progress.

### Strauß' Hegelianism Blocked Appreciation of Kant's Paradigm Revolution

Undoubtedly, Strauß' failure to initiate a revolution was also because of the particular trajectory of his own Hegelian, philosophical theology. However, Strauß never developed anything like a philosophical theology as an alternative to Hegel although he had the resources at his fingertips in Immanuel Kant to do so.

It is clear that in 1864 with his second life of Jesus, *The Life of Jesus Examined for the German People*, Strauß was, in fact, inspired by his close circle of friends in Heidelberg who called for a 'return to Kant.' All Hegelian language has long since disappeared, and Strauß' focus is on Jesus as a moral teacher whom Strauß portrayed by means of Kantian vocabulary, but not meaning.

Kant was distorted for Strauß by those upon whose judgment Strauß depended for his understanding of him. What I will describe as the '*pre-figured*' presentation that shaped Strauß' understanding of Kant (especially, F.C. Baur, Hegel, Schleiermacher, and Karl Daub) created a set of negative assumptions that effectively blocked Kant as a resource for him. I employ Strauß' reflections on Kant to illustrate how one always

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212. In his "Schleiermacher und Daub," Strauß refers to a 'genetic criticism' in ethics analogous to the 'genetic development' of gospel mythic accounts of the history of Jesus: "Had Schleiermacher [...] given a genetic criticism of ethics up to our day and traced its development from the Greco-Roman world through the Christian-Germanic world into the modern world: At the end, as little as at any individual point of the investigation along the way would the result have been pure destruction, but, rather, each subsequent stage of development would have absorbed the earlier one as a moment in itself, and so at the end, the criticism would have stood there as rich in ethical insights as Schleiermacher's stands there poorly [...]" "Schleiermacher und Daub." 30

commences with a pre-understanding of an author with the deciding issue being one's awareness (or lack of awareness) of the pre-understanding that has shaped what one claims to understand.

My positive engagement of Kant by no means ignores that most of his writing (the philosophical anthropology excepted), as well as Hegel's, is 'arid' and 'abstract.' However, examining Strauß' comments on Kant and examining the various sources for his reading of Kant, I believe, demonstrates the need for, and value of, 'going to Kant 'to encounter' him, not to 'counter him' – to this day. Despite the aridity and abstractness of his writing, one does not have to be a Kant scholar to grasp the importance of his insights.

An unfortunate consequence of the threat of censorship that drove Kant's need to present his insights veiled in the turgid vocabulary of the 'Academy,' which occurred, especially, with the writing of his *Religions within the Limits of mere Reason*. Kant has been taken by too many to be a standard for the prototype of erudition to be to write in an inaccessible style. Yet, Kant actually addressed the author's responsibility to her/his readers to encourage the reader's capacity of discernment because spoon feeding one's readers is an insult to their intelligence.:

Witty ideas [not reflecting and re-producing judgment] are thoughts shrouded in obscurity, which obscurity immediately dissipates [...] A witty idea does not need to be interpreted, because otherwise it becomes dull. The cause is surprise, when the mind is led to the meaning of the idea [...] A book, no matter how much reality it contains, will not please *if it does not conceal witty things under metaphorical expressions in a manner that the obscurity disappears by itself*. The reason for this is perhaps that the reader's powers of perception are also involved, and s/he can develop her/his capacities of discernment.<sup>213</sup>

Rather than intellectual opaqueness, precision of thought always requires the acquisition of the metaphors appropriate to the themes at hand. The 'kernels' of the metaphoric language in Kant's case reward the reader with an astonishing fresh insight into the human condition and every day, responsible agency "when one reaches the point at which 'the obscurity disappears by itself.'" In other words, the aim of precision writing is to encourage reflection on the part of the reader, not enhance the intellectual reputation of the author.

However, Strauß' own reading of Kant was narrowly *pre-figured* by the work of those who influenced him early on in his philosophical theology and moral reflections, and it is clear that he never undertook his own serious reading of Kant to any

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213. Kant, *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 874; Olms ed.: 25–26. Anticipating Ricoeur's creative *re-figuring* of an author's *con-figured* work, Kant writes: "If there is something in the product which animates unanimously through the whole, it is called spirit (*Geist*). A book may contain a great deal of wit, and be very entertaining but still be very far removed from spirit because wit is a kind of dainty work, which amuses, but need not come often, like sweets. Only true spirit calls for our own talents, and makes them similar to the original [spirit of an author's *con-figured* work]." *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1064; Olms ed.: 242.

degree like he had read others (for example, Baur, Schleiermacher, Schelling, Hegel, Daub, Spinoza, Jakob Böhme, etc.). Without a viable alternative, Strauß only had what even he acknowledged as an inadequate Reductionist Materialism as an alternative to Hegel.

For example, his materialism as expressed in *The Old and the New Faith* acknowledges a privileged status to consciousness in the material order. When he expresses his 'new faith' that consciousness is where nature 'turns inward on itself' to continue its onward progress,<sup>214</sup> his ignoring that consciousness adds elements to perception of the world that cannot be given in perception directly, results in his proclaiming a dogmatic dictum (*Machtspruch*) analogous to the Personal Theism that he rejected. In other words, Strauß' insists (without the availability of any proof) that consciousness must (!) be solely a product of material nature<sup>215</sup> violates the very Principle of Sufficient Reason (*Satz vom zureichenden Grund*) that 'something cannot come from nothing' that Strauß holds to so dearly. Consciousness is dependent upon matter, obviously, but in light of the fact that we only experience the effects of causes, not the causes directly, as well as consciousness involving teleology (establishing goals not given by nature) means that our causal explanations for consciousness will always remain conjectural, just as Kant pointed out.<sup>216</sup> How all this occurs, according to Strauß, is buried in the 'it must be so' logic of an 'is/ought' fallacy. Consciousness 'is' unequivocally experienced so that it 'ought' to have a material, causal explanation.

What follows in these two volumes on Strauß, then, is not merely an account of the context and an historical reader for the 1839 Zurich revolution sparked by David Friedrich Strauß' appointment to the University of Zurich. I take Strauß' work worthy of careful consideration for four primary reasons although I provide additional reasons, as well: 1) Strauß is important not only because of the unusual circumstance of a professor of theology causing a political revolution but also 2) because of the breadth, depth, and rigor of his gospel criticism in the *LJ* (1835) based on myth as 'husk' and 'kernel' as well as the 'genetic mythical principle.' 3) Furthermore, his extraordinary account of the history of Christian dogmatics in his *Glaubenslehre* (1841) demonstrates the inconsistencies and indefensibility internally to Christianity without the need to embrace an external, 'philosophical' point of view. Finally, 4) His epistemology and metaphysical reflections across his career that were initially fueled by Hegelianism, as exacting and thorough as they are and despite their diminishing influence on him, not only provide the occasion to follow a mind deeply shaped by his sources but also demonstrate what happens when one depends on the reading of others for one's

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214. See Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 240

215. See Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 168–171

216. Already so formulated in his *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens, or Essay on the Constitution and Mechanical Origin of the Entire Universe, treated in accordance with Newtonian Principles* (1755) AA I: 225–226. See the 'First Introduction' to Kant's *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA XX: 209; *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* AA IV, 544; and Volker Gerhardt, *Immanuel Kant. Vernunft und Leben* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2007): 312–314.

understanding – in Strauß’ case, the unfortunate portrayal of Immanuel Kant that he had from those who influenced him.

My thesis is that, by the end of his career, Strauß had no adequate alternative to replace his ‘speculative,’ Hegelian metaphysics. A close reading of his final work, *The Old and the New Faith*, proposes that Strauß by no means ended up a ‘mere’ materialist. In other words, he had not (!) contradicted Ralph Waldo Emerson’s claim that “Every materialist will be an idealist; but an idealist can never go backward to be a materialist.”<sup>217</sup>

In short, my goal is to reward the reader’s time not through mere ‘information transfer’ of *re-producing* judgment concerning Strauß’ intellectual odyssey (over which the accuracy and exhaustiveness can always be debated) but to trace Strauß’ epistemological and metaphysical trajectory as an exercise in *reflecting* judgment.<sup>218</sup> This project is a demonstration of the consequences that occur when clever thinkers (already the case with Johann Gottlieb Fichte, but also Schelling, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Daub, and Baur, not to speak of Nietzsche) distorted and warped Kant’s Critical Idealism. *Status and prestige is no substitute for careful and informed scholarship.* Already at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> C, there was an alternative limb available on which to crawl even if it was ignored by Strauß in the 19<sup>th</sup> C!

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217. Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The Transcendentalist:” 87.

218. On the difference between *reflecting* and *re-producing* judgment, see the “Introduction:” 86, n. 26.