

Chapter 6: Grand Narratives of Theoretical Reason Nullify Practical Reason

Nullify Practical Reason

Chapter Overview

Following an examination of Hegel's notions of 'theoretical' and 'practical' reason, I contrast Hegel's 'theoretical' Spirit' with Kant's 'theoretical reason' by first addressing the theme of 'critique' along with an account of Strauß' own shift in metaphysics in the *Glaubenslehre* from Hegel's cataphatic/apophatic circular metaphysics to a linear, historical metaphysics based on Spinoza and Böhme. I then turn to an examination of the meaning of 'Absolute Knowledge' for Hegel and the early Strauß. This is accomplished by addressing a) Hegel's anthropomorphic analogy, b) his 'flight of the dove in a vacuum, and c) a contrasting of Hegel's/ Strauß' Absolute Knowledge with Kant's 'reflecting judgment.' The theme of 'reflecting judgment' constitutes the bridge to Chapter 7's investigation of the meaning of 'practical' reason in Hegel and Strauß. The chapter includes an 'Addendum: On 20th C 'Critique' and the 'End of Metaphysics'"

Strauß maintained in the *Glaubenslehre* that "the criticism of Church Doctrine is its history,"¹ which he understood as its internal faults eliminate any need for an 'external,' philosophical perspective for its collapse. The same may be said of his own life project. Rather than Kant needing to be invoked as an *external* perspective on Strauß' work, an internal *criticism* of Strauß arises within his own corpus once it is recognized that, although he himself embraced certain Kantian themes as of 1864, he, clearly, never undertook the task of a serious investigation of Kant as he had, for example, of Böhme, Spinoza, Baur, Hegel, Schelling, Schleiermacher, and Daub but remained satisfied with a general, 'cultural' understanding of Kant that 'everyone' took to be Kantianism. In other words, his own efforts at finding a philosophical framework for his understanding of the human condition collapse from within not because he ignored Kant but precisely because he claimed allegiance, in part, to Kant without a *rigorous* understanding of him. He wrote in the "Foreword" to his *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History*, a year after the publication of the *Life of Jesus Examined for the German People* in which Strauß found inspiration, in part, from Kant's ability to contribute to the 'religion of humanity:'

1. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 71. Already in "Schleiermacher und Daub," Strauß pointed out that [...] "*the true critique of a thing [can] only lie in its history.*" Strauß, "Schleiermacher and Daub and Their Significance for Theology in our Age" ("Schleiermacher und Daub in ihrer Bedeutung für die Theologie unserer Zeit") in *Charakteristiken und Kritiken* (Leipzig: Verlag von Otto Wigand, 1839): 30.

Today it is with Schleiermacher's theology exactly as it was sixty years ago with Kantian philosophy. While true scholarship had already moved forward with Fichte and Schelling [McG: Note the absence of Hegel] to deepen and develop the principle established by Kant, *Kantian philosophizing* had spread abroad, had entered general consciousness, and had become the average wisdom of the era.² (emphasis added)

An 'internal' critique, in contrast to an internal criticism, of Strauß' work requires doing what he failed to do by undertaking a careful examination of Kant's theoretical and practical reason. This current chapter examines Strauß' understanding of theoretical reason. Chapter 7 looks at Strauß' understanding of practical reason.

Hegel and Strauß on 'Theoretical Reason'

Theoretical and practical reason, according to Hegel, are both activities of finite spirit subordinate to Absolute Spirit. (Hegel's God) However, their purposes are different. According to Hegel, theoretical reason is the contemplation (Plato's θεωρία, *theoria*)³ of abstract Spirit whereas practical reason is concerned with concrete desires and appetites that drive agency in the world.⁴ Consequently, for Hegel, theoretical reason ultimately originates from the single, *a priori* synthetic judgment, which is Absolute Spirit⁵ that is knowable by theoretical reason. Absolute Spirit is *synthetic* because it *must be an ultimate Oneness* out of which all difference arises. Absolute Spirit initiates the diairesis (διαίρεσις),⁶ that is, the distinguishing between 'this' and 'that,' which dialectically generates a world of appearances in which practical reason (ethics) is doomed to failure because of nature's freedom limiting the individual's freedom.

According to Hegel, although theoretical reason commences *experientially* as a bottom-up activity of finite reason that begins with what are merely 'apparently,' independent objects as 'representations,' theoretical reason is concerned with the true 'content'/'idea' of any and all 'representations' (*Form*). The 'true content' of representations is *the* Concept or Absolute Spirit. Theoretical reason's aim is not understanding of particulars but the ultimate *causal explanation* of all 'that is.' Theoretical reason,

2. Strauß, *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History*, trans. by Leander Keck (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977): 4.

3. Hegel takes the reflecting judgment of theoretical reason to be 'contemplation' in Plato's sense of *theoria* (*Republic* 511c: θεωρία, *theoria*), which employs dialectic to contemplate the Absolute Good 'above Being' (*above unchanging ideas*) (*Republic* 509b: ἐπίκεινα τῆς οὐσίας). On Plato's notion of contemplation (θεωρία, *theoria*), see: 24, n. 7.

4. See Hegel on practical reason as the concern of the 'lower appetites' of self-interest, imagination, and wishful thinking in the "Preface:" 47, n. 32 NOTE: Absent is autonomous freedom!.

5. On Hegel's sole *a priori* Concept, see in the "Preface:" 61 and below 718, n. 245.

6. On diairesis (διαίρεσις), see Chapter 3: "Academic Controversy:" the section "Academic Controversy Based on Criticism (*diairesis*):" 219 ff.

according to Hegel, is 'scientific' in that is Absolute Knowledge of the 'true' content (*Inhalt*) of 'what is'.

Theoretical reason for Hegel, then, is *metaphysically* a top-down, causal account of 'reality' (the *Reelle*) on the basis of absolute 'ideality' (the *Ideelle*). It is not 'representations' (*Form*), which are particular phenomena, that govern 'truth' but universal 'ideas' (*Inhalt*). The 'philosopher' is able to discern the difference.⁷ 'Representations' are merely 'place holders' in actuality (*Reelle/Realität/Wirklichkeit*) that are what anchor the dialectical Double Negation that is 'becoming'. By serving as the anchor to the 'becoming' of Absolute Spirit, representations are taken by Hegel to insure that Absolute is no mere 'empty idea'. The combination of representations (*Form*) and ideal content (*Inhalt*) are what Hegel means by 'science'. In other words, the function of actuality (the *Reelle*) is that it assures that theoretical reason's ideas are not 'empty abstractions.'

Theoretical reason, according to Hegel, has one capacity that is superior to all others: the capacity of reflecting judgment. He takes his definition of reflecting judgment from Kant: the search for the concept under which a set of phenomena are subsumed in order to understand them.⁸ However, Hegel turns the focus of reflecting 180° from Kant's focus. For Hegel, reflecting judgment's sole concern is the grasping of the single, *a priori* synthetic judgment required for the causal explanation of all 'that is.'⁹ All other synthetic judgments are *a posteriori* in accordance with the 'negative' logic of dialectic. The single, *a priori* synthetic judgment that reflecting judgment grasps is Absolute Spirit. Finally, theoretical reason is the segue to Absolute Freedom for finite consciousness. Absolute Freedom is above all limitations, pain, and suffering in the world. However, for Hegel, the cunning of reason, silently working in the deep background of all reality of the appearances, ensures that Absolute Spirit's goal of Self-awareness is achieved regardless of its recognition (or non-recognition) by finite consciousness.¹⁰

In contrast, practical reason, according to Hegel, is a finite, top-down, subjective concern with teleological, 'subjective interests' that are the self-created representations of its agency. Practical reason's aim is concrete agency in the world. Practical reason, therefore, is 'subjective' for three reasons. *First*, as the case with theoretical reason, practical reason is subjective because *it is 'limited' to understanding the world in*

7. On Hegel's claim that the philosopher is one who distinguishes 'truth' from 'falsehood,' see Chapter 1: "Methodology:" 148, n. 141.

8. On Kant's distinction between reflecting (*reflektierende*) and re-producing (*bestimmende*) judgment, see the "Introduction:" 86, n. 26.

9. Hegel takes the reflecting judgment of theoretical reason to be 'contemplation' in Plato's sense of *theoria* (θεωρία, *theoria*) (*Republic* 511c), which employs dialectic to contemplate the Absolute Good 'above Being' (*Republic* 509b: ἐπίκεινα τῆς οὐσίας). On Plato's notion of contemplation (θεωρία, *theoria*), see 24, n. 7.]

10. On the 'cunning of reason,' see the "Preface:" 89, n. 48; the "Introduction:" 89, n. 35; Chapter 1: "Methodology:" 168, n. 210; and Chapter 5: "Traces of an Intellectual Crisis:" 608, n. 182.

and through the imagination,¹¹ not reason which is ‘above’ understanding (see Plato’s discussion of ‘understanding’ and its relationship to ‘imagination’ in the Simile of the Line¹²). Second, it is subjective because *it is governed by personal, teleological interests in the world, not the ‘truth’ of ideas*. Third, it is subjective because *it is anchored in the ‘maxim of arbitrariness’* by means of which it capriciously declares its principles to be universal. Practical reason’s principles, according to Hegel, then, are *metaphysically* a bottom-up, *relative* construction of individual and social values. Finally, practical reason only exercises a restricted, relative freedom because nature and its social conditions limit the realization of subjective interests. Practical reason achieves Absolute Freedom only when it grasps that its ultimate purpose as an agent is to be ‘the point of indifference’ of the Second Negation, which eclipses all phenomena.

According to Hegel, ‘theoretical Spirit’ (or theoretical reason) and ‘practical spirit’ (or practical reason) both suffer from the same ‘shortcoming’ (*Mangel*), according to Hegel, in that both assume

[...] the apparent separation of the subjective from the objective [...] and that the unity of these opposite determinations is to be produced first, – a defect that lies in the nature of Spirit because *Spirit is not an existing, immediately completed thing but rather that which produces Itself, the pure activity*, the abolition of the conditions of the subjective and the objective that Spirit has made for Itself is the prerequisite of the opposition of the subjective and the objective.¹³ (emphasis added)

The dialectical structure that governs all ‘that is’ takes Absolute Spirit to be the sole *a priori*, Absolute Unity (absolute synthesis) of ‘pure reason’¹⁴ ‘elevated’ above the ‘shortcomings’ of ‘sundered consciousness’ (individual subjectivity), which is perception in the world:¹⁵

Spirit as alienation from Itself has its existence in the world of development [Bildung]; but because the whole [McG: that is the ‘world of development/process’] has been alienated from Spirit Itself, the unactual¹⁶ [unwirkliche] world of pure consciousness or thought [pure thought] stands beyond the world of development. The content [Inhalt] of pure consciousness

11. Especially for Hegel, Kant’s practical reason is subjective because Kant explicitly recognizes that although there are ‘ideas of reason’ ‘above’ understanding, the ‘ideas of reason’ are regulative, not constitutive ideas. Because Kant’s ideas of reason are not given directly in experience, they are quintessentially ‘empty ideas’ according to Hegel.

12. See the opening paragraph of the “Foreword:” 19, n. 1.

13. Hegel, “Addendum” to the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaft* (1830) GW X: 237–238.

14. See Hegel, “Glauben und Wissen:” GW II: 304–305 and Hegel’s discussion of ‘pure reason’ as Absolute Unity/synthesis in “Reason’s Certainty and Reason’s Truth” of the *Phänomenologie* GW III: 178–185 (Baillie: 272–280).

15. See Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 184–185 (Baillie: 280).

16. For Hegel, the ‘actual’ is perceptible representations (*Form*) and the ‘true’ is the imperceptible content (*Inhalt*) of Spirit.

is pure thought, thinking is its absolute element. However, because thought is first an element of this world, pure consciousness has only its thoughts, but it does not yet think them or know that they are thoughts; rather, they are for it in the form of the imagination. [Finite] consciousness steps out of actuality [*Wirklichkeit*] into pure consciousness, but it is itself still in the sphere and definiteness of actuality [*Wirklichkeit*]. Sundered consciousness [*zerrissenes Bewußtsein*] is in itself only the self-sameness of pure consciousness for us, not for itself. It is, therefore, only the immediate elevation, not yet completed In Itself, and has its opposite principle [McG: perception of representations as development], through which it is conditioned, still in itself, without having become master of it through mediated movement. Therefore, the essence of [McG: 'pure'] thought does not apply to sundered consciousness but only as an essence in the form of the abstract in-itself, but in the form of a common actuality [*Gemeinwirklichen*], an actuality [*Wirklichkeit*] that has only been elevated into another element without having lost in it the determinateness of an unthought actuality [*Wirklichkeit*].¹⁷

As the finite, synthetic unity of all distinction between subjective consciousness and objective perception, the individual employs its 'theoretical Spirit' in the bottom-up activity of individual, abstract consciousness. 'Theoretical Spirit' starts with the investigation of phenomena by distinguishing 'this' from 'that' as 'thesis' and 'anti-thesis' of diairesis (διαίρεσις) to then identify the 'idea,' that is, "the [intelligible] form of the remembered, subjective, general, necessary and reasonable"¹⁸ that is shared between an individual subject (consciousness) and its perceptions. In short, 'thinking' is the abstract application of *the synthesis of finite 'thought'* that processes perceptions/representations. Therefore, according to Hegel, absent the apparent separation that is sundered consciousness, the subjective and the objective, the 'idea' is merely 'empty abstraction.'

Hegel proceeds to explain in the "Addendum" to the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaft* that 'practical spirit' in contrast to 'theoretical spirit,' is concerned with the achievement of teleological goals in the *external* world whereas 'theoretical spirit' is concerned with a process *internal* to consciousness.

Practical spirit takes the opposite starting point; it does not begin, as the [McG: finite] theoretical spirit does, from the apparently independent object [McG: bottom-up], but from its purposes and interests [McG: top-down], that is, from subjective determinations of finite consciousness, and only proceeds to make these into an objective reality. In doing this, [McG: finite] practical spirit reacts just as much against the one-sided subjectivity of self-consciousness closed in on itself as [McG: infinite] theoretical spirit does against consciousness dependent on a given object. Theoretical and practical Spirit, therefore, integrate each other precisely because they are distinguished from each other in the manner indicated. This difference, however, is not absolute, because [McG: infinite] theoretical Spirit also has to do with Its own determinations, with thoughts as a top-down dialectic; and conversely, *the purposes of the rational will are not something belonging to the particular subject, but something that exists In and for Itself.* Both kinds of Spirit are forms of

17. Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 391 (Baillie: 549).

18. Hegel, "Addendum" to the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaft* (1830) GW X: 237.

reason; because *in both theoretical and practical spirit*, although differently, *that in which reason consists is produced: a unity of the subjective and the objective* [McG: a unity always and already achieved by Absolute Spirit, not independently by theoretical and practical spirit themselves].¹⁹ (emphasis added)

When it comes to his criticism of Kant, there are two core themes for Hegel: empty ideas and mere subjectivity. Kant's ideas are 'empty' because they are merely 'subjective constructions,' and his philosophy is 'subjective' because he 'fails to acknowledge' the objectivity of Absolute Spirit. The latter, subjectivity, Kant conceals by his 'purported' humility that insists upon recognizing the 'limits to reason.' Hegel writes of abstract subjectivity closed in upon itself²⁰ in his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*:

[When it comes to Kant's abstract subjectivity], [...] the [McG: subjective] I [is] absolutely idealizing, as for which all difference, determination, content is abolished and [determined] as one set only by itself. [Abstract subjectivity is the] determining 'I am,' and only I am it as this individual, as the immediate self, as I who am immediately. All content has an immediate relation to me, i.e. Being, and I am it as singleness, as the relation of negativity to itself. That which is established by me is, as set apart from me, as the negated, which is only set [by me]. I am thus the immediate negativity. Thus I, this excluder, am the affirmative of all, good because I am immediately – i.e., according to my feelings, opinions, according to the arbitrariness and randomness of my sensation and volition –. *All objective content, law, truth, duty, disappears for me, I acknowledge nothing, nothing objective, no truth; God, the infinite is to me a beyond, kept away from me. I alone am the positive, and no content is valid in and for itself, it has no more affirmation in itself, but only in so far as I set it; the true and the good is only my being convinced, and to the fact that something is good, only this my being convinced, this my recognition belongs. In this ideality of all determinations I alone am the real.*²¹

Having shut the individual within its subjective self, Hegel takes Kant's rejection of any attempts to speak of an objective Absolute (as God, Spirit, Knowledge, and Freedom) as unwarranted fancies beyond the limits to reason. Hegel continues:

19. Hegel, "Addendum" to the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaft* (1830) GW X: 237. The italicized clause underscores Hegel's Absolute Idealism that 'ideas' exist 'in and for themselves' and are only 'recollected' in a Platonic sense. Note the thundering silence with respect to Kant's notion of autonomous, creative freedom that is the core of Kant's 'practical reason.'

20. F.C. Baur equated Kant and Schleiermacher with this Hegelian notion of abstract subjectivity closed in upon itself: "[...] all objective content disappears, only what is established out of myself is valid, I alone am positive, real [*Reale*]. From this perspective, the highest is not truth, not knowledge of God but objective content [*Inhalt*] has disappeared into formal subjectivity. No religion is possible on the basis of this contentless [*inhaltslosen*] perspective because I am the affirmative. All content [*Inhalt*], agency, and life comes from me; I have only a dead, empty God, a so-called highest essence, and this emptiness, this representation remains only subjective and never comes to true objectivity." See Baur, *Gnosis*: 666–667.

21. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* GW XVI: 181–182.

This point of view [of Kantian abstract subjectivity] now first presents itself as that of humility, and this humility consists in the fact that the I excludes the infinite, knowledge and cognition of God from itself, renounces it and determines itself as finite against it. However, this humility refutes itself and is, rather, arrogance because I exclude just the true from me, so that I as this one in this world am only the affirmative and the in and for itself existing, against which everything else disappears. *True humility would rather renounce itself [...] and recognize only the true [Absolute Spirit] and that which exists in and for Itself as the affirmative.* On the other hand, false humility, by recognizing the finite as the negative, limited, makes itself simultaneously the only affirmative, infinite and absolute: I, this one, am alone the only essential being, i.e. I, this finite, am the infinite. The infinite as otherworldly is only set by me [...] Because knowledge of something higher falls away and only the subjective emotion, the desire remains, nothing objectively common unites individuals, and, in the arbitrary diversity of their feelings, they are hostilely directed against each other with hatred and contempt.²² emphasis added)

These are by no means new themes for Hegel here in the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*. They are the core themes of his article "Faith and Knowledge or the Philosophy of Subjective Reflection in its Comprehensive Form Found in Kantian, Jacobian, and Fichtean Philosophy."²³ Strauß refers to this article in his response to the criticisms of his *LJ* in Pamphlet III of his *Streitschriften*²⁴ and in his article on "Schleiermacher and Daub."²⁵

Hegel presented a formulation of his definition of 'theoretical reason's 'synthesis' in distinction from 'practical reason's 'analytic' in his "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" of 1802 and maintained it across his career. 'Synthesis' is the identification of the unity (idea) in common to multiplicity (a set of phenomena) that consciousness accomplishes by dialectic. Here in the "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten," he defines Kant's 'moral law' as a maxim of subjective arbitrariness (constructivism):

[...] [W]hat Kant recognizes very well, as the one who has presented the[...] abstraction of the concept in its absolute purity, is that practical reason lacks all the material of law, and that it can make nothing more than make its supreme law a *maxim of arbitrariness* the form [representation] of appropriateness [*Tauglichkeit*]. A maxim of arbitrariness has a content [*Inhalt*] of abstraction, and includes a determinateness in itself; pure will, on the other hand, is free of the determinations of particularities. The absolute law of practical reason is to raise these particular determinations into the form of pure unity, and the formulation of this determinateness is the law [...]. However, the matter [*Materie*] of the maxim remains what it is, a determinateness or particularity; and *the generality which grants it admission into the form is thus an absolute, analytic unity*; and if the unity granted

22. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* GW XVI: 182–183.

23. See Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen oder die Reflexionsphilosophie der Subjektivität in der Vollständigkeit ihrer Formen als Kantische, Jacobische und Fichtesche Philosophie" (1802) in *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*, F.W.J. Schelling and G.W.F. Hegel, eds., I/1 (1802): GW II: 287–433.

24. Strauß, (1837), *Streitschriften* III: 149

25. Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 126.

to it is expressed purely as what it is, in a proposition, then the proposition is an analytic and a tautology.²⁶ (emphasis added)

For Hegel, Kant's "principle of a universal legislation of the law" of practical reason is an 'analytical' generalization from particulars, and Hegel claims that a generalization from particulars *can never result in an [absolute] moral law*.

According to Hegel, 'theoretical reason's' abstract content [*Inhalt*] is an 'idea' of 'pure reason,' 'practical reason's' 'abstract content' [*Inhalt*] is a capricious, subjective *construction*, a 'maxim of arbitrariness.' Practical reason variably elevates an analytical maxim to be a tautological (I say it, so it is so), absolute moral law.²⁷

I address in greater detail Hegel's claims for 'practical reason' in Chapter 7. However, for my purposes here, it is important to present succinctly just what Hegel means by 'pure reason' (Absolute Spirit), 'theoretical reason' (bottom-up thought that is grounded in but recollects/re-members an 'idea' of Absolute Spirit as the 'true' synthesis of all representations), and 'practical reason' (top-down, arbitrary, analytical, and tautological declaration of a 'law' as a subjective, 'arbitrary maxim'). *According to Hegel, 'pure reason' In-Itself is Absolute Spirit's 'thought' without the imagination; 'theoretical reason' is 'true' thought that identifies the 'idea' of Absolute Spirit that is the 'correct' synthetic unity of in the midst of the dialectical differences that arise in the imagination; and 'practical reason' is the activity of the imagination to generate a law by means of the 'maxim of arbitrariness' (not an 'idea' of Absolute Spirit as with 'theoretical reason') to govern finite consciousness' agency in the world.*

When it comes to 'pure,' 'theoretical,' and 'practical' reason, the only thing that Hegel and the early Strauß share with Kant are their labels. They take their own 'dead metaphors' (concepts) to exhaust the meaning of *what are in Kant 'living metaphors.'* *What now follows demonstrates the narrow, anachronistic, and vicious hermeneutical circle that shapes their reading of Kant's far broader, open-ended philosophical reflections.*

I examine Hegel's 'theoretical Spirit' and contrast it with Kant's 'theoretical reason' by means of two themes: I. Critique and II. Absolute Knowledge.

I. Critique

Kant's Critique is Discernment of Conditions for Understanding

As necessary and valuable as such an *analytical, a posteriori* criticism is (and Kant, too, acknowledged its value), 'criticism' is far narrower than Kant's 'critique'. By

26. Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 460.

27. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 460.

'critique' Kant means the investigation of the *a priori* conditions that are required in order for a set of phenomena to be experienced, whatsoever.

Plato and Hegel/Strauß take reason to be 'absolute' whereas Kant takes reason to be a deduction drawn from finite experience in the world. In short, Kant defends neither Plato's system of eternally unchanging ideas nor any form of Hegelian, absolute, meta-ontological Absolute Spirit as the alpha and omega of causal explanation of history. Kant's concern with intellectual capacities in general (and reason in particular) is that they are required in order to understand finite experience in the world. Kant says:

We count three abilities among the higher powers of cognition: understanding, judgment, and reason. These three are manifested in the three propositions of the syllogism of reason (*Satz des Vernunftschlusses*). Understanding is the faculty of the rule, *major propositio*; judgment is the faculty of the *subsumptio* under the rule, *minor propositio*; reason is the conclusion, where I apply to the given case what the rule says in general.²⁸

There is nothing said here about humanity's cognitive capacities as justification for invoking an eternal order of 'Being' above 'Becoming' as the case with Plato or as justification for embracing a meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit as the case with Hegel. Humanity's finite, transcendental capacities are required not as a source of ultimate explanation but as the conditions for there to be conscious, finite experience in the world.

Given that we don't experience 'things-in-themselves' but only their appearances (and NOT, originally, as formed images), *what is most certain* (given our experience of appearances!) is not any judgment we might draw about the 'object' of investigation. Rather, we have *certainty* only with respect to whatever conditions and capacities are required in order to experience the appearances of the 'object' of investigation as we do. Remove these conditions and capacities, and we cannot experience.

In *Metaphysik Mrongovius* Kant distinguishes between dogmatic and critical 'science':

A method is dogmatic when I take indemonstrable grounds to be the basis of knowledge upon which I construct other knowledge.

A method is critical when I investigate the grounds themselves with respect to their manner of formation – with respect to the mental potency from which they arise and according to their possibility of how they could arise *a priori*.²⁹

Succinctly, Kant says in *Metaphysik Mrongovius*: "*Critical method is not concerned with knowledge itself or its object but with understanding.*"³⁰ (emphasis added) In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant pointed out that "The dogmatic solution is [...] not only uncertain, but impossible. The critical solution, which allows of complete

28. Kant, *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1036; Olms ed.: 209.

29. Kant, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XXIX: 938.

30. Kant, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XIX: 939.

certainty [because it identifies what is *required* for understanding] does not consider the question objectively, but in relation to the foundation of [the conditions required for] knowledge [...].”³¹

For that reason, it is not objective but [universally] subjective. When I assume a principle in philosophy, I must be able to provide evidence of it [*muß ich es erst bewiesen haben*]. If I am unable to provide evidence [*kann ich nicht beweisen*], it is questionable and of no use. *If it contains a contradiction, I am unable to use any knowledge drawn from it because its metaphysics takes us beyond experience, and I am unable to test a the philosophical principle.* When it comes to this form of metaphysics, critique is most crucial [...] *To the extent that metaphysics is constructed on the basis of critique, it safeguards us from error.* Consequently, critique is a bulwark in religion against all speculative doubts [...] [...] When I separate pure knowledge of reason from empirical knowledge in the science of understanding, this [separated] collection is a metaphysics of [... the science of reason]. It is incredibly useful in science to distinguish knowledge of reason from empirical knowledge in order all the more clearly to see mistakes. *Metaphysics is philosophy's spirit. Metaphysics is related to philosophy as wine spirits [spiritus vini] is to wine. It refines our elementary concepts and makes it easier for us to understand all sciences. In short, metaphysics is the greatest culture of the human mind.*³² (emphasis added)

Kant is not saying here that one's philosophical principles must be capable of a *posteriori* or a *priori* 'proof'. He commences with 'assumptions' that are *required* for theoretical and practical reason to be possible *in this world*,³³ not with an insistence on absolute, logical necessity as the case with Hegel, and says that one must provide evidence both perceptible (empirical) and imperceptible (metaphysical) for one's philosophical assumptions. One must deduce them out of the relationalities within the appearances of experience. Furthermore, neither the perceptible nor the imperceptible 'evidence' may involve contradiction. Otherwise, there can be no certainty – although non-contradiction in itself is no guarantee of certainty. One's deductions must fit into the entire 'architectonic' of reason.³⁴

For example, the Copernican solar system's substitution of a heliocentric for a geocentric assumption is incapable of proof merely on the basis of a *posteriori* appear-

31. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 512.

32. Kant, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XXIX: 939–940.

33. See, for example, Kant's rejection of Johann Georg Sulzer's claim that one day there will be a proof for the existence of God and the afterlife in *Critique of Pure Reason* B 769–770. Kant also recognizes that there will also never be any disproof of God and the afterlife. For transcendental consciousness the only issue here is how God and the afterlife function for the furthering of theoretical and practical reason *in this world*, not as a motivation for one's moral effort in this life for fear over God's judgment in the afterlife.

34. See Section 3: "The Architectonic of Pure Reason" of "The Transcendental Method" in the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 860–879.

ances because it is 'contrary to perceptible experience.'³⁵ There is no position that one can take on this planet that the sun doesn't 'appear' to circle the earth. What one 'empirically experiences,' however, is precisely a set of appearances, not the sun in-itself, the earth in-itself, or the imperceptible, causal relationality between them. Although empirical appearances alone cannot guarantee adequate understanding, understanding of the empirical appearances requires that the concepts used to make sense of them not be incompatible with the appearances – again, a key difference with Hegel, who maintained that truth of even false, *sensible perception* is the idea of *intellectual perception that is 'appropriate' to them*, which effectively eliminates representations of having any effect on 'truth.'³⁶

When it comes to the appearances of the Copernican system, then, they can be accounted for by two different philosophical assumptions: dogmatic or critical. Kant claims that, whichever assumption I take, I must demonstrate not only its consistency with the empirical appearances but also with the imperceptible *a priori*, coherent, metaphysical, lawful elements that ground understanding. In other words, although the starting and ending point of all reflection is appearances, understanding of appearances requires a 'metaphysics' that must be *added to* the appearances, which, in turn, must be compatible with the appearances for proper understanding. It is this metaphysics that constitutes the required, imperceptible, yet internally consistent, 'architectonic' of lawful order³⁷ to adequately account for the appearances. Copernicus (as well as the Islamic world) provided the imperceptible (hence, metaphysical) mathematics that demonstrated the consistency of the heliocentric system. Without the imperceptible metaphysics of mathematics, though, the appearances are accounted for only by a mere aggregate of indemonstrable, contradictory, dogmatic principles. "*In short, metaphysics is the greatest culture [which is concerned with the cultivation of the universal capacities] of the human mind.*"

A bit later Kant adds:

Therefore, it was, to be sure, necessary to examine the capacity of understanding, its scope, limits, and barriers as well as to find a benchmark or criteria of truth according to which one can demonstrate the validity of such pure³⁸ concepts, which correspond to no object in experience. Were they to be derived from concepts in experience they, correctly, would raise doubt. The task of examining the capacity of understanding] is the business of critical philosophy.³⁹

35. See McGaughey, "The Incomplete Copernican Revolution in Popular Legend, the Natural Sciences, and in Practical Reason (Morality)." <https://criticalidealism.org/incomplete-copernican-revolution-27-october-2016/>

36. Hegel claims in the "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" that "only philosophy can determine if something is a subjective opinion or objectively true" (GW II: 511) and it is possible that the sensible form can "fully lose its truth" (GW II: 516–517).

37. See the methodological conclusion to the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 860–879.

38. On Kant's meaning of a 'pure' concept, see: 558, n. 109.

39. Kant, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XXIX: 954–955.

Analytical, *a posteriori* criticism of empirical phenomena *presupposes* everything involved in transcendental critique of the conditions of possibility and capacities upon which it depends. Critique is *a priori* and *synthetic* – to be sure, distinct (but never separated) from *a posteriori*, *analytical criticism*. In other words, Strauß' notion of *a posteriori* criticism (as well as Foucault's – see below) presupposes the *a priori*, imperceptible conditions and capacities of the human mind that make it possible for the historian to encounter the empirical phenomena, in the first place, which s/he then analyses *a posteriori*. A *a posteriori* critique is always shrouded with doubt because it has no foundation other than a dogmatic dictum – even before we begin to consider the Heideggerian notion of the Being-of beings (and possible, naturalistic Negative Theology⁴⁰) of concealed possibilities in all manifest actualities.

Evidenced by his focus on 'understanding' as the crucial moment of dis-closure of possibilities in §32 of *Being and Time*⁴¹ and the failure of science and technology to think beyond actuality in "The Question Concerning Technology"⁴², Heidegger is concerned only with what Kant calls 'theoretical reason' (nowhere does he address Kant's 'practical reason' of morality). He takes finite 'Dasein' to be the location where Being "shatters against Being,"⁴³ and, as "[...] the site of openness, the there [*Da*]," is the

40. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trans. (New York: Harper and Row, 1962): 499, n. xiii (German: 427, n. 1). I would translate the decisive final sentence of the footnote: "Whether the *via negationis et eminentiae* [influx and emanation] could offer a possible way to do this is anyone's guess.

41. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*: 188–195 (German: 148–153).

42. See Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, William Lovitt, trans. (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1977): 3–35.

43. See Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Ralph Manheim, trans. (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1961) 137. The circularity that is Being coming to awareness of itself in Dasein is obvious. Heidegger even articulates the circle as a '*must be the case*' in "Vom Wesen des Grundes" in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978): 132–133: "The un-concealment [*Aletheia*/truth as *Un-verborgenheit*] of Being [...] is always the truth of the Being of being, may this [ontic] being be real or not [an echo of Hegelian 'indifference']. Conversely, in the unconcealment of Being there is always and already, as such, the truth of its Being. Ontic and ontological truth concern differently *being* in its Being and the *Being-of* being. They essentially belong together because of their relation to *the difference of Being and* [ontic] *being* (ontological difference). Hence, the necessarily ontologically bifurcated essence of truth in general is only possible with the opening up of this difference. Stated differently, if now that which distinguishes Dasein lies in the fact that it relates the understanding of Being to [ontic] being, then *this* being-able-to-distinguish, in which the ontological difference becomes factual, *must have its very possibility* because its roots arise out of the ground that is Dasein's essence. We call this ground of the ontological difference, anticipatively, Dasein's *transcendence*." (partial emphasis added)

"[...] site for the disclosure of Being [*Sein*]"⁴⁴ as "the place-holder of No-thing,"⁴⁵ which is the "ontological difference."⁴⁶ Heidegger criticizes Kant's use of the terminology of 'transcendence' in Transcendental Consciousness precisely for Kant's having presupposed the 'ontological difference.' Heidegger's reading of Kant is that his concern for the *conditions of possibility* of experience of a world limits Kant to the 'ontic' absent the 'ontological' revealing/concealing of the deeper, *transcendental possibilities* that are the Being-of beings:

For Kant, transcendental concerns the "*possibility*" (the enabling) of [critical/*kritische*] cognition, which, not unjustly, "flies over" experience as experience itself but not as "transcendence." The transcendental thus provides [...the] definition of non-transcendental human being as [concerned with] *possible* ontic cognition. With a more radical and universal version of the essence of transcendence [obviously, with Heidegger's investigation grounded in the ontological difference], however, a more original elaboration of the idea of ontology and thus of metaphysics is necessarily required.⁴⁷

According to Heidegger, humanity experiences a profound circularity in its temporality that it cannot escape.⁴⁸ To be sure, this circularity is not a representation of forms emanating out of Oneness to return to Oneness of Gnosticism (and Hegel) or the Negative Theology of Pseudo-Dionysius, but, nonetheless, one has here with Heidegger a horizontal circularity similar to Hegel's reclined Plato. The difference between them is the difference between a 'Absolute Spirit' and 'concealed possibilities'. Hegel is a Pan-en-theist⁴⁹ for whom ultimate reality is 'beyond' historical nature, whereas Heidegger is a Pan-naturalist, for whom ultimate reality is 'concealed' in nature. Neither Hegel nor Heidegger have any interest in morality. Hegel seeks to

44. Heidegger writes in "Vom Wesen des Grundes" in *Wegmarken*: 157: "Entering the world is not a process of a thing's entrance, but something that "happens with" a thing. This happening is the existing of Dasein, which transcends as existing. The hour and day of entrance in the world of a thing occurs only if in the Allness of things, a thing exists in the way of the temporality that is Dasein. *Only when this primal history that is transcendence happens, that is, when a thing with the character of Being-in-the-world [Dasein] breaks in, is there the possibility that an [ontic] thing reveals itself.*" (emphasis added)

45. Heidegger describes Dasein as the 'place-holder' of the ontological difference in "Was ist Metaphysik?" in *Wegmarken* 117 as follows: "Dasein's holding itself in the nothingness that is the ground of hidden anxiety makes a human being the placeholder of nothingness. We are so finite that we are not able to bring ourselves originally before nothingness by our own will and decision. So abysmally does finitude dig into existence that our freedom is denied its own and deepest finitude."

46. See Heidegger, "Vom Wesen des Grundes" in *Wegmarken*: 123 describes the ontological difference as follows: "The ontological difference is the not between things [*Seiende*] and Being [*Sein*]. As little as Being is a nothing as a not to things is a nothing in the sense of the *nihil negativum*, so little is the difference as the not between thing and Being only the figment of a distinction of the understanding (*ens rationis*).

47. Heidegger, *Vom Wesen des Grundes*: 138.

48. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*: 362–364 (German 314–316).

49. On Hegel as a Pan-en-theist, see; 214, n. 1.

escape the pain and suffering of the world (not sin), and Heidegger passively sits on his hands waiting for the Being-of beings to 'come'.

Heidegger's horizontal circularity, though, consists of the No-thing that is concealed possibilities in the midst of things that only Dasein, as far as we know, is capable of understanding as an ambiguous 'revealing'/'concealing' of possibilities in the encounter with actuality. It is a circularity, however, that presupposes Kant's *a priori* synthetic structures⁵⁰ not only of 'theoretical reason' concerned with understanding, but also overlooks the *a priori* synthetic structures of 'practical reason' (moral responsibility on the part of the individual⁵¹), as well as Kant's emphasis on the significance of aesthetic judgment in which beauty is a 'symbol of the moral' and the sublime elevates humanity to its moral capacity).⁵² Unfortunately, ignoring morality (Kant's practical reason), Heidegger never grasped more than a theoretical reason of subreption with its emphasis on the 'objective,' passive, causal nature of the 'event'⁵³ of the Being-of beings as manifesting concealment.⁵⁴

50. In fact, Heidegger reverses Kant's labels of 'synthetic' and 'analytic'. See Chapter 6: Grand Narratives of Theoretical Reason:" 700, n. 178.

51. See Heidegger's discussion of 'culture' as what 'man' prizes as driving motivation in "Science and Reflection" in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*: 135

52. See Kant, *Anthropology in a Pragmatic Sense* AA VII: 243 and below Chapter 9: "Missing Aesthetic Judgment:" the section "4) On the Relationship of Beauty and the Sublime to the **Moral**:" 905.

53. Dasein's 'passivity' is clear, for example, in Heidegger, "Über den ‚Humanismus'" in *Platon's Lehre von der Wahrheit: Mit einem Brief über den ‚Humanismus'* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1975): 79: "Man [...] is not only a living being who possesses language among other abilities. Far more, the language is the house of the being. Dwelling in it, humanity *ek-sists* [as the clearing in which the Being-of beings becomes aware of Itself], by belonging to the truth of Being and guarding it." See as well, Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, Vol. 65 of the Gesamtausgabe, Friedrich-Wilhelm v. Herrmann, ed. (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 2003).

54. Martin Heidegger claims in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington.: Indiana University Press, 1968): 40–42, that, Kant is trapped in a dualism between 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity'. Heidegger's claim is that, having identified in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* the centrality of the imagination in reason as 'the common, unknown root' uniting Kant's dualism of perception and understanding, Kant recoiled in horror over the irrationality upon which reason was grounded so that in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the imagination is absent. (See Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 173–174.) This is a ridiculous ignoring of the continued presence and functioning of the transcendental imagination in the second edition as it is a mis-reading of Kant's grounding of transcendental reason in autonomous freedom, which is the condition of possibility of the imagination. Ernst Cassirer pointed out the absence of any psychological trauma on Kant's part in "Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik. Bemerkungen zu Martin Heideggers Kant-Interpretation," *Kant-Studien* 36 (1931): 1–26. In fact, in *Metaphysik Mrongovius* (AA XXIX: 960 ff.), one finds Kant speaking of Heidegger's 'one thought' of the 'Being-of beings' as concealed possibilities.

One might be tempted to attribute this theme of concealed possibilities to Martin Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1979), originally published in 1926. However, it was already developed by Paul Natorp in his *Philosophische Systematik (Lectures 1922/1923)* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2000) that originated as lectures in 1922/1923 but not published until 1958 (see for example, 276 ff.). Natorp and Heidegger had long conversations on walks while Heidegger taught in Marburg

Kant calls an ‘analytic’ judgment elucidating (*erläuternd*) and an *a priori* ‘synthetic’ judgment supplementing (*erweiternd*).⁵⁵ The synthesis that arises out of dialectic is an analytical elucidation [*Erläuterung*] of something in common to the thesis and antithesis. It is an *a posteriori*, analytical elucidation. Kant’s notion of an *a priori* synthetic judgment refers to all those required elements that one must *add* (*and have added*) [supplementing/*Erweiterung*] to empirical phenomena in order to experience, understand, and exercise (responsible) agency in the world. Such synthetic elements include our grasp of the ‘laws’ of nature that govern our understanding of physical events (‘what is’) and of morality that govern the exercising of our agency (‘what ought to be’). Synthetic elements include, as well, the schema of concepts (never a lone concept) that we must employ to classify phenomena. They include, in addition, even more rarified ideas like the non-anthropomorphic (or at least, non-literally anthropomorphic⁵⁶), Noumenal unity (God) that as the presupposed origin of our universe as well as the presupposed enduring identity of the self (soul) and the presupposed extra-

from 1923–1928 so that it is not a stretch to believe that Heidegger has the theme directly from Natorp. Nonetheless, even Natorp is not the origin. Otto Willmann speaks of *aletheia* as *Un-verborgenheit* (un-covering). See Otto Willmann, *Geschichte des Idealismus. Band 1*: 188–189. The theme can be taken, as well, as the claim by Plato that the good is “above being” (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας) as the culmination of his similes of the sun and line in the *Republic* (509b). The theme is also found in Aristotle. See Heinz Happ, *Hyle. Studien zum Aristotelischen Materie Begriff* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971): 687: “Alle Einzelfälle von ἐνέργεια gründen im *Actus purus*, von δύναμις in der ‘reinen Möglichkeit,’ die als ‘Urgegensatz’ Dynamis/Energieia einander gegenüberstehen.”

As I mention above, it appears to have already been engaged by Kant in *Metaphysik Mrongovius*. A case can be at least proposed that this theme provides a coherent framework for what, otherwise, is taken to be ‘wild ramblings’ in Kant’s *Opus Postumum* (AA XVIII). In *Immanuel Kant. Vernunft und Leben* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2007), Volker Gerhardt proposes that the *Opus Postumum* confirms that Kant’s project failed (*scheitert*) (342) because only in humanity did Kant (342) overcome the famous “gap” (*Kluft*) announced in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* (AA V: 195) between reason and the perceptible, material world (288–289). According to Gerhardt, Kant believed that humanity alone constitutes the “middle concept” (*Mittelbegriff*) between God and the world (342–343) as the being capable of grasping the “living activity” (*lebendige Tätigkeit*) to establish the “unity” of an otherwise fragmented totality (342). Gerhardt says that Kant never sought a connecting link between reason and the perceptible world by means of the notion of “Being” (*Sein*) (341–342). However, Gerhardt appears to overlook that the “gap” remains only so long as “Being” is taken to be same kind of substance that connects two ontologically distinct dimensions of experience. However, once one makes the critical turn to conditions of possibility, as Kant appears to do in both the *Metaphysik Mrongovius* and *Opus Postumum*, rather than objective, substance claims, the “living activity” (*lebendige Tätigkeit*) that constitutes the condition for any and all experience of totality is no longer just a necessary assumption (*Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 183) of humanity’s reflecting judgment but applicable to all phenomena, not just humanity, as *the horizon of possibility that is the condition for all dynamism both perceptible and imperceptible*.

55. See Kant, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XXIX: 968.

56. See Kant, *Prolegomena* AA IV: 356. See as well, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 724–725; B 728 and *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 353.

ordinary causal system that makes it possible for us consciously to initiate sequences of events that nature could never accomplish on its own (cosmology/freedom).⁵⁷

For Strauß, then, what Kant means by ‘critique’ was and remains a never examined black hole because Kant’s broader notion of critique is concerned with what is required in order for Strauß to encounter his historical phenomena, whatsoever. Transcendental consciousness is not directly perceptible in the senses. However, it is ‘pure’ not because it is dualistically separate from ‘impure,’ sinful sensuousness (as Strauß would have us believe) but because it is a set of imperceptible conditions that make sensuous experience possible. We would never think to identify such required, imperceptible, transcendental elements were we not in a world/universe of phenomena calling for our attention, understanding, and responsible agency with respect to them.⁵⁸

Strauß’ Metaphysics in the *Glaubenslehre*: The Dialectical Logic of Negation as Ultimate, Causal Explanation

Strauß’s disaffection with the Hegelians was not merely because even the Left-Wing Hegelians rejected his Christology but also because he rejected Hegel’s reclining Plato, meta-narrative of Double Negation. In the *Glaubenslehre*, Strauß doesn’t criticize Hegel for his anthropomorphic projections (as does Feuerbach) but for his ‘Docetism:’

[...][F]inite things collapse into a commonality [*Allgemeinheit*] because they annul one another [*sich aufheben*] by an endless alternation of becoming and passing away whose commonality no longer behaves as their cause but as their substance. [According to Leibniz] the cosmological argument proves a necessary Being but as an eternal being/substance [*Grundwesen*], not as a Being external to the world [as with Personal Theism].

57. Rather than focus on ‘synthesis’ as supplementing (‘*erweiternd*’), Heidegger focusses on the function of Kant’s notion of ‘synthesis’ as apprehension (*Apprehension*). See Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretation von Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*: 340 ff. He offers an elucidation (*Erläuterung*) of ‘synthesis’ as the activity of the imagination as a unifying grasping (*Auf-greifen*) of phenomena. See *ibid.*, 345–346. His discussion focuses on the empirical phenomena, not on the supplementing (‘*erweiternde*’), synthetic activity of a *a priori* judgment. In other words, he presupposes Kant’s notion of a *a priori* synthetic judgment. This results in his giving an account of apprehension as ‘*Syndosis*’ (his term, *ibid.*: 347) not ‘*Syn-thesis*’ as the ‘givenness’ of phenomena by means of a ‘gathering together’ (*Zusammennehmen*) of phenomena, not Kant’s synthetic ‘adding to’ the phenomena. See *ibid.*, 347. Consequently, Heidegger focuses, of course, on his own ‘pre-ontological’ notion of temporality as simultaneous future, past, present. He engages Kant’s ‘synthetic judgment,’ then, as an example of ‘anticipatory resoluteness.’ See Heidegger, “¶ 62. *Anticipatory Resoluteness as the Way in which Dasein’s potentiality-for-Being-a-whole has Existentiell Authenticity*,” 352 ff (German 305 ff.) and “¶ 68. *The Temporality of Disclosedness in General*,” 384–401 (German 335–350).

58. Kant wrote in the *Prolegomena* AA IV: 293: “My idealism concerns not the existence of things (the doubting of which, however, constitutes idealism in the ordinary sense), since it never came into my head to doubt the existence of things” (McG: translation)

This transformation of the causal relationship between God and the world into a relationship of substance appears in Hegel in such a way that the usual opinion of a positive relation between the starting-point as well as the end-point of the conclusion are converted into a relationship of negation. According to Hegel, we aren't required to think of God as existing because the world exists but because the world does not correspond to true Being, can't calm thinking, and must advance thought through its imagining of the world to determine the idea of God. The negation of the Being of the World is the bond of elevation. This means that *the world, to be sure, comes into being but only as appearance, not absolute truth*. Rather, *Absolute Truth is beyond appearances* and is only in God. God alone is true Being. Thinking worldly existence means to strip away the particularities of form and accidents to grasp it as a universal and necessary Being, which is different from worldly existence: to think of worldly existences as God [footnote to Hegel's Encyclopedia, § 50]. What else does this mean but that for common understanding the world is an aggregate of particular, randomly accidental things under laws. [Proper] *knowledge negates these things as existing particulars and ascends to a universal Unity, which goes out of Itself and returns to Itself (that is, a Unity that is related to particular things as substance to accidents)*.⁵⁹ (emphasis added)

In the *Glaubenslehre*, Strauß turned to Jakob Böhme and Spinoza to justify his own divine Immanentism by substituting a Böhmean understanding of linear negation for Hegel's account of the meta-narrative of Negation. In short, Strauß rejected the cyclical, meta-narrative Metaphysics of Negation, but he retained a linear Metaphysics of Negation for explaining the creative process of the historical world.

The difference between Hegel and Spinoza is that Spinoza's 'substance' has neither thought nor Spirit but only 'nullification of finitude' (influx without emanation):

*What distinguishes the Hegelian Absolute as substance, which is simultaneously subject, from Spinoza's mere substance? The difference with respect to whether the Absolute is determined to be only substance or Spirit, Hegel says [...], depends entirely on whether thought, which annihilates [vernichtet] its finitude and mediations (negates its negation) and, thereby, grasps the One Absolute, is conscious of that knowledge of absolute substance or isn't conscious of it. Substance must be the nullification [Aufgehobensein] of finitude. One says with this that substance is the Negation of Negation because only negation is allocated to finitude. As Negation of Negation, substance is absolute Affirmation and, equally, unmediated freedom and self-determination. God is not a dead but a living God. He is even more as living, He is Spirit and eternal love [...]; ([T]he teacher [... Hegel] continues:) and is this [living Spirit and eternal love] only because His Being is not abstract but in Itself moving difference, and in that person different from Him is His self-knowledge.*⁶⁰ (emphasis added)

59. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 382–383.

60. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 514–515. True to his own inclusive Christological convictions, Strauß asks here: "Do we think [this Person] as God's Son, according to Church claims, or as humanity to the extent that God is conscious of Himself?"

Strauß agrees with Hegel's criticism of Spinoza's substance:

Hegel explains that Spinozism is an inadequate philosophy that takes reflection and its inadequate definition to be an external thought in that substance includes thought only with respect to its unity with extension (that is, not as separated from extension), thereby neither as defining and forming nor as the returning out of itself as the origin of movement. That is, Spinoza thinks of substance only with respect to its nullity [Aufhebung] of established determination, not as the determiner of determinedness. He acknowledges only the return of all things to it [substance]; not, equally, the recurring emanation out of it. [Figuratively], he speaks only of its system of veins, not its arteries so that he doesn't conceive of substance as a life cycle⁶¹ [...] Hence, his substance is [...] neither Person nor Spirit.⁶² (emphasis added)

However, rather than embrace Hegel's notion of Spirit as a cyclical process of emanation and influx (cataphasis and apophasis), Strauß turns to Jakob Böhme's conception of finite negation to account for a linear, open-ended historical process that involves an inseparable interface between Spirit and matter.

Tertullian's *nihil est incorporale nisi quod non est* [there is nothing incorporal unless it is not] is not so inconsistent as it is usually taken to be. If Absolute Affirmation (*actus purus*) [...] is thought simultaneously as Absolute Negativity, it contains, as well, the First Negation or the placing of matter as well as the physical world. Except that this First Negation, as J. Böhme claimed, is neither the holy light of God Himself nor God's body but the self-determining presupposition for the realization of Him as Spirit.⁶³ (emphasis added)

Strauß affirms Böhme's metaphysical 'logic' of Negation. *Logic is Spirit and it is inseparable from matter. Yet, the One is unmovable without repulsiveness.* Böhme's Theosophy constitutes the 'essential complement' to Spinoza.⁶⁴

Whereas Spinoza taught that all things return to the eternal One and as true as this is: Böhme shows us [...] why the multiplicity of [particular] things emanate out of this eternal One rather than that the Being of this One were a Not-Being. Böhme developed an endless number of metaphors [...] in order to graphically portray the Negativity of the illimited [One]. This great breadth without end – he said, entirely sensorily – desired limitation and comprehensibility by which it could reveal Itself. *A breadth without limit could not reveal Itself. In order for Its revelation to occur, an attraction and enclosure had to occur. [...], [W]ere the will to belong to only a Single Unique Being, the mind would have only a single quality, an unmovable thing that was eternally still, and could do nothing but remain One Thing.* It would have no joy, no knowledge, neither art nor science of more than One, and would be no truth. Everything would be a Nothing, and there would, in fact, be neither a mind nor will to do something because everything would be only the One.

61. In fact, Spinoza's substance "[...] is abstract, not yet concrete; is rigid and dead, without living movement in itself." Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 508

62. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 515.

63. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 558.

64. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 508–509.

Consequently, one can not say that God is One Will and Being [...] *No thing without repulsiveness can reveal itself* [...] It can no nothing of its original state. Almost completely finitely, Jakob Böhme expresses these thoughts [...]: the reader should know that *everything consists of 'Yes!' and 'No!'* – whether godly, diabolical, earthly, or whatever. *The One as 'Yes!' is vain power and love and is divine truth and God Himself.* In itself, this 'Yes!' would be unknowable to itself and would have no joy or relevance or sensibility without the 'No!' 'No!' is the alternative to 'Yes!' or truth by which truth is revealed and is something within which there is a contradiction (*Contrarium*) by which eternal love is operative, sensitive, and desiring. *The One has nothing in itself that it can desire.*⁶⁵ Therefore, it doubles itself that it is two. In *One-ness*, it cannot experience Itself, but in *Two-ness* it can experience itself.⁶⁶ (emphasis added)

Strauß takes Böhme's account of the First Negation to be the metaphysical logic driving the on-going *linear, creative process* that is the world. However, where Böhme was shocked by the infinity of finite endlessness, Strauß was taking a step on the path to his materialism at which he arrived by *The Old and the New Faith* of 1872:

[Böhme says in his *Deutsche Theologie* Kap. 29:] "God [...] in Himself without creatures is original and essential, but not formed and actual; and God desires that [what is in Him] be experienced because it is in Him for the purpose that it should be experienced and actualized." Kap. 49: "*The eternal will that is original and essential and without all creation and actuality, that same will is present in a human being or in a creature actually and operatively. Because to the will belongs and is in itself that it should desire; what is it otherwise?* [...] [F]or that purpose the creature ought to be, and God wishes it to have [this] desire in order that this will have, and effect through it His [God's] own works – Were there to be no works or effects and such, what ought [...] God Himself to be? or what would He be? [Shocked by his own question, the author (Böhme) adds:] *One must here turn back, stay and stand still; otherwise, one would want to come and crawl so far and wide that one no longer would know where one was or from where one must turn back.*⁶⁷ (bracketed material from Strauß) (emphasis added)

Strauß claims here in the *Glaubenslehre* that divine creativity is not a docetic circular (Absolute Spirit's cataphatic emanation and apophatic influx) but a linear process of finite negation that is always on the way to the full realization of God: "This work [of negation], can it be other than the (development of nature) and world history, which the World Spirit [World Soul] assumes for itself because it is unachievable by any lesser consciousness? In this respect, *the Absolute is essentially a consequence [Resultat], is only at the end [of history] what it truly is. This is what constitutes its nature, actuality, subjectivity, or its self-development.*"⁶⁸

65. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 489: : "God, the Father, is not something itself, but only a desire to something, as the dark urge to self-revelation [...]" (emphasis added)

66. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 509–510.

67. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 638, n. 24.

68. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 513–514. He finds a compatriot in this thought, again, in Böhme: "[...] what kind of God is it whose body, essence, and power consists of fire, air, water, and earth? [...]. I will

Nonetheless, for both Hegel's cataphatic/apophatic Docetism and Böhme's open-ended history, the narrowness of the metaphysical logic of negation takes logic to be a causal explanation of concrete events, which consists in an *a posteriori*, descriptive claim that insists that it is an abstract system of rules that governs thought, generally. Yet, logic is a canon without an organon,⁶⁹ Kant points out. An *a posteriori* logic of dialectic (Negation) is a descriptive account of events (a narrative), not a causal explanation of them.⁷⁰

In fact, in contrast to Plato's contemplation (θεωρία, *theoria*) by means of dialectic that claims to 'know' the ultimate 'Good' (and proleptically rejecting Hegel's dialectical logic for Absolute Spirit, Kant explicitly rejects the employment of dialectic to establish (prove) the ultimate elements that make possible experience, understanding,

give you a correct ground for divinity. Wherever this entire Being is not God, you are not the image of God [...] For you are created out of this God, and live in Him, and He gives you blessing, food, and drink incessantly out of his power. All of your science [*Wissenschaft*] is grounded in this God, and when you die, you will be buried in Him." (emphasis added) *Glaubenslehre* I: 555–556 (Strauß footnotes to Aurora, c. 22, 35, 23, 1 ff) "[...] [T]he sun and stars [...] are not sacred God but His body. The sacred God Himself is in the midst of all these things, and you can't see or conceive Him, but the soul conceives Him. He is concealed in His heaven, but this heaven is everywhere, even in you yourself." 556. (emphasis added) See as well, *Glaubenslehre* I: 574–575.

Schelling's formulation on divine personality is: "All consciousness is concentration, gathering, taking together, uniting with oneself. This negating power that is directed toward itself is the true power of personality [...]" *Glaubenslehre* I: 510–511; Strauß adds: "It's a pity that Böhme explicitly denied such a formulation. He says literally that God is no Person other than in Christ, but He [God] is the eternal birthing power and the kingdom of all beings [...] Böhme understands this negativity by means of which God experiences Itself, where he [Böhme] is scientifically clear, as the externalizing of God into the World of Nature and finite spirits. God lets Himself be personal only in the latter, or in the Church's representation, in Christ." *Glaubenslehre* I: 511 (emphasis added)

Speaking with Böhme, Strauß asks: If love is the basic determination of the divine will: In the divine relationship to the λόγος [Logos] love could realize itself eternally. If God is unthinkable without revelation of His Being, this revelation is eternally given in the begetting of the Son and the pouring out of the Spirit. However, to speak with Jakob Böhme, what is left to be said of the more brilliant light, the more powerful sound, the sharper perception which is only to be achieved by means of actual separation and finalization of divine power, that is, by means of the creation of a world? Or, with Lessing, *would the divine self-perception be complete in itself, were God to perceive His perfection only with respect to one of two possible ways; [1] Namely, everything together and mixed up [= Absolute Unity], not also as the case of the other way, [2] namely, each for itself and distinguished from the others [= Absolute Aggregate], that is, if He were to perceive Himself only as God, not also as World?"* *Glaubenslehre* I: 639–640.

69. See page 49, n. 36 and "Speculative Metaphysics and Science" in Chapter 1: 175, 176, and 177.

70. Kant's understanding of metaphysics is concerned, then, with the condition of possibility for even Strauß' divine, linear Immanentism. As such, it is grounded in 'necessity'. On the metaphor interference of 'necessity,' see the "Preface:" 42, n. 22. Kant, of course, usually speaks of the 'necessary' (or required) conditions of possibility of experience. The term 'necessary' can cause confusion by its association with the 'Principle of Sufficient Reason' (*Satz vom zureichenden Grund*), which speaks of 'necessity' in the sense of causal determinism. However, Kant's metaphysics is not determining causes; it is enabling (*what is required* for experience) and, thereby, far broader than Immanentism. The latter is grounded in a narrow, naïve empiricism and analogies and subreptions of causal explanation.

and responsible agency in the world, *the three ideas of pure reason* (God, the soul/enduring identity, and freedom/nature).⁷¹ He points out that they must be ‘deduced,’ but *unlike the categories of the understanding, which are deduced from sensation, the ideas of pure reason are deduced from an idea as necessary/required “[...] to represent to ourselves other objects in an indirect manner, namely in their systematic unity, by means of their relation to this idea.”*⁷²

[I]f they are to have the least objective validity, no matter how indeterminate that validity may be, and are not to be mere empty thoughts (*entia rationis ratiocinantis*), a deduction of them must be possible, however greatly (as we admit) it may differ from that which we have been able to give of the categories. This will complete the critical work of pure reason [...].⁷³

II. Absolute Knowledge

As with Hegel, the early Strauß understands that metaphysics is Spirit knowing Itself “in fully comprehending its substance” by ‘leaving its external existence behind’⁷⁴ grasping itself as “absolute or completely coherent knowledge.” To be sure, Hegel insists that it is *necessary* that Absolute Spirit ‘externalize’ itself in the ‘other,’ but this is a dogmatic, causal necessity veiled with this claim that “[s]cience [*Wissenschaft*] contains in itself this necessity that the form of pure Spirit externalize Itself ...”⁷⁵ This internal origin of ‘process’ remains a pure mystery in Hegel because it is a circular, logical argument for an ultimate cause of which, at best, one only experiences its effects. Nonetheless, it would seem that one can hardly have a ‘broader,’ more comprehensive, epistemology than one that is absolute. However, there are legitimate

71. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 697.

72. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 699.

73. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 197–698.

74. See G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie*: “Spirit that knows itself [...] grasps its own notion, immediate identity with itself; and this [...] is [...] the beginning from which we started.” GW III: 589–590 (Baillie trans.: 806) and, “[s]ince its accomplishment consists in Spirit knowing what It is, in fully comprehending its substance [McG: *seine Substanz, vollkommen zu Wissen*], this knowledge means Its concentrating Itself on Itself (*Insichgehen*), a state in which Spirit leaves Its external existence behind [...]” GW III: 590 (Baillie trans.: 807) See as well, Hegel’s account of the ‘absolute suffering or speculative Good Friday’ by which Absolute Spirit ‘restores Itself’ by arising ‘from Its deepest depths, at the same time all-embracing and in the most cheerful freedom of Its form.” Hegel, “Glauben und Wissen” GW II: 432–433.

75. Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 589 (Baillie: 806). This is a ‘necessity’ driven by dialectical logic, not reality itself. Logic, though, is a ‘canon,’ not a causal explanation. Hegel is insisting that he knows that his logic (canon) of absolute synthesis is a *necessary, a priori* causal explanation whereas an organon “requires that I already know the object of the knowledge to be brought about according to certain rules.” See Kant’s *Logic* AA IX: 13 ff. Hegel’s *necessity* of Absolute Spirit’s Double Negation is a vicious hermeneutical circle.

reasons to question the adequacy of their notion of ‘absolute’ reason (Absolute Spirit and theoretical reason). I will examine *four issues* with respect to its usage by Strauß:

- a) An Anthropomorphic Analogy: Hegel’s metaphysics is not grounded in Absolute Knowledge of causality but in an anthropomorphic analogy that places humanity on the throne of Spirit/God. As a claim for Absolute Knowledge, Hegel’s metaphysics is nothing remotely appropriate to Kant’s theoretical reason of finite, conscious understanding in the world. In the end, Hegel’s metaphysics is world-denying in the name of asserting the ‘truth’ of Absolute Spirit.
- b) A Flight of Fantasy in a Vacuum: Hegel’s Metaphysics’s absolute content [*Inhalt*] is claimed to be required for human knowledge. This metaphysics is no guarantee of ‘truth’ despite its claim for Absolute Knowledge, and it draws humanity *out of history*.
- c) In contrast to Hegel and the early Strauß, Kant’s ‘broader’ account of theoretical reason rests not on Absolute Knowledge of causality but on the interacting of ‘reflecting’ and ‘re-producing judgment [*reflektierende und bestimmende Urteils kraft*]. Reflecting judgment unites theoretical reason (understanding) and practical reason (responsible agency) in a creative, open-ended process of understanding and agency to the extent graspable by finite, transcendental consciousness *in history*. In other words, Kant’s transcendental necessities have nothing to do with a call *out of history*.
- d) Hegel and Kant on Nature and Freedom

I examine each of these four themes in detail:

a) Theoretical Reason’s Anthropomorphic Analogy rather than Absolute Knowledge:

The Hegelian meta-narrative and the early Strauß’ Immanentism of ‘theoretical reason’ are structured on a metaphysical dictum (*Machtspruch*) of Absolute Spirit, Absolute Unity, Absolute Freedom, and Absolute Reason. Although they reject the Personal Theism of Platonic Christianity, in fact, they share with Personal Theism that *Spirit means consciousness with its eternal Ideas, which are the true content of the world of particulars,*⁷⁶ *which, in turn, are nothing but interchangeable ‘copies and shadows’ (logical place-holders) of the ‘true.’*

Specifically, Strauß’ account of the creative process of the world in the *LJ*, taken from Hegel, as a process driven by the logic of ‘negation’ is grounded in the same metaphysical understanding of Logos (the divine thoughts of God) found in Person-

76. This was explicitly articulated by Feuerbach in his *Wesen der Religion* (1848–1849) (Berlin: Deutsche Bibliothek, 1913): Lecture 14: 134–135.

al Theism. Granted, Personal Theism employs the Logos for a top-down meta-narrative initiated by a Personal God outside of history and leading to fulfilment of creation and atonement of the individual with God in the next life. Granted as well, in dramatic contrast, Hegel's Panlogism is a 'horizontal' emanation and returning influx (but not top-down). Nonetheless, *Hegel's meta-narrative is a Gnostic cycle of expansion (ἐκστασις) and contraction (συστολή); cataphasis/κατάφασις and apophasis/ἀπόφασις*.⁷⁷ For his part, Strauß formulated a horizontal, linear Immanentism in 1835 as an *inclusive* Christology that consisted of an open-ended process of Spirit becoming aware of itself in and through the lives of all persons as the realization of the eternal Idea in history under the assumption that humanity as a species is eternal.⁷⁸

In other words, although the metaphysical order is the same, Personal Theism understands the Logos to be contained in the mind of an *external* deity over against the world with the world itself a copy and shadow of the Logos. Hegel and Strauß, in contrast, speak of the creative process of Spirit as *internal* to the natural order. Nonetheless, the process of creation is not random for either external Personal Theism or internal Immanentism. However, with Personal Theism the relationship of consciousness to the world of appearances is one of 'ideas' to their 'copies' with 'eternal thought,' Logos (Logos endiathetos; λόγος ἐνδιάθετος) preceding the 'transient copied' Logos (Logos prophorikos; λόγος προφορικὸς) that one finds already in Plato's *Timaeus* (27d ff; 69b-70a) and the Stoics.⁷⁹ Again in contrast to Personal Theism, according to Hegel and the early Strauß, the relationship of consciousness to the world of appearances is not 'ideas' to their 'copies' but that both ideas and their copies are the product of a dialectical logical process of causal explanation emanating out of Absolute Spirit. Nonetheless, the functional relationship of 'content' (*ideelle Inhalt*) and 'representations' (*reelle Form*) is the same for both Personal Theism as well as Hegel and the early Strauß.

The relationship of the Platonic 'thinker' to its thoughts is at the core of the claim in Christian Platonism that God is an Absolute Person, and it shapes the portrayal and criticisms made by Strauß of Hegel in §33 of the *Glaubenslehre*.

What does it mean to say that God is a Person? It can mean an enduring identity over against others from which it is separated, or it can mean the inward, all-compass-

77. Hegel's Gnostic emanationism is clear from the very notion of the First Negation that 'creates two-ness' to initiate the logical dialectic of negation that leads to the material order that is the condition for the emergence of consciousness. Hegel's Gnostic influx is clear from the "knowledge" (Gnosis) that 'returns' to Absolute Spirit by means of the Second Negation in individual consciousness.

78. See § 150 of the *LJ*: "The Speculative Christology:" especially, 780. By 1864, though, the linear Immanentism of Strauß' inclusive Christology is no longer labeled 'Christology' ('Spirit'/'Man') but has been replaced by humanity as the location of an open-ended process of the human species' moral improvement as demanded by its requiring ever new moral principles appropriate to its changing historical circumstances.

79. See above "Vol. II Introduction:" 543, n. 49.

ing, unlimited exclusion of everything external that thinks nothing.⁸⁰ Rosenkranz, the 'centrist' Hegelian,⁸¹ claimed that divine subjectivity "[...] is absolute subjectivity because [... absolute subjectivity] is the concept that is identical with absolute substance."⁸² Strauß asks: "How is this otherwise than an: I want this to be the case, so it is the case?"⁸³

Hegel distinguished himself from Spinoza's system by claiming that for Spinoza God as a substance is "abstract, not yet concrete, [...] rigid and dead."⁸⁴ Strauß points out that for Hegel:

[...][w]hether the Absolute is determined only as substance, or as spirit, depends solely on whether the thinking, which has [...] negated its negations, and thereby grasped the One Absolute, is consciousness of what it did [...] or whether it is not [...] Substance is said to be the abolition of the finite; thus one says that it is the negation of the negation of the negation. [...]. As negation of negation, substance is herewith the absolute affirmation, and just as directly [absolute] freedom and self-determination. God is not a dead but a living God; he is even more than the living, he is spirit and the eternal love.⁸⁵

Furthermore, Hegel complains of Spinoza that he only gives an account of divine influx without an account of divine emanation:

Spinoza understands with respect to substance only how it negates set determinations, not how it sets them,. Thus he does not understand it as self-determining. He recognizes only the return of all things back into it, not likewise the emanating of things from it [... and] thus not as in *itself a life circulation* [...].⁸⁶

Strauß emphasizes that Neoplatonism provides "the crucial insights of Hegel's teaching concerning God."⁸⁷ Hegel suggests that those who make the absolute *ideale* (as *absolutes Wesen*, eternal ideas) the object of the divine thinker "speak as if God were a source beyond consciousness."⁸⁸ However, Hegel claims (although it remains unclear whether he is reporting about Neoplatonism or maintaining for himself⁸⁹) that God is not "[...] a Spirit which is outside the world and outside self-consciousness, but that Its existence as a Spirit conscious of Itself is precisely real, self-consciousness

80. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 504–505.

81. Strauß identified him as the 'one centrist' in "Vereschiedene Richtungen innerhalb der Hegel'schen Schule in Betreff der Christologie" in *Streitschriften* III: 120.

82. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 505.

83. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 505. This is a classic 'ought'/'is' fallacy.

84. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 508.

85. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 514.

86. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 515. Spinoza has a vein but not an artery system – metaphysically, a cataphatic but not apophatic system. See as well, *ibid.*: 508 (Spinoza's substance is abstract, not concrete, rigid and dead) and 512 (Spinoza's substance is an unconscious generality).

87. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 516.

88. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 516.

89. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 516.

Itself.⁹⁰ Strauß claims that this, in fact, is Hegel's position. This would mean that what Platonism calls 'universals' (absolute essences) which constitute thought, are Absolute Being Itself, not that the thinker is 'above' the essences that it thinks.⁹¹

Hegel maintains that with his philosophy a 'new epoch' has begun:

*The world spirit has now succeeded in disposing of all alien, objective being and finally grasps Itself as Absolute Spirit. The struggle of finite self-consciousness with Absolute Self-consciousness, which appeared as apart from It, has come to an end. Finite self-consciousness ceased to be finite [is spiritually divinized], and thereby, on the other hand, Absolute Self-consciousness received the reality (Wirklichkeit) which It lacked before.*⁹² (emphasis added)

What has changed that Hegel can speak of a 'new epoch'? The change is the emergence of 'science' (*Wissenschaft*),⁹³ which, according to Hegel, is humanity's grasp of essential, true Being! Strauß asks, does this mean that:

[...] according to Hegel, God has only [... His] ideal existence as thinking [by finite spirit]? Nothing less! Our concept of Absolute Being [...] is indeed Absolute Being Itself. However, God is not exhausted by [... the thinking of finite spirit] because He is not only Being or *ideal (ideale)*, but also *real (reale)* existence.⁹⁴ His existence as Being is our thinking of Him; but His *real* existence is nature to which the thinking individual belongs at [its present] moment.⁹⁵

God's existence (the divine *ideale*) as Being (Spirit) is dependent upon finite consciousness, but God's actually (the divine *reale*) is the natural world as a historical totality. Therefore, finite, theoretical reason serves Absolute Spirit as the necessary 'point of indifference' where Absolute Spirit becomes aware of Itself – not, though, by the individual's complete identification with God's reality (*Wirklichkeit*), which involves all of history.

This claim by Hegel generated much criticism, correctly in Strauß' judgment,⁹⁶ because it implies that in order for God to be fully Spirit, God requires humanity. Hume's criticism of the use of anthropomorphic analogy for God-talk reaches its pinnacle here. It is not merely an act of hubris for humanity to think that human consciousness is the key to God-consciousness as Hume pointed out,⁹⁷ but here the

90. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 516.

91. Strauß cites to Hegel's "Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie:" III. Here is a tip that Hegel is Athanasian in contrast to Strauß, who is Arian.

92. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 517.

93. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 517.

94. God is not only the 'true' content (*Inhalt*) but also the 'actual' representations (*Form*) that are nature.

95. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 517–518.

96. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 518.

97. See David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1982): 14–19.

claim is made that God can't be God without human consciousness. Furthermore, this would mean that in the long duration prior to the emergence of finite consciousness, God was not God as Spirit but only a 'blind, natural, dynamic power.'⁹⁸

Strauß points out that conservative Hegelians responded that : "[...] temporal revelation of God in man already presupposes the eternal revelation of God"⁹⁹ as the eternal, inseparable circularity of Spirit and nature. However, Strauß also points out that this is an ambiguous formulation. The claim could refer to a God who is *complete and independent of the world* [...] with no need of the mediation of finite spirits [...] or that *God is dependent upon an external determination of 'Himself'* [nature and, especially humanity, for Spirit to become aware of Itself]¹⁰⁰

Strauß quotes from Immanuel Hermann Fichte (J.G. Fichte's son), who observes that Hegel, 'properly' understood, takes God to be "[...] *not merely [a] substance [...] nor a dull-colored indifference or the dead identity of subject and object but the living process of subjectivity* [...]. He [God] is never exhausted in one of these self-presentations [...]. Consequently, *God is here the eternal observation of Himself in the other, the unceasing creation as unlimited Subjectivity-Objectivity.*"¹⁰¹ (emphasis added) In this formulation, Hegel's God, though, remains entirely indifferent to the particularities of nature and humanity for his 'eternal observation of Himself in the other.'

Granted that out of love, God establishes the historical actuality that is required for humanity to be the location for God to 'think' (that is, experience) Himself, to the extent that divine love is "a play of love with Himself,"¹⁰² *what does this really say about the meaning and significance of the concrete, subjective experience of individuals? Are not humanity's creative achievements, sufferings, inflicted injustices, etc., a matter of indifference to this lover of Himself?!*

One can palpably hear the exasperation in Strauß' comment in 1841:

"[...] [M]y dear Hegel, have you invented your profound categories of differentiation and externalization, negation and negation of negation, of annulment [*Aufhebung*] of these moments into a higher moment that the crudest births of an ill-bred imagination, of which the most far-out Gnostic would not be ashamed, should let themselves [the crude thoughts] be grasped with them [these profound categories]? [...] Where is the *Symbolum Quicunque* [the Athanasian Creed: "God became man that man might become God"]? Give it to me! I would rather confess it ten times before I take the propositions of our Philosopher only once to be other than superstition."¹⁰³

98. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 518.

99. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 520.

100. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 520–521.

101. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 522. The citation is to Immanuel Hermann Fichte's *Die Idee der Persönlichkeit und der individuellen Fortdauer* (Elberfeld: Büschler'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung und Buchdruckerei, 1834).

102. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 513. See *Phänomenologie* GW III: 386 (Baillie trans.: 542–543).

103. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 500–501. F.C. Baur connected the dots here when he wrote in 1838: "[...] [T]he long period from the Ancient [Church] to the end of the eleventh century [is] characterized

The notions that ‘God needs humanity to become Spirit’ and that ‘humanity needs God to become Spirit’ constitute a circularity, but it is not a circularity of metaphysical, causal ‘necessity’ but, rather, the circularity of an ‘ought’/‘is’ fallacy: It ‘ought’ to be that God is engaged in a cataphatic/apophatic emanation and in an influx that involves Spirit and finitude as two sides of the same coin, but this ‘ought’ is a vicious circle. Strauß himself writes: “[...] what is this other than: I would like it to be like that, that's why it is like that?”¹⁰⁴ This is a classic ‘ought’/‘is’ fallacy.

Christian Personal Theism as well as Hegel and the early Strauß assume that infinite Spirit is the same as finite spirit: ideas are the universal, unchanging essences (spirit) of consciousness that are manifest in particular, changing particulars (matter). Yet such an account is narrowly and literally anthropomorphic. It is human beings (or more accurately, finite, transcendental consciousness) who classify phenomena by means of ideas/concepts related to particulars, and we have encountered such a capacity only in finite consciousness.

Furthermore, unlike Spinoza’s limiting substance to a process of divine influx with no account of divine emanation, Hegel views all of history as a pulsating of Double Negation, with the ‘new epoch’ that comes after Spinoza consisting of Absolute Knowledge of the Concept that is finite consciousness’ grasp of Absolute Spirit. In this ‘new epoch’ we not only know who the God/Man is, but also we know ourselves what actual, world history ‘truly’ is. *The ‘point of indifference’ has two meanings: 1) Absolute Unity as a point of non-difference, which claims that God can’t be God without humanity; and 2) complete equanimity on the part of Absolute Spirit when it comes to the actual particularities of history because what matters is Absolute Knowledge of Absolute Spirit, not the details of actual history that are the condition of its Self-awareness.*¹⁰⁵

In short, where there is a spectrum of Right-, Left-, and, at least, one individual in the Center of Hegelianism,¹⁰⁶ with significant major ambiguities among the most

by nothing more than the mythical form that it has received in the most viable imagination. [...]. The form of dogma is rightly to be called mythical if the image [*Form/Representation*] takes the place of the Concept [*Inhalt*]. As *Gnosticism shows, the docetic is closely related to the mythical. Once Spirit succumbs to the mythical, once it lives in a world of figurative representations that it has created for Itself, then the world of reality [*Wirklichkeit*] can easily transform itself into a world of mere and deceptive appearance, as we see in the Gnostics, in whom the mythical direction prevailing in them also led to the understanding of the historical appearance of Christ in a purely docetic way.*” (emphasis added) F.C. Baur, *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung* (1838), Bd. I (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004): 142–143.

104. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre*: I: 505.

105. Hegel calls this event in finite consciousness the ‘point of indifference.’ On ‘the point of indifference’ as both a turn to non-difference and affectless equanimity, see Hegel, “Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten” GW II: 456, 465–7, 484, 487–8, 496–97, 499–500. The actual world is only an (*affektloser Traum*) (*ibid*: 496–497, 499–500).

106. This “at least” refers to Strauß’ account of the Hegelian spectrum in “Verschiedene Richtungen innerhalb der Hegel’schen Schule in Betreff der Christologie:” 120. The differences here between Göschel and Schaller make clear that at stake is the core Hegelian epistemological conception of concept and representations, not just the notion of the God/Man.

‘conservative’ of Hegelians, the language of ‘Absolute Knowledge is inappropriate. Any language of ‘consciousness,’ ‘personalism,’ or of the relationship between ‘concepts’ and ‘representations,’ as well as ‘substance’ and ‘identity’ and ‘difference’ language are all anthropomorphisms. When it comes to the dependence of an argument on analogies and an assumption as, in this case, the Principle of Sufficient Reason (*Satz vom zureichenden Grund*), the claim to Absolute Knowledge is a *petitio principii*.

b) A Flight of Fantasy in a Vacuum:

Hegel’s and the early Strauß’ understanding of Absolute Knowledge is established on the basis of the difference between ‘content’ [*Inhalt*] and ‘representations’ [*Form*]. Content refers to the ‘idea,’ which, in turn, corresponds to the forms given in representations/perception. This epistemological structure of mental ‘idea’ and perceived ‘form/image/representations’ mediated by the imagination¹⁰⁷ is at least as old as Plato who employs it in his Simile of the Line in Book VI 507b of the *Republic*. Plato distinguishes between ‘the many’ that are ‘seen but not known’ and ‘the ideas’ that are ‘known but not seen.’ Plato describes at 510a the things ‘seen but not known’ as only representations (τὸ δοξαστὸν, *das Vorstellbare*, the imaginable) occurring in the intellect, which are distinguished from what is ‘known’ (τὸ γνωστὸν, *das Erkennbare*, the known). The objects of the senses must be ‘converted into representations’ or images/forms (αἱ εἰκόνες, *Bilder*, images, forms) because we can’t put the physical world directly into the mind. *Forms are imagined in the mind whereas ideas are already present in the mind and are applied by thought to representations in the imagination.*

107. Hegel uses here with respect to mental experience itself the notion of ‘form, (more like Aristotle) which for Plato ‘form’ refers to the ‘representation’ of the external world in the mind by means of the imagination. I take form in the sense of exclusively mental form to refer to *the manner in which ideas/essences are given in thought*. We think ideas, but what they are in themselves is as inaccessible to us as the in itself of the objects of sense perception. Hegel appears to be drawing an analogy between our perception of objects of sense by means of representations (images in the imagination) and our thinking of ideas/essences. Plato speaks of these two points of transition 1) from external objects to mental ideas and 2) from mental ideas to the Good ‘above Being’ as follows: “There are two subdivisions [in the mind], in the lower of which [understanding of sense perception] the soul uses the figures [objects] given in the former division [of physical objects in the world] as images [in the imagination = φαντάσματα (Republic 510a) = “an image presented in the mind by an object;” φαίνεται (i.e., φαντασία) (Sophist 264a-b – see Liddell and Scott)], the inquiry can only be hypothetical, and instead of going upwards to a principle [the Good, above Being] descends to the other end [in the direction of sense perception]; in the higher [subdivision in the mind, that is, in reason], the soul passes out of hypotheses [ideas], and goes up to a principle [the Good] which is above hypotheses, making no use of images as in the former case [of understanding sense phenomena], but proceeding only in and through the ideas themselves.”

Hegel and the early Strauß employ the Platonic/Cartesian distinction between understanding (intellection) and imagination (perception).¹⁰⁸ For Plato, the imagination (*Republic* 510a: φαντάσματα, "an image presented in the mind by an object") is the imaging or representations that constitute sense perception. Descartes then distinguished between understanding and imagining by saying: I can 'understand' by intellection a chiliagon, which is 'known but not seen,' even though I cannot 'imagine' it, that is, even though I cannot see it in sense perception.¹⁰⁹ In Hegel's terminology, I can have an empty idea without representations. In the case of Hegel's Absolute Knowledge, then, I can understand the Absolute Idea abstractly and embed it in a logic of Double Negation to account for a horizontal, immanent, divine creativity, even though I cannot imagine it, that is, even though I cannot experience it in sense perception. *What this really means is that the Absolute Idea Itself is by no means, as the sole, a priori synthetic judgment,*¹¹⁰ necessarily the Absolute Causality of all 'that is' but, rather, by its own criterion is an 'empty abstraction.' Hegel's and Strauß' understanding of 'science' (*Wissenschaft*) is that 'knowledge' can only occur where there is both intellection and imagination (content/*Inhalt* and representations/*Form*). Nevertheless, despite this insistence by Hegel and the early Strauß that imagination/representations are required for knowledge to be actual (*Wirklichkeit*), the 'true' content of knowledge is the appropriate 'idea' of intellection.

This insistence by Hegel of the necessity of both intellection and imagination drives the logic of his Double Negation meta-narrative that he claims accounts for the necessary causality of creation. However, Hegel wants to have his cake and eat it too: Although finite imagination is supposedly what ensures that 'ideas' are not merely 'empty abstractions,' nevertheless, the physical world, which includes finite imagination, is subordinate to, and 'opposed to,' the truth of Absolute Spirit.¹¹¹ The 'cunning of reason' is Absolute Spirit's silent and imperceptible governing the dialectical process of Double Negation to achieve Absolute Knowledge and Absolute Freedom in Absolute Spirit – despite and 'behind the back' of events and agents.¹¹²

108. Plato's Similes of the Sun and Line are not only valuable for an understanding of Hegel's epistemological distinction between content (*Inhalt*) and representations (*Form*), but they are a crucial aid to understanding why Hegel (and Strauß) call Kant a 'subjectivist.' See Chapter 8: "Hegel's Reclined Plato and Kant as a 'Subjectivist'" 811 ff. and Chapter 9's section entitled "Hegel on Beauty" 868 ff.

109. See Descartes. *Meditations on First Philosophy in which the Existence of God and the Distinction of the Soul from the Body Are Demonstrated*. Translated by Donald A. Cress. 1641. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., Inc., 1983.

110. On Hegel's Absolute Concept as the 'sole' a priori synthetic judgment, see the "Preface" 61, n. 78.

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

112. See Hegel, "Introduction" to the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: GW XII: 45–46, 53 (Sibree trans.: 31–32, 38). See as well, Strauß' take on the cunning of reason in Chapter 1: "Methodology:" 168, n. 210.

The Idea/Concept, which is Absolute Knowledge, is incapable of appearing directly in actual representations, but Hegel and the early Strauß claim that it is ultimately, the single, and necessary universal "[...] Idea [that] *can emerge from everything* because it is always the Idea that is reflected in these infinitely many droplets."¹¹³ (emphasis added) What one experiences in the imagination as representations (*Form*), 'the infinitely many droplets' which *serve to 'guarantee' the 'reality' of the Absolute* content (*Inhalt*), are taken to have been caused by the logic of negation arising from the Absolute Idea Itself. However, Kant had already pointed out that, rather than grounding the causal explanation of events, logic is a 'canon' of rules for thought independent of an 'organon' (the agency of practical reason that is inseparable from sense perception and governed by moral principles), rather than a causality of phenomena.¹¹⁴

The claim that the Absolute Idea, 'beyond the imagination,' as a 'pure' logical Idea for which its 'grounding form' is the entirety of the imaged cosmos turns out to be nothing but a fantasy of the understanding as a mere 'empty idea.' Kant spoke of such flights of understanding in his "Introduction" to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. It is as if Kant was anticipating Hegel:

Misled by such a proof of the power of reason, the demand for the extension of knowledge recognizes no limits. The light dove, cleaving the air in her free flight, and feeling its resistance, might imagine that its flight would be still easier in empty space. It was thus that Plato [as the case with Hegel] left the world of the senses, as setting too narrow limits to the understanding and ventured out beyond it on the wings of the ideas, in the empty space of the pure understanding. He did not observe that with all his efforts he made no advance—meeting no resistance that might, as it were, serve as a support upon which he could take a stand, to which he could apply his powers, and so set his understanding in motion. It is, indeed, the common fate of human reason to complete its speculative structures as speedily as may be, and only afterwards to enquire whether the foundations are reliable. All sorts of excuses will then be appealed to, in order to reassure us of their solidity [...] But [*sic.*] so far as the matter or content is concerned, there has been no extension of our previously possessed concepts, but only an analysis of them. Since [*sic.*] this procedure yields real knowledge *a priori* [e.g., as the case with Hegel's Absolute Spirit], which progresses in an assured and useful fashion, reason is so far misled as surreptitiously to introduce, without itself being aware of so doing, assertions of an entirely different order, in which it attaches to given concepts others completely foreign to them, and moreover attaches them *a priori*. And [*sic.*] yet it is not known how reason can be in position to do this. Such a question is never so much as thought of.¹¹⁵

113. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 14–15. This is a misapplication, if not unintentional then a major distortion, of Kant's Copernican Turn, which shifts the focus from objective judgment to subjective conditions of possibility and capacities that make possible the experience of objective phenomena, in the first place. The crucial difference is that Kant is talking about the finite conditions of possibility for experience, understanding, and responsible agency in the world. Hegel and the early Strauß are talking about the ultimate, eminent, causality that brings about any and all experience (or the infinitely many 'droplets' of actual reality as well as their true ideal content).

114. See Kant's *Logic* AA IX: 11–12; 15–16 and 49, n. 36.

115. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 8–9.

For Hegel/the early Strauß content [*Inhalt*] (ideas) occurs only in consciousness. It is only in consciousness that the representations of form have meaning, that is, make sense and are truly known. Content [*Inhalt*] is freed from inadequate form and elevated into consciousness. In Strauß' account of Hegel that follows, note, especially, what he means by content [*Inhalt*] and form which I will then contrast with Kant's use of the terms below. Strauß writes:

[...] as with Homer who [...] said that [...] things] have two names; one in the language of the gods, the other in the language of humans on the earth's surface: there are, then, for every substance two languages; one of the feelings, representation, and communication, in finite categories and one-sided abstraction-nestled thought, the other of concrete concepts. Here is where the difficulty lies: to separate in a content [*Inhalt*] what is the content [*Inhalt*] as such, of thought, from that which belongs to the representation [Form], as such. Philosophy is charged with stripping off the forms that are representation [to emphasize only content]. Everyday thought has no awareness of this distinction [between form and content]. Because truth is connected to this (form-) determination [in the senses], everyday thought believes that the [mental] content [*Inhalt*] has no role to play.

*Is it, therefore, true that [mental] content [*Inhalt*] is so indifferent to the form according to the principles of [everyday] philosophy from which this determination of the relation between content and form arises? Are they really so externally related to one another that, with change on one side the other continues to persist unchanging? It is the case in Hegel's *Logic*¹¹⁶ that content [*Inhalt*] is not raw but formed matter; that the falsehood of the distinction between form and content [*Inhalt*] is recognized in the higher sphere of speculative thinking. [In this higher sphere] it is pure form itself which becomes content [*Inhalt*] so that the content [*Inhalt*] is nothing other than changing form into content [*Inhalt*] and form is nothing other than the changing of content [*Inhalt*] into form.¹¹⁷ (emphasis added)*

In the higher sphere of speculative thinking (that is, consciousness), one must distinguish between the 'thinker' and her/his thoughts/ideas so that ideas *in the mind* for their thinker are analogous to representations (forms) in sense perception. Yet, thoughts themselves are not imagined, that is, external representations, but are themselves inseparable from the 'true' content (*Inhalt*) that is internal to the mind. Consciousness as Absolute Spirit, then, thinks its thoughts in the mind as a relationship between the Absolute Concept (of the unified 'I') and the multiplicity of ideas so that in the mind, although there is a distinction between the Absolute Concept and ideas, they together constitute the content (*Inhalt*) of consciousness – both Absolute and finite.

However, *in the lower sphere of everydayness*, Hegel clearly subordinates perceived form to mental content.

116. Strauß footnotes to Hegel's *Logic* here.

117. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 11–12.

[...] [W]hen Hegel unhesitatingly calls the form of representation subordinate [and] inadequate, which for him results in religion's absolute content [*Inhalt*], *one must ask whether the content [*Inhalt*] can be absolutely present in a finite form? Is it not, rather, that this form as finite is inappropriate to the [absolute] Idea?* Hegel himself claims that there is a difference whether reason is explicit or only vaguely present in religion [...] *He himself claims that an inexplicit, only vaguely present reason is not yet actual [keine wirkliche] and, in the inadequate forms of concealed speculative and moral content [*Inhalt*], reason is not yet speculatively [truly] and morally present.*¹¹⁸ (emphasis added)

Nonetheless, Hegel claims that 'truth' is not identical with 'representations' but is always and already at the core of representations because representations are a manifestation of 'true' content.

[...] Truth, he [Hegel] says, can appear to direct consciousness in multiple sensory ways because the Idea is One in All, is *universal necessity* [...] Hence, *the Idea can emerge from everything because it is always the Idea in these infinitely many droplets, which reflect the Idea.* The Idea is represented, presaged in the seed that is simultaneously the fruit of the tree as its final determination. The seed dies in the earth and the plant can only emerge with this negation. Such a narrative, perception, and appearance can be elevated to universality by Spirit. Thereby, *the history of the seed, the sun, are a symbol of the Idea, but only a symbol: they are forms [Gestaltungen] that are not adequate to the Idea that is their actual content [*Inhalt*]; awareness is external to them, their meaning does not exist in them as meaning. The object that exists in itself as concept [Begriff] is the spiritual subjectivity of the individual [der Mensch]. [S/]he is in [her-/]himself meaning; meaning doesn't occur external to [her/]him. [S/]he is all-interpreting, all-knowing, not a symbol, [her-]his consciousness is essentially the narrative itself, and the narrative of Spirit is not the narrative of an existence inappropriate to the Idea [...] [H]egel's speculative interpretation consists precisely in [the claim] that [...] the content [*Inhalt*] of Christianity must be freed and lifted out of an inappropriate form.*¹¹⁹ (emphasis added)

According to Hegel, only the philosopher in possession of the knowledge of the difference between *content* and *form* is able to grasp the truth of *forms*.¹²⁰

The insistence that Absolute Truth is grounded by representations regardless of their factual validity reduces representations to the status of a mere 'place marker' of Indifference. I can understand what a unicorn is although I can't experience it in the imagination, and insisting that a horse, a donkey, a mule, or whatever are equally sufficient representations to ground the 'truth' of my idea of a unicorn means that it really doesn't matter whether I am perceiving a horse, a donkey, a mule, or a unicorn. All that 'truly' matters is what I'm thinking.

After the publication of the *LJ*, Strauß came to view this account that both insists on the imagination as the establishment of 'actuality' while simultaneously dismissing the imagination as having anything to do with 'truth' to mean that the particularities,

118. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 13.

119. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 14–15.

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

the pain and suffering, of history was ultimately meaningless for Hegel. As a student in the Protestant Seminary (Stift) in Tübingen, Strauß met weekly under his leadership with a group of students. The student in whose room they met, Gustav (von) Binder, already in those discussions found Hegel's insistence on the historical problematic. Whereas, Ziegler reports, Strauß was enamored with what Hegel said "about religion, its essence, and its relation to knowledge," "Binder was primarily interested in the historical impact of the work, *which admittedly only touches on the historical as if with swallow's wings*."¹²¹ Within two years of the publication of the *LJ*, it is clear that Binder's insight did not fall on deaf ears.

Especially when it comes to miracles, Strauß points out, the distinction between content and form is especially trenchant. A literal miracle reverses the relationship between form and content (*Inhalt*). *Rather than a rationally necessary content (Inhalt) governing a set of accidental forms, when it comes to a miracle, a set of fantastic, accidental forms determines the rational necessity of their content (Inhalt)*. A miracle, then, would be a fantastic representation (form), which would require that its content (*Inhalt*) was rationally, necessarily true. Should acceptance of a miracle as a factual event be essential to faith, then such a faith "[...] is belief in a content [*Inhalt*] that is accidental [*zufällig*, not absolute], that is, it is not true because true faith has no accidental content [*Inhalt*]."¹²² *Not only would the philosopher/theologian be put out of business, but also all rational order collapses under the weight of fantasy.*

We have here an epistemological conundrum and a vicious, hermeneutical circle driving the understanding of Hegelian Absolute Knowledge. First, the epistemological conundrum: By definition the Absolute Idea cannot appear directly in perception (as a representation or form in the imagination), which would require imagining the totality of the 'infinitely many droplets' of representation that we are no more capable of doing than imagining a chiliagon. Consequently, a finite, 'accidental' set of representations (a selected portion of the whole) is taken by Hegel to be the basis for the claim that a unity of an Absolute Spirit was the rationally necessary content (*Inhalt*) of that finite, accidental set of representations.

The question becomes: How is one to determine that Absolute Spirit is not a 'fantasy' just as a unicorn is a 'fantasy' if it is the content (*Inhalt*) of the judgment that determines its 'truth' and, as with the case of a unicorn, there is no representation of Absolute Spirit in the imagination? What would prohibit our taking an imaginary, finite set of accidental representations as the form that anchors our truth claim of an absolute unity to experience (Absolute Spirit)? Such a conclusion would mean to claim to know absolutely that the universe is a miracle, which would be belief in a content (*Inhalt*) that is accidental and not true because truth has no accidental content. In fact, though, Hegel's notion of Absolute Spirit is merely a dictum (*Machtspruch*) that everything comes from Absolute Spirit negating Itself only to return to Itself by a

121. Ziegler I: 51.

122. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 252.

Second Negation. It is a dictum that overlooks that it rests upon the assumption of the Principle of Sufficient Reason and the denial of an infinite regress.

Second, the vicious, hermeneutical circle here is that the metaphysical claim of Hegelianism is that Absolute Spirit generates the finite representations (form) that are then taken to be sufficient ground to claim the truth of a rationally necessary content (*Inhalt*) for the unity of Absolute Spirit. In fact, though, the purported truth claim is only a judgment based on accidental representations (form) asserted to have originated, of course logically 'necessarily,' in Absolute Spirit in the first place. When this vicious, hermeneutical circle is placed on the back of the turtle of what turns out to be Hegel's anthropomorphic analogy grounded in finite consciousness and its experience of 'reason,' we end up with an enthusiastic-rapturous elephant on the back of the representation of a fantasy, that is, an anthropomorphic turtle, with everything being turtles from there all the way down.

Hegel's and the early Strauß' Idealism is no more illuminated and its limits no better identifiable than in their account of Absolute Knowledge as the top-down, true content [*Inhalt*] of Spirit, which, in turn, is the 'explanation' why there is a world and establishes the ultimate goal of the world as Spirit's awareness of Itself. In short, there is no 'form' for Absolute Spirit so that, according to their own criterion, determines whether or not the content (*Inhalt*) is 'merely empty,' Absolute Spirit is an enthusiastic-rapturous judgment of 'merely empty abstraction,' not a true, 'scientific' judgment.¹²³

In contrast, according to Kant, all experience, understanding, and agency occur (but are not caused) because *we are immersed in a world of empirical appearances*. To be sure, experience, understanding, and agency are not reducible to empirical phenomena. Empirical phenomena without concepts are blind (an organon without a canon), and ideas without appearances are empty (a canon without an organon).¹²⁴ An empty canon can be a system of logic, but it can also be fantasies (conspiracies). Finite, transcendental consciousness must necessarily add *lawful* elements to appearances in

123. In his discussion of the history of the Church's acceptance of the notion that revelation in the scriptures is incomplete and needs supplementation by new revelation, Strauß employs his distinction between the two epistemological components of content (*Inhalt*) and representations (*Form*). It is possible to experience an "enthusiastic-perceptible" kind of content (*Inhalt*) grounded in a "fantastic" form, which one would call wild speculation without any legitimate truth. See *Glaubenslehre* I. 258. In other words, fantasy representations in form are no guarantee that their content (*Inhalt*) is true. Fantasy representations in form can lead to content claims (*Inhalt*) of the truth that are enthusiastic raptures. What determines the truth of a representation (form) is the 'rational necessity' of its content (*Inhalt*). Strauß established this principle a few pages earlier when he discussed Lessing's formula: "The accidental truths of history [= accidents of form in representations] can never be the absolute truths [the rationally necessary content] of reason." For Lessing the claim that one must believe in a miracle as the confirmation of the truth of Christ, then, consists in requiring that an 'accidental' (rather than only a 'rationally necessary' content *Inhalt*) can establish truth). Such a claim would contradict true faith, which has no 'accidental' content (*Inhalt*). See *Glaubenslehre* I: 251–252.

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

order to experience, understand, and act as we do. These elements are necessary, but they are not causally determinative.

It is the task of *Critical Idealism* to identify the *a priori* elements that transcendental consciousness requires (but does not create) in order to process appearances. The *content* of experience is appearances without which we could have no ideas about elements not directly present in the appearances that are required in order for us to experience appearances. In short, *content is 'bottom-up' for Kant* that anchors humanity in a world of appearances but, obviously, requires imperceptible, finite, transcendental elements in order for finite, transcendental consciousness to experience, understand, and act as it does. Kant is fundamentally an empiricist. Succinctly, Kant understands (finite epistemology), he doesn't claim to give certain, causal explanations!

In *On a Discovery* (1790), Kant responds to Johann Augustus Eberhard's review of Kant's 'critical philosophy' in the *Philosophisches Magazin* in which Eberhard

takes Kant's "Thoughts without content [perceptions, *Inhalt*] are empty, perceptions [*sinnliche Anschauungen*] without concepts are blind" to mean that Kant's notion of a 'thing-in-itself' is empty because the thing-in-itself cannot appear in representations (perception). Eberhard reformulates Kant's aphorism as:

All representations that are not appearances are empty of sensible perceptual forms [...] – All *representations of things-in-themselves* are representations that are not appearances [...] Hence, they are absolutely empty. [Eberhard claims Kant should have concluded:] Things-in-themselves are representations empty of sensible perceptual forms.¹²⁵ (emphasis added)

Kant protests Eberhard's interpretation as "an improper formulation not found in the *Critique*" and responds that the last sentence "is actually the only conclusion that one can draw out of the *Critique* whereas the first two are made up additions."¹²⁶ Kant, then, points out that representations of things not in appearances are empty of perception and, hence, as Kant claims, *they are empty of knowledge – but that does not mean that they are 'empty abstractions.'* They are necessary *additions to perception*, which itself is a 'peculiar receptivity of the mind' to search for a concept to understand when it is affected by sensation.

In other words, we cannot know things-in-themselves directly. However, that does not mean that they are empty with no role to play in understanding. *It is precisely their inability to be known directly that calls for transcendental consciousness to add a priori synthetic judgments to phenomena in order to adequately understand them; not that we absolutely can know (or prove) the thing-in-itself.* Kant adds: "The reason for the possibility of sensory perception is [...] neither a limit of the cognitive faculty [the imperceptible thing-in-itself] nor an image [in the mind]; it is the mere peculiar

125. Kant, *On a Discovery* AA VIII: 214.

126. Kant, *On a Discovery* AA VIII: 214.

receptivity of the mind, when it is affected by something (in the sensation), to get an idea according to its subjective constitution."¹²⁷ Understanding occurs neither by a direct grasp of the thing-in-itself as a substance¹²⁸ nor by a capriciously constructed, mental abstraction,¹²⁹ which would be brute, Nominalist skepticism. Rather, understanding (not Absolute Knowledge) occurs by the application of *a priori* synthetic elements to appearances by means of an *a priori* conceptual scheme that fits into an architectonic of lawfulness applicable to a set of given phenomena.¹³⁰

For Kant, flights of intellectual fancy always are reined in by sensations and the assumption of their lawful order. Without sensations, one is only a dove dreaming that it can fly in a vacuum.

According to Hegel (and Strauß down to 1837), *content is 'top-down' for Hegel* (and the early Strauß) that anchors humanity in Absolute Spirit, Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Freedom over against the relative spirit, knowledge, and freedom experienced in nature. Hegel is fundamentally an idealist. Succinctly, Hegel explains (absolute causality)!

In dramatic contrast to Hegel, then, when Kant speaks of form, he is talking *not* about the representations (images or *Bilder*) of external phenomena but of the processing of sense phenomena in consciousness. Kant writes two pages after the above passage in the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

There are two rules which logicians must always bear in mind when dealing with pure general logic:

As general logic, it abstracts from all content of the knowledge of understanding and from all differences in its objects and deals with nothing but *the mere form of thought*.

As pure logic, it has nothing to do with empirical principles, and [...] it must be [...] entirely *a priori*.¹³¹ (emphasis added)

Again clearly, here *form refers to 'the mere form of thought,' not to external representation but to the intelligible realm and its functions.*

127. Kant, *On a Discovery* AA VIII: 222.

128. See Kant, *On a Discovery* AA VIII: 215: Critical Idealism "[...] says: The objects as things in themselves give the material for empirical views (they contain the reason to determine the imaginative faculty according to its sensuality), but they are not their matter [Stoff]."

129. On Kant's rejection of conceptual 'constructivism,' see his comments on the "functional" nature of concepts (*Verhältnisvorstellungen*), which are necessary to understand objects (not direct perception of substances), see Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 66–67 (*Verhältnisvorstellungen*), 93 (all sensible perception is effects, whereas concepts are functions), especially; see as well, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* XXIX: 889 (A concept arises as a consequence of the experience of appearances because "I imagine the identity of my apperception in many representations.").

130. See Kant's discussion of the methodology of pure reason that is the final section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

131. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 78.

We can say that Hegel/Strauß have turned Kant on his head and that Kant is here shattering any sense that he's a Platonic idealist.¹³² Furthermore, confirmation that Kant is no Platonic/Hegelian Idealist, who is some kind of a 'dualist' who claims that Spirit/consciousness can generate matter, is nowhere clearer in Kant's writings than in the 'Preface' to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "I am just as surely conscious that there are external things which are related to my senses as I am conscious that I myself unequivocally exist in time."¹³³

In the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, he confirms his conviction that as 'idealist' as philosophy must be, it is nothing but *a concern to understand experience in the world*. Kant, therefore, insists that it never occurred to him to doubt the existence of things, which constitutes idealism in the ordinary sense.¹³⁴ Kant's goal is not to provide an ultimate, causal *explanation* of, but to *understand*, the world of appearances!¹³⁵

There isn't a more forceful rejection of what Hegel and Strauß call Absolute Knowledge, than the opening lines of the "Introduction" to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

There can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience [...] In the order of time, therefore, we have no knowledge antecedent to experience, and with experience all our knowledge begins.

But [*sic.*] though all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it all arises out of experience. For it may well be that even our empirical knowledge is made up of what we receive through impressions and of what our own faculty of knowledge (sensible impressions serving merely as the occasion) supplies from itself.¹³⁶

*The pure insight of Absolute Knowledge for Hegel/the early Strauß is Absolute Spirit*¹³⁷ (the World Soul/Spirit, the Absolute Idea), empty of all content (*Inhalt*) and representations (*Form*):

132. Kant explicitly rejects Platonic Idealism in "Refutation of Idealism" of the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 275 ff.

133. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B xxxix*. One should read the entire footnote and look, as well, at B 273: "[...] that the concept precedes perception signifies that the concept is a mere possibility. The perception that supplies the [empirical] content to the concept is the sole mark of actuality. One can, however, know the existence of the thing prior to its perception and, consequently, comparatively speaking, in an *a priori* manner only if it occurs along with perception in accordance with the principles of their empirical connection (that is, analogically)."

134. See *Prolegomena* AA IV: 293.

135. Understanding involves 'explanation,' but nowhere does Kant claim to provide ultimate and absolute explanations.

136. Kant *Critique of Pure Reason* B 1 (Norman Kemp Smith trans.)

137. Note the difference in usage of the term 'pure' by Hegel and Kant! For Kant's contrasting meaning, see 558, n. 109.

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, without pure consciousness] [...] [Faith] is, then, pure consciousness of essence, that is, of ordinary inwardness and is, therefore, thinking [...] The immediacy by which the essence is in faith consists in its object as essence, that is, pure thought. However, this immediacy [...] consists in the significance that is objective being 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.¹³⁸

Absolute Spirit (pure insight) negates Itself to establish the conditions for multiplicity in the first of two, ultimate negations.

[...] the first and foremost moment is Absolute Being, spirit absolutely self-contained, so far as it is simple eternal substance. But [*sic.*] in the process of realizing its constitutive notion [the Concept that thinks Absolute Being], which consists in being spirit, that substance passes over into a form [First Negation] where it exists for an other; its self-identity becomes actual [*zum wirklichenden*] Absolute Being, actualized in self-sacrifice; *it becomes a self, but a self that is transitory* [...] Hence the third stage is the return of the self [Second Negation] thus alienated, the substance thus abased, into its first primal simplicity. Only when this is done is Spirit presented and manifested as Spirit.¹³⁹ (emphasis added)

Absolute Knowledge's awareness, according to Hegel, is dependent upon finite consciousness being able to 'imagine' and, then, 'negate,' a 'given,' empirical world of sense perception created by Absolute Spirit. However, Hegel is not interested in illuminating the conditions of possibility for the experience of a world of sense perception. Rather, his sole intent is to provide *the absolute, causal explanation* of the world of sense perception as a product of Absolute Spirit on the basis of a descriptive, causal logic of Double Negation (dialectic) that finite consciousness must 'negate' to experience truth. In short, *the only significance of multiplicity for Hegel is that it serves as the occasion for 'the point of indifference' that liberates from multiplicity.*

In contrast, Kant anchors understanding in the 'content' (*Inhalt*) of sense perception (*sinnliche Anschauung*), not intellect (*intellektuelle Anschauung*). Furthermore, Kant explicitly distinguishes between dogmatic and metaphysical speculation. *Dogmatic speculation* is fanaticism and rapturist (*Schwärmererei*)¹⁴⁰ that elevates conscious-

138. See Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 394 (Baillie trans.: 553).

139. Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW II: 395 (Baillie trans.: 554–555).

140. Kant rejects 'Platonic idealism' [including, implicitly, Hegel's dogmatic speculations] in the "Appendix" to the *Prolegomena* AA IV: 375*: "Actual idealism always has a rapturous [*schwärmerische*] intention and can have no other. My idealism, however, is only to understand the possibility of our *a priori* knowledge of objects of experience, which is a problem that has not yet been solved, not even raised. Thus, [in my idealism] the whole of rapturist [*schwärmerische*] idealism, which always (as can already be seen from Plato) proceeded from our *a priori* knowledge [...] to another (namely intellectual) perception than that of the senses, falls away because it never occurred to anyone that the

ness to a 'higher' dimension above and independent of *the world* of concrete agency. *Metaphysical speculation* of transcendental consciousness (not metaphysics of Absolute Knowledge as ultimate origin of any and all things), is the product of transcendental critique, which identifies the required conditions and capacities for experiencing, understanding, and exercising agency responsibly *in the world*.¹⁴¹

As if anticipating Hegel and the early Strauß, Kant speaks in the "Introduction" to the *Critique of Pure Reason* of the "[...] demand for the extension of knowledge" as "knowing no limits."¹⁴² He employs an analogy to the flight of a dove that in its soaring flight experiences the resistance of the air and believes it would be easier to fly in a vacuum of empty space. Kant refers to Plato as venturing out beyond the world of understanding "on the wings of ideas." However, in a vacuum there is no support "upon which [... one] could take a stand." Ideas may be eternal and unchanging, but we experience them only under the 'resistance' of particulars whereas the claim that ideas exist independent of and separate from particulars is pure conjecture (as if trying to fly in a vacuum):

It is, indeed, the common fate of human reason to complete its speculative structures as speedily as may be, and only afterwards to enquire whether the foundations are reliable. All sorts of excuses will then be appealed to, in order to reassure us of their solidity [...]¹⁴³

As far as we have ever experienced, though, ideas occur only in a finite consciousness. An individual is not even able to prove that some other consciousness other than her/his own employs them. Once I leave the 'air resistance' of my limited mind, I am employing more or less, speculative analogies. However, an analogy that denies its own primary analogate (here, the finite human mind) as having any 'truth' because

senses should also perceive *a priori*." Speaking of rapture (*Schwärmerei*) Kant writes in the *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 86–87: "There can be nothing more meaningless than that which raises man above himself (as a part of the sensory world), which ties him to an order of things that only the intellect can think, and which at the same time has the whole sensory world, with it the empirically determinable existence of man in time and the whole of all purposes (which alone is appropriate to such unconditional practical laws as the moral one) beneath it." He defines 'solely rapturous' (*baare Schwärmerei*) as 'sensory insanity' in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* AA VII: 145: "If, however, certain judgments and insights are assumed to arise directly from the inner sense (not by means of the intellect [McG: that is, not by means of *a priori* synthetic judgment]), but the latter is assumed to be self-commanding, and sensations are assumed to be valid for judgments, then this is solely rapturous (*baare Schwärmerei*), which is closely related to sensory insanity."

141. Kant writes in the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* AA IV: 472: "All true metaphysics is taken from the nature of the faculty of thought itself and is by no means fictitious because it is not borrowed from experience, but contains the pure actions of thought (that is, *a priori* concepts and principles), which bring the multiplicity of empirical ideas into the lawful connection in the first place – by means of which it can become empirical knowledge, i.e. experience."

142. 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.

143. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 9.

truth only occurs in the empty space of pure ideas, is perhaps the wildest, fanciful speculative judgment that it is possible to make. It may appear to be a powerful exercise in self-humility that there is a realm of ideas independent and 'above' finitude,¹⁴⁴ but it ultimately is a claim of the highest hubris because it assumes that the universe is constructed on the basis of the same 'idea'/copy, teleological structure as finite human consciousness.

In short, all assertions with respect to the status of ideas without the 'air resistance' of finite consciousness is human hubris. Furthermore, the claim that ideas exist in 'empty space' (in a vacuum) is not only speculative but also fantastic enthusiasm. Rather, agreeing with Kant, one must rein-in one's speculation to say that 'ideas' of pure reason and categories/concepts of the understanding are *a necessary assumption* for us (as finite, limited reason) to be able to experience, understand, and act responsibly the world of finite things and events as we can/do, but as far as we experience we do not possess them 'by birth' (as innate from an 'empty space'/a vacuum brought into the world). Rather, they must be learned (acquired in 'air resistance').¹⁴⁵

A further indication of Strauß' stepping back from Hegel is that in 1841 Strauß himself embraces a claim of an Absolute Idea as the origin of history from Descartes (as well as Spinoza) on the relationship between the dualism that is taken to be understanding and imagination.

The difference between understanding and imagining, according to Descartes and Spinoza, is that the former is intelligible and the latter is sensible. Whereas I can imagine a pentagon (image it in my mind) and understand it to be five-sided, I am unable to imagine a chiliagon (image it in my mind) although I can understand it to be a 1,000 sided figure.¹⁴⁶ *When the mind understands, "[...] it turns itself toward itself and gazes upon one of the ideas that are in it. But [sic.] when it imagines, it turns itself toward the body, and intuits something in the body similar to an idea either understood by the mind or perceived by sense.*"¹⁴⁷ (emphasis added) On the basis of understanding as non-extended and imagination as extended, Strauß concludes rather remarkably given that Hegel and the early Strauß' claim that the imagination is (representations are) what ensures that an idea is not merely an 'empty abstraction':

144. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* GW XVI: 182–183. See above the citation of this passage from Hegel: 657, n. 22.

145. See Kant, *On a Discovery*: AA VIII: 222–223.

146. See Descartes, "Sixth Meditation" in *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1983): 45–46 (72–73). The citation numbers in brackets here refer to the Charles Adam and Paul Tannery *Oeuvres de Descartes*. Vol. VII: *Meditationes de Prima Philosophia* (Paris: Léopold Cerf, Imprimeur-Éditeur, 1904). It is not relevant for Strauß' of the use of this distinction between understanding and imagination, but it is important to note that Descartes' argument is to make a case for the existence of bodies, which the mind is capable of doubting (unlike the *cogito ergo sum* that is demonstrably proved to especially when it doubts itself – in order to doubt the *cogito* must exist – see Part IV of Descartes' *Discord on Method*). In short, Strauß is employing Descartes' distinction between understanding and the imagination to 'prove' that ideas/the Idea exists.

147. Descartes, "Sixth Meditation:" 46 (73).

[Speaking with Spinoza,] [w]e must and can think [in non-extended consciousness] [...] that eternity can only be construed as a beginningless and endless time sequence, God can only come into being in an endlessness of creatures next to and after one another. However, we can so little imagine an endless time as we can a limitless space as long as the attempt to imagine them is tangled up in an endless alternation of setting and removing of limits [in the realm of extension]. However, in as much as we recognize that this impossibility is grounded in [...] the imagination, [...] it would be incorrect were we [...] to not desire to think [understand] further, than we are capable of representing to ourselves [in the imagination]. It is so with respect to eternity to say, as Spinoza said of God, that we say of eternity: *non imaginari, sed quidem intelligere possumus* [we don't imagine (eternity), but we can, indeed, understand (it)].¹⁴⁸

In the next sentence, Strauß adds the key theme that drives his inclusive Christology over against the Hegelians: "*The positing of the finite with the Absolute as well as the inseparability of both constitutes a fundamental conviction (!) of speculative philosophy in our age.*"¹⁴⁹ This is by no means a trivial claim, but neither has Strauß formulated the conviction by means of the absolute certitudes of Hegel's meta-narrative of Double Negation nor has he provided an accounting for his Idealism here. As I present in the next chapter on practical reason, unlike Kant who claims that concepts are required *a priori* assumptions of lawfulness (we would now add statistical significance and algorithms) of reflecting judgment as justifying our efforts at understanding and responsible agency, Strauß appears here to embrace Scholastic Intellectualism absent the Personal Theism that grounds it for the Scholastics. Strauß appears here to have forgotten the theme of 'empty abstraction' that was a central pillar of his earlier rejection of Kant.

Returning to Hegel's Absolute Knowledge, if understanding or thinking the 'truth' of Absolute Knowledge requires, according to Hegel, a Second Negation that nullifies multiplicity (the imagined) 'back into' consciousness, then, understanding of the Absolute One of Absolute Spirit occurs only by denial of the imagination, which Absolute Spirit created. In other words, although Absolute Spirit is the source of the very structure of imagination and understanding, which allows, then, for the Second Negation of the imagination and in order to think the Absolute One, which the Absolute One by Itself cannot think, then he is clearly caught in a vicious hermeneutical circle that reduces the particularities of history and individual consciousness to insignificance in themselves. The particularities of history and individual consciousness are only a logical 'point of indifference.'

Furthermore, the claim that the finite and the Absolute are inseparable presupposes that Absolute Spirit generates a world of images (of the imagination) by means of a logic of Double Negation. Yet, as I've noted, logic is a 'canon' without an 'organon.' It is a system of rules that is not tied to any specific phenomena unlike mathemat-

148. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 656.

149. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 656.

ics, which is both a 'canon' with an 'organon' of agency inseparable from physical sensation and governed by moral principles.¹⁵⁰ *Logic can't causally explain anything! It is a description of how we 'ought' to think. The claim that logic can explain the world is an 'excuse' to fly in empty space (a vacuum) without any resistance.* Absolute Knowledge constitutes an understanding "further than we are capable of representing to ourselves" in the imagination. Consequently, at least with respect to its claim for Absolute Knowledge, *Hegelian speculative philosophy soars into empty abstraction (!)* beyond the resistance of the air 'because we must and can' think it so – without being able to imagine it.

Hegel and the early Strauß committed an error of logic and surreptitiously introduced a causal account that silently assumes the Principle of Sufficient Reason so that they end up with substituting a mere logic of *causal description* for a metaphysical *causal explanation* (a classic μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος) to ensure that Absolute knowledge is no merely 'empty abstraction.'

When one adds to the epistemological, logical, and causal conundrums the literal, anthropomorphic projection that contaminates every theology of 'reason'¹⁵¹ and goes on to insist that finite, human consciousness is required in order that God becomes God, the response can't be to say that this 'speculative metaphysics' is absolutely false. However, neither may it be said by a wide margin that it is remotely, Absolute Knowledge and Truth, and it increases the likelihood that humanity is only worshipping itself.¹⁵² It is at best a literal, anthropomorphic wager of non-epistemic faith grounded in unlimited human hubris.

c) Kant's Reflecting judgment, not Hegelian Absolute Knowledge

The capacity of reflecting judgment (*reflektierende Urteilskraft*) is far broader than establishing the (believed) 'certainties' of re-produced judgment (*bestimmende Urteilskraft*) or the metaphysical dictums of the Hegelian Concept and ideas just as the physical world of 'actuality' is far more than merely the finite condition for a 'point of indifference' from the world to think Absolute Spirit by the elite few who are fortunate to understand it. Furthermore, the physical world is far broader than Spirit's ultimate, hidden hand of God in history as the 'cunning of reason' seeking to experience only Itself to the neglect of history, and understanding is far broader than claiming to grasp one Absolute Truth. In fact, the key to understanding is not its possession by innate metaphysical ideas or absolute causal explanations, but, as Lessing proposed, by the search for it.

150. See page 49, n. 36 and "Speculative Metaphysics and Science" in Chapter 1: nts. 175, 176, 177.

151. See Feuerbach, *Wesen der Religion* (1848–1849) (Berlin: Deutsche Bibliothek, 1913): Lecture 14: 134–135.

152. On the limits to anthropomorphisms, see: 34.

Autonomous freedom as finite, eminent causality 'above' (freedom-from), while never experienced as separable from, nature is capable of intentionally accomplishing things (freedom for-) that physical nature on its own can never accomplish. Without autonomous freedom, Hegel would be correct. Morality would only be an abstract duty that consists of a heteronomous, external, finger-waging authority but would be incapable of governing agency by moral principles because moral principles would be merely 'empty abstractions' of an unrealizable duty. For Hegel, 'I should, but I can't.' For Kant's broader moral theory, though, his aphorism is 'If I should, I can' precisely because the ground of morality is autonomous freedom.¹⁵³]

Kant calls reflecting judgment¹⁵⁴ the search for the concept appropriate for subsuming a specific perceptible manifold. However, in contrast to Hegel, this is no metaphysical 'deficiency.' In fact, Kant maintains that all 're-producing' (*bestimmend*) judgment, which consists in applying an already acquired concept to understand phenomena, was at some point a reflecting judgment. Hence, *rather than reflecting judgment flagging Kant's metaphysical deficiency, reflecting judgment is the incredible, heuristic strategy that transcendental consciousness employs to acquire new understanding.* Kant stresses, in fact, the pleasure that is associated with the success of finding an appropriate concept.¹⁵⁵

Kant initially refers to the 'gap' overcome by 'reflecting judgment' as

[...] the great gap (*Kluft*) between the supersensible and appearances.[McG: Note that both 'sides' of the 'gap' are in the mind!] Kant adds, immediately: "The concept of freedom determines nothing in regard to the theoretical cognition of nature; the concept of nature likewise determines nothing in regard to the practical laws of freedom [...] [A]lthough [...] the sensible cannot determine the supersensible in the subject, nonetheless the converse [the

153. On the distinction between Hegel's 'I should, but I can't' and Kant's 'if I should, I can,' see "Vol. II: Introduction:" "The Moral View of the World" 547 ff.

154. On Kant's notions of 'reflecting' and 're-producing' judgment as well as his distinction between broad, positive wit and the narrow, negative, capacity of judgment, see Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 179 ff. On my preference for translating 're-producing' rather than 'determining' judgment for '*bestimmende Urteilskraft*,' see "On Imagination, the Law of association, and Reflecting Judgment" at: 86, n. 26.

155. Kant writes that the conformity "[...] of perceptions with laws in accordance with universal concepts of nature (the categories [of the understanding]) we do not encounter the least effect on the feeling of pleasure in us nor can we encounter it, because here the understanding proceeds unintentionally, [...], by contrast the discovered unifiability of two or more empirically heterogeneous laws of nature under a principle that comprehends them both is the ground of a very noticeable pleasure [...]. To be sure, we no longer detect any noticeable pleasure in the comprehensibility of nature and the unity of its division into genera and species, by means of which alone empirical concepts are possible through which we cognize it in its particular laws; but it must certainly have been there in its time, and only because the most common experience would not be possible without it has it gradually become mixed up with mere cognition and is no longer noticed." (emphasis added) Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 187. Kant does not equate reason and feeling, but he identifies the 'passion for order' to be the fundamental motivator for reason. See Kant, *What does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?* ("Was heißt: sich im Denken orientieren?") AA VIII: 136 and 139".

supersensible can determine the sensible] is possible (/not in regard to the cognition of nature of course, but in regard to the consequences of the former on the latter) and is already contained in the concept of a causality through freedom, whose effect in accordance with its formal laws is to take place in the world [...]¹⁵⁶

Speaking of nature and freedom, then, Kant talks of their ‘concepts,’ not the ontological difference between body and mind: “[T]he capacity of judgment [...] provides the mediating concept between the concepts of nature and the concept of freedom.”¹⁵⁷

Kant’s ‘gap’ is not Hegel’s gap between nature and freedom: Hegel jumps on Kant’s claim that the ‘capacity of reflecting judgment’ “[...] provides the mediating concept between the concepts of nature and the concept of freedom”¹⁵⁸ to mean that ‘reflecting judgment’ is concerned with establishing the ultimate bridge of Absolute Identity between ‘objective’ nature and ‘subjective’ freedom.

[...] *the middle link between the concept of nature and the concept of freedom*, that is, between the objective variety [of judgment] determined by concepts [with respect to nature], which is understanding in general, and the [variety of judgment that is] pure abstraction of understanding [with respect to freedom]. *The region of Identity that elevates Itself in absolute judgment above the sphere of the theoretical as well as above the practical, this Identity, which is true and exclusive reason, has, according to Kant, nothing to do with reason but only with reflecting judgment.*¹⁵⁹ (emphasis added)

Hegel takes Kant’s reflecting judgment to mean a judgment ‘without a determinate idea’ in contrast to a re-productive judgment (*bestimmendes Urteil*) that already possesses ideas for objective phenomena. In other words, for Hegel, *a reflecting judgment is one without a ‘determinate idea,’* and, according to Hegel, there can only be one: the Absolute Concept. Having overlooked/intentionally ignored the Absolute Concept, “[w]here Kant comes to reason as the key to unraveling the taste antinomy [between freedom and nature], it is nothing but *the indeterminate idea of the supersensible* in us, which cannot be made comprehensible any further [...]¹⁶⁰

Hegel defines reflecting judgment, then, merely as a negative, specifying judgment (*bestimmendes Urteil*) that, already in possession of the ideas for objective phenomena, merely specifies the appropriate idea to a given set of phenomena. In other words, for Hegel, *a reflecting judgment is one without a ‘determinate idea.’* “Where Kant comes to reason as the key to unraveling the taste antinomy [between freedom and nature], it is nothing but *the indeterminate idea of the supersensible* in us, which cannot be made comprehensible any further [...]¹⁶¹

156. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 195.

157. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 196.

158. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 196.

159. Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen" GW II: 322.

160. Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen:" GW II: 323.

161. Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen:" GW II: 323.

Whereas Hegel takes the ‘gap’ to refer to a *metaphysical gap* between two substances, mind and body, which are separated in the sense of Descartes’ mind and body dualism in *Meditation II*, Kant takes the gap to be an *epistemological gap* between (passive) perception and (active) understanding. He refers to the the gap as arising between two kinds of mental activity: “[...] [R]eflecting judgment *mediates* between *the concepts* of nature [perception] and *the concept* of freedom [understanding].”¹⁶² (emphasis added) The experience of transcendental consciousness of a ‘gap’ is *internal to the mind* between ‘given’ appearances and understanding. *The issue at issue is: how does the mind get from appearances to understanding because these are, obviously, two very different mental states?*

Kant takes reflecting judgment to be the ‘third moment’ that overcomes the gap by its ‘adding to’ the appearances the concepts that it has deduced out of the imperceptible ‘association’ (relationalities) among the appearances. By the deducing of concepts it grasps the its grasp of the imperceptible relationality (the concept) that turns an aggregate of appearances into a rational order, *which results in understanding*. Kant is definitely not talking about a dualistic gap between substances and causes, and he is not talking about concepts as metaphysically innate always and already in the mind waiting to be applied to an aggregate of appearances.

As an Idealist, Hegel cannot fathom the notion that consciousness doesn’t already possess ideas (including the indeterminate idea of *the Absolute Concept*) for all that it might and could encounter. Hegel’s innate ideas are a not even what Ricoeur calls ‘worn out’ metaphors “[...] replaced by the production of a concept that erases its trace [...]”.¹⁶³ According to Hegel, ideas were never tensive metaphors but always and already metaphysical dictums (*Machtsprüche*) of absolute ‘truth.’ In dramatic contrast to Hegel’s metaphysical dictums, Kant’s reflecting judgment is the heuristic strategy that transcendental consciousness employs in order understand new phenomena with which it has not had any prior experience.

Rather than understand Kant’s notion of ‘reflecting judgment’ as the heuristic search for an appropriate concept for a perceptible manifold of appearances, Hegel takes reflecting judgment to mean the lack of knowledge of the ‘idea’ of the specifying judgment that is always and already given’, even if unknown. The only issue for Hegel is the application of the ‘true’ concept appropriate to the phenomena, which is always and already innate in the mind. He has no conception of the pleasure that Kant emphasizes that comes from dis-covering the conceptual and lawful order of nature. Hegel’s *specifying judgment* (*bestimmendes Urteil*) is not Kant’s *re-producing judgment* (*bestimmendes Urteil*). Hegel’s *specifying judgment* is eternal, absolute (causal) truth as the imperceptible ‘content’ of perception, and there is only one indeterminate, causal truth (the Absolute Concept). Hence, there is only one *reflecting judgment* for Hegel.

162. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 196. NOTE: Kant’s notion of ‘freedom’ is not Hegel’s Absolute Freedom of Absolute Spirit!

163. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*: 286.

Kant's *re-producing* judgment can be apodictic necessity when it comes to 'meta-physical' and 'transcendental principles,' but, when it comes to perceptible appearances, Kant's *re-producing* judgment, in principle, is always open to revision given the inaccessibility to 'things-in-themselves' and the relationalities that are 'concepts' of understanding. Hegel would surely be shocked to hear that originally all that he means by re-producing judgment (*bestimmendes*), according to Kant, was originally not the determination of always and already innate, eternal 'ideas,' which are the ultimate cause of phenomena, but the product of reflecting judgment, or what Hegel calls 'indeterminate ideas.'

According to Hegel, the Concept is *above both theoretical and practical reason*, that is, above finite cognition and analytical, technical/pragmatic agency.¹⁶⁴ This Concept is Absolute, 'Pure' Reason and, for Hegel, constitutes the necessary connecting link between nature's freedom and Absolute Spirit's Freedom.

However, according to Hegel, *the Idea/Concept of ultimate causality above theoretical and practical reason is absolutely necessary*. It is the Absolute Concept that is the causal origin of all 'that is.'¹⁶⁵ Here Hegel speaks of the sole, *a priori* synthetic judgment,¹⁶⁶ but he means the *synthesis* of dialectic, not Kant's *a priori* synthetic judgment that '*adds to*' phenomena elements not given directly in perception. Rather, Hegel's *a priori* synthetic judgment is the *necessary* synthesis of Absolute Spirit's Absolute Oneness prior to any and all twoness that *must have* dialectically negated *Itself* in order to commence the dynamic of dialectical negation that brought about all 'that is.'

Not having grasped Kant's insight that understanding is a genetic process of deductive understanding, which consists of the imperceptible relationalities that unite sets of phenomena,¹⁶⁷ Hegel insists that understanding is a matter solely of specifying (*bestimmendes*) judgment of Absolute Causality.

Rather than applying innate, true ideas to phenomena under the umbrella of the synthetic unity of Absolute Concept above theoretical and practical reason, the very

164. For a 'spatial' portrayal of the hierarchy understanding (practical reason), cognition (theoretical reason), and Absolute Spirit, see the discussion of Hegel's 'reclining' of Plato's Simile of the Line in Chapter 8: "Hegel's Reclined Plato and Kant as a 'Subjectivist'" 811 ff. and Chapter 9: "Hegel on Beauty:" 868 ff.

165. Whereas it is true that, although he recognized the inescapability of 'symbolic' anthropomorphism when it comes to claims beyond the limits of finite, transcendental consciousness (*Prolegomena* AA IV: 356), Kant was reticent to assign predicates to the Noumenon. However, his reticence is not because he took the Noumenon to be an 'indeterminate concept' but because such predicates, unless relevant to what can be known as *necessary* for the functioning of finite, transcendental consciousness, are dangerous flights of fantasy. Kant's reticence, then, is to avoid illusions. See, for example, Kant's *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 461–462.

166. On Hegel's sole, *a priori* synthetic judgment of Absolute Spirit, see the "Foreword:" 61.

167. On concepts as deduced relationalities/functions rather than Platonically innate or Nominalistic constructions, see the "Foreword:" 20, n. 3, Chapter 5: "Traces of an Intellectual Crisis:" 575, n. 54; and Chapter 6: "Grand Narratives of Theoretical Reason:" 709, n. 204.

‘weakness’ of Kant’s philosophy, according to Hegel, is precisely because Kant stresses reflecting judgment and does not speak of Absolute Knowledge.¹⁶⁸ Unable to think otherwise, for Hegel Kant *must be* a dualist with consciousness locked into subjectivity and constructing its own subjective understanding.

Where Kant comes to [... the true and sole] reason as the solution [that is, absolute identity], *reason for him is nothing but the indeterminate idea of the supersensible in us*, which cannot be made comprehensible further, – as if he had not himself given a concept of the same in the identity of the concept of nature and freedom.¹⁶⁹

Here Hegel chides Kant for ignoring his own concept of the ‘connecting link’ between nature and freedom. However, the only thing that Hegel shares in common with Kant with the concepts of nature and freedom are their labels.

d) Hegel and Kant on Nature and Freedom

Hegel views nature and Spirit as governed by two separate and separable freedoms: physical nature’s freedom restricts Absolute Freedom as it ‘grounds’ in ‘actuality’ (*Reelle*) the ‘true’ (*Ideelle*) freedom of Absolute Spirit. These two freedoms stand in opposition to one another.¹⁷⁰ The goal of Absolute Freedom is to escape from the restrictive suffering, pain, and passions of physical nature and to achieve finite spirit’s unification with Absolute Spirit.

In contrast, Kant views nature and freedom as distinct but complementary: physical nature is by no means free but exhaustively governed by ‘blind,’ mechanical, efficient causality. Freedom (autonomy) is only possessed by transcendental consciousness (not a speciesism claim because not necessarily possessed merely by human beings), which is capable, intentionally, of creating things that the blind, mechanical, efficient causality of nature cannot create on its own. Autonomous freedom, according to Kant, is both *freedom-from* the efficient causality of nature and, simultaneously, *freedom-for* its own creativity in and through nature. In short, autonomous freedom is not escaping from nature into Absolute Spirit.

The distinctions between Hegel’s and Kant’s understanding of nature and freedom lead to Hegel’s inappropriate insistence upon squeezing Kant into Hegel’s own system. The crucial difference between them is that *Hegel is an Absolute Idealist already in*

168. See Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen" GW II: 287–288.

169. Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen" GW II: 323.

170. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 455–456. On Hegel’s distinction between the real (*reelle*) and ideal thought (*ideelle*) see the "Preface:" 46, n. 31. See as well, Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaft* GW X: 237; Hegel, "Addendum" to the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaft* (1830) GW X: 237–238.

*possession of Absolute Knowledge beyond the world whereas Kant is an Archaeologist Intentionalist*¹⁷¹ *seeker of understanding and responsible agency in the world.*

In the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*, Kant proposes that concepts to the extent they are related to objects have a field (*Feld*), territory (*territorium*), or domain (*ditio*).¹⁷² A 'field' is a set of phenomena to which we can apply concepts regardless of our ability to achieve a genuine understanding. Nocturnal dreams are a 'field' in which we apply concepts to the phenomena with clarity and distinctness, but we have no genuine understanding because there is no causal order to the phenomena.¹⁷³ A 'territory' is a set of phenomena to which we can apply concepts *for which it is possible* that the phenomena are governed by lawfulness, but we have not yet established a lawful order for them. An example of such a territory is the experimental laboratory, which is governed by one's commitment to discernment of lawful order, but, until one has brought the experiment to a 'successful' conclusion, the lawfulness remains a hope. A 'domain' is a region of experience in which our concepts 'govern' the phenomena because we can and have discerned an imperceptible, lawful order of the region. Kant employs the Latin label '*ditio*' here, which literally means 'dominion' or 'sovereignty.'

In this context, the terms 'dominion' and 'sovereignty' do not mean 'subjugation' in the sense of at the disposal of capricious, willful self-service. *Kant identifies two domains of lawfulness:*¹⁷⁴ *the domain of theoretical reason (understanding of nature, not Platonic/Hegelian contemplation of reason beyond nature) and the domain of practical reason (responsible, moral agency).* Although Kant refers to a 'gap' (*Kluft*) between these two domains of nature and freedom, they are not metaphysically, separated regions of subjectivity and objectivity. Because *they are both experienced as appearances in transcendental consciousness, the 'gap' is an epistemological gap between appearances and understanding.*

According to Kant, then, reason is 'limited' and consists of two domains: theoretical reason and practical reason. Theoretical reason is concerned with understanding 'what is' (of materially determined appearances) whereas practical reason is concerned with 'what ought to be' (of autonomous freedom's generating of new, yet always within, appearances). Furthermore, although practical reason requires the understanding of 'what is' that is theoretical reason, theoretical reason is subordinate to, although not separated at any point from, practical reason. Hence, 'dominion' and 'sovereignty,' according to Kant, are not limited to the domain of theoretical reason. Rather, 'dominion' and 'sovereignty' are always answerable to practical reason, the issue of 'what ought to be.'

171. On Kant as an 'Archaeologist'/'Intentionalist,' see Vol. II: "Introduction:" 556, n. 108.

172. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 174 ff.

173. On Kant's notion of 'field' (*Boden*) as clarity and distinctness of perception without any hope of causal explanation and nocturnal dreams, see: 116 and, especially, n. 39

174. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 174.

A being capable of exercising practical reason must, by definition, be 'free' to ignore its moral responsibility because without 'freedom' there would only be material determinism, hence, no morality. However, *the capacity to ignore one's responsibilities is no license to do so*. The passion for, and faith in, lawfulness in understanding is a constant reminder that 'if one should, one can' although, unlike Hegel's "The Moral View of the World," there is no heteronomous, absolute 'one must'!¹⁷⁵ Self-governing of one's creative agency by this passion for lawfulness is what makes one 'worthy of respect.' However, deeper than respect is 'dignity' or the 'absolute (not merely relative) worth' of the individual because transcendental consciousness innately and indelibly, *universally possesses autonomy* (autonomous, creative freedom).¹⁷⁶

It is one thing merely to assert that theoretical and practical reason are inseparable as do Hegel/the early Strauß with their invocation of Absolute Spirit that unites abstract content (*Inhalt*) and concrete representations (*Form*). It is another thing to understand their relationship as a required condition of experience in a finite world by transcendental consciousness. The merely 'logical,' dogmatic claim that theoretical and practical reason are united by Absolute Knowledge and the Absolute Freedom of Absolute Spirit, 'logically' reduces all experience, understanding, and agency to illusory meaninglessness (*maya*).

Both *theoretical reason*, which seeks to understand 'what is,' and *practical reason*, which seeks to achieve 'what ought to be,' require a transcendental critique to identify the conditions of possibility, which are their respective capacities, as well as to identify what unites the two lawful systems of freedom and nature – far below the lofty unity of Hegel's Absolute Spirit. Unification of the two lawful systems of nature and freedom,

175. This 'If one should, one can' is dramatically in contrast to Hegel's 'I should, but I can't' in "The Moral View of the World" in the *Phänomenologie*. See "Vol. II: Introduction:" "The Moral View of the World" 547 ff.

176. On Kant's discussion of 'dignity,' which is incapable of substitution for or by an other, and 'relative worth,' which is capable of substitution for or by an other, see Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 434–436, 249.450. On 'respect' owed to others, see Kant, "Remark" to "On Vices that Violate the Duty of Respect Owed to Other Persons" in the *Metaphysics of Morals*: "The only respect to which I am obligated by nature is that for the law (*reverere legem*) [and its conditions of possibility], and this, not to esteem others generally (*reverentia adversus hominem*) or to render some particular obligation to them, is the universal and unconditional duty owed to other persons, which can be expected from everyone as the original respect [*Achtung*] owed to all.

"Other forms of respect, which need demonstration, that is, with respect to human nature [*Beschaffenheit der Menschen*] or the individual's particular circumstances, namely, age, sex, genealogy [*Abstammung*], strengths or weaknesses, or even the individual's status and prestige [*Standes und Würde* mean "status and prestige" because "*Würde*," in the sense of human dignity from Section II of the *Groundwork*, is absolute, not capricious], which in part are due to capricious dispositions, have no place and require no classification in the presentation of the first principles of the doctrine of virtue [when it comes to the transcendental conditions and capacities of practical reason] because here one is concerned only with the pure principles of reason [not with the accidents of perception]." *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 467–468.

according to Kant, is accomplished by reflecting judgment with its wrestling with the interface between theoretical and practical reason *in a world of appearances*.

Of course, it is possible to claim dogmatically, as do Hegel and the early Strauß, that the unity of theoretical and practical reason, which Hegel divide into Absolute Freedom and nature's freedom, consist of the absolute, ontological 'ground' of Absolute Spirit. Such a dogmatic claim is possible (but not provable) because every causal explanation involves a degree of speculation given that only effects are experienced, not causes themselves. However, Hegel's/Strauß' absolute, ontological unity of Absolute Spirit does not serve understanding and responsible agency in the world. Rather, Absolute Spirit is taken to be not only *the ultimate, causal origin* but also *the ultimate spiritual* (idealist) *goal of all events that take humanity beyond nature*.

It is only because one takes the capacities of theoretical and practical reason to be unique to each of them that gives the impression that they are separated by an unbridgeable metaphysical 'gap.' Kant says that it is precisely this false impression that required his writing of a 'third critique,' the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*.¹⁷⁷

First, the 'gap' between nature and freedom, according to Kant, is itself only apparently ontological. The gap is only apparent because it acknowledges that there are *two imperceptible, lawful orders*, not two kinds of substance. However, *these two imperceptible, lawful orders govern the seamless, unified flow of appearances that are experience*. In other words, we're concerned only with an apparent gap, which emerges only if one insists that knowledge is causal explanation, rather than the concern to understand the conditions of possibility for experience, understanding, and exercising of responsible agency in the world. There are no gaps in experience.

Second, *what bridges the apparent 'gap' between the two imperceptible functions of reason (theoretical and practical reason) is not what Hegel/the early Strauß call Absolute Spirit as the sole 'substance' or even what Martin Heidegger called the 'unknown common root' of the imagination that would mean that Kant 'grounded' reason in the irrational*.¹⁷⁸ *Rather, what theoretical and practical reason have in common is what Kant calls 'reflecting judgment,' not to be confused for Hegel's notion of a 'sole' reflecting judgment: Absolute Spirit.*

According to Kant, the common element in both freedom-from nature and the individual's freedom-for creativity is the world of appearances. *How is it possible that appearances both can be 'mechanically' determined and, simultaneously to a degree, be independent although never separated from mechanical determination?* However, rather than the question being concerned with the ultimate, causal explanation for two systems of complementary causalities as is the case with Hegel, the 'critical' question

177. See the "Introduction" to Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*: "III. On the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* as a Means for Combining the Two Parts [theoretical and practical reason] of Philosophy into One Whole." AA V: 176–179. Their union is not metaphysical but the epistemological capacity of reflecting judgment. See the next section "IV. On the Capacity of Judgment as an *a priori* Legislative Faculty." AA V: 179 ff.

178. See Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

for Kant is: *What capacity must eminent, finite, transcendental consciousness possess in order to experience a coherent world that contains these two complementary causalities?* Kant's answer: reflecting judgment!

Both theoretical and practical reason are concerned with 'judgment.' Judgment consists in subordinating a sets of phenomena under concepts.¹⁷⁹ When we already possess the appropriate concepts for judging a set of phenomena, we are able to make a 're-producing judgment' (*ein bestimmendes Urteil*): For example, 'This is a computer;¹⁸⁰ 'that over there is an oak tree.' However, given the limits to reason and our limitation to phenomena as appearances, we can encounter phenomena for which we, as yet, have no appropriate concepts. This is a situation that awakens our desire for grasping order, and we can set out to discover/learn the appropriate concepts for the un-understood phenomena. As an indicator of the role of desire here, Kant points out that the *discovery of a "[...] unifiability of two or more empirically heterogeneous laws of nature under a principle that comprehends them both is the ground of a very noticeable pleasure [...]."*¹⁸¹ Simply memorizing re-produced judgments is boring!¹⁸² Most importantly, though, Kant points out that there was a time when what is now taken to be a re-produced judgment was originally arrived at through the learning process of reflecting judgment.¹⁸³

Reflecting judgment precedes re-produced judgment and is at the heart of both theoretical and practical reason! Rather than grasping Absolute Knowledge in its singular activity of uniting Absolute Freedom and nature (as Hegel maintained), *reflecting judgment is the strongest form of denial of Absolute Knowledge that one can make.* However, this is *no sign of reason's weakness*, as Hegel asserts in his dismissal of Kant. Reflecting judgment widens understanding/knowledge because it opens up the entire cosmos to consideration as a 'domain' of reason's understanding and responsible agency, and it is possible because transcendental consciousness possesses a form of open-ended causality that we've experience nowhere else but in humanity: autonomous freedom. In fact, rather than a weakness, autonomous freedom in principle contains the possibility to destroy nature.¹⁸⁴

With their metaphysics of Absolute Spirit, Hegel and the early Strauß take the world/cosmos to consist of the multiplicity of things ("infinitely many droplets, which reflect the Idea"¹⁸⁵) and which subordinates the world/cosmos to an indifference of

179. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*, AA V: 179 ff.

180. Note, though, that judgment is not a simple correspondence of 'a concept' with a set of phenomena. Kant's twelve 'categories of the understanding' in the *Critique of Pure Reason* indicate how complex judgment is.

181. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 187.

182. See Ernst Cassirer, *Kants Leben und Lehre* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977): 322–323.

183. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 187.

184. See Kant, *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie (Lecture on Moral Philosophy)* (1774/1775): 177.

185. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 14–15.

Absolute Spirit that is both the non-difference of an Absolute Oneness and a reduction of particularity to the indifference of meaninglessness. With their epistemology of Absolute Knowledge, Hegel and the early Strauß *assume the givenness of the Idea (Spirit) and ideas in the mind*, metaphysically prior to particulars. Ideas, for Hegel and Strauß, are the ‘canon’ of the mind for measuring the truth (mental content/*Inhalt*) of actuality (the representations of perception/*Forms*). Strauß succinctly formulated this epistemology in the *Glaubenslehre*. What it means to think is to apply an already existing idea as the standard for grasping the multiplicities of representations:

*In nature, an idea only pours itself out in the multiplicity of existing things. In the mind, the idea thinks itself [reflectirt (sic.)] in itself out of this externalization. That is, the individual person [itself an externalization of the idea ‘humanity’] thinks the idea ‘humanity’ and refers to this idea. By means of this relationship [between internal idea and external multiplicity], everything is essentially brokered mentally and ethically.*¹⁸⁶

In short, the mind is an internal location of a system of eternal ideas, which serve as an absolute canon¹⁸⁷ for processing the external world of phenomena.

However, this system of ideas is an anthropomorphic projection onto Absolute Spirit. Neither Hegel nor the early Strauß offer anything close to a causal explanation for the origin of the canon of ideas¹⁸⁸ except to say that they are a consequence of a logic of negation. Hegel dogmatically invokes explicitly the ‘infinite’s principle of motion and change’¹⁸⁹ and Absolute Spirit as fulfilling the ‘principle of sufficient reason,’ not by a synthetic, heuristic, ‘adding to’ of the principle of sufficient reason to Absolute Spirit but by Absolute Spirit being Absolute Cause.¹⁹⁰ However, *if the claim for Absolute Spirit as a cause is grounded only in the canon of logic, then its ‘containing’ of the principle of sufficient reason within Itself ‘is equally an assumption.* Clearly, one cannot legitimately ground an absolute explanation, much less Absolute Knowledge, in a set of assumptions. Absolutes are unequivocal truths (κατ’ ἀλήθειαν);

186. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 383.

187. Strauß employs the notion of a ‘canon’ (measure, standard) in his presentation of Spinoza’s invocation of ideas for measuring the universal character of human nature is an ‘empty abstraction’. See *Glaubenslehre* II. 382. However, he quickly adds that Spinoza’s system, like Hegel’s, requires that ideas be ‘grounded’ for the actuality in historical phenomena. Strauß doesn’t recognize that logic is itself a ‘canon’ without an ‘organon’ so that invoking logic to causally explain anything is a fanciful wishing of the dove to fly in a vacuum. On logic as a ‘canon’ without an ‘organon,’ see Chapter 1: 49.

188. See Hegel’s account in “Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten” GW II: 455–456 of the emergence of ideas out of the ‘divisible-I’ of Absolute Spirit in conformity with infinity’s ‘principle of motion and change’. See as well: 160. Along with the appearance of ideas in the divisible non-I of nature as actuality/representations, and their ‘formal reality’ (but not ideal origin) in subjective consciousness, we are given a description, not a causal explanation anything close to Absolute Knowledge. In short, Hegel has engaged in a μετάβασις εις ἄλλο γένος.

189. See, for example, Hegel, “Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten.” GW II: 454.

190. See, for example, Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik* GW VI: 82–83.

reflecting judgments *grounded in appearances and assumptions are tentative truths* (κατ' ἀνθρώπων) of faith (*Fürwahrhalten*).¹⁹¹

Despite Hegel's claim that his canon of ideas requires representations in order that the ideas not be 'empty,' reality (*Realität*) is, nonetheless, supposedly grounded, metaphysically, in eternal ideas with representations only providing their appearance in the actual (*Wirklichkeit*) as fleeting forms. In other words, 'truth' is 'above' and ultimately indifferent to the actuality of representations. This is what makes Hegel's/the early Strauß' metaphysics 'Idealism.' This 'Idealism' is an absolutizing of *re-produced* judgment (actually, *specifying* judgment) that has 'forgotten' its origin in *reflecting* judgment.

In contrast, Kant places humanity as an autonomous, free transcendental consciousness squarely in the world/cosmos with a set of finite, yet incredibly powerful capacities to understand and to exercise responsible agency *in a world of appearances, not a realm merely of abstract ideas*. Far from any dictum (*Machtspruch*) of Absolute Spirit's externalizing of ideas in representations, for Kant the world/cosmos *in-itself* matters. Without a world (phenomena), we would have no transcendental consciousness. Without the domains of nature and autonomous freedom, there would be no instance that could drive reason's passion: the application of reflecting judgment to discern order. Transcendental consciousness' capacity for discernment of the imperceptible relationalities in phenomena is what constitutes our creative potential both to understand (theoretical reason) and to creatively and responsibly act in the world/cosmos. Transcendental consciousness' capacities are what establish the human species as an unequivocal location in nature that denies reality as a zero-sum, materialistic game nor as indifferent to the suffering, exploitation, persecution, and oppression in the world.

In a nutshell: we gain understanding of the world/cosmos not by applying metaphysical, eternally existing ideas of *specifying* judgment to transient phenomena and claiming it is 'knowledge' but by means of *reflecting* judgment's *deduction of the imperceptible, relational order that appears to govern the world/cosmos*. *Reflecting* judgment drives the living metaphors of ever-expanding discernment of imperceptible order. In dramatic contrast, the dead metaphors of *specifying* judgment are readily buried in the graveyard of dictionaries awaiting poetic rejuvenation although in the meantime venerated as absolute when, in fact, they originate out of the dynamic of *reflecting* judgment.

Nonetheless, *concepts arrived at by reflecting judgment are also not a form of Nominalism*.¹⁹² Nominalism is grounded in a materialistic metaphysic that is as much

191. On the difference between κατ' ἀλήθειαν and κατ' ἀνθρώπων, see Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 767–768 and *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 462–463. Kant speaks of the distinction between an argument κατ' ἀνθρώπων and κατ' ἀλήθειαν and without reference to the importance of the distinction in Kant. See Strauß, *Streitschriften* II: 52.

192. On 'Nominalism,' see the "Foreword:" 20, n. 3.

enthusiastic and fanciful as spiritualistic Logos metaphysics. Nominalism claims to provide a causal explanation to concepts as merely abstractions drawn from an empirical metaphysics and known *κατ' ἀλήθειαν*- just the opposite of Logos metaphysics *κατ' ἀλήθειαν*. It no more gives an account of how the world of appearances is governed by concepts and laws/rules any more than Logos metaphysics can give an account of why concepts are eternal.

It may appear as if Kant's reflecting judgment is Nominalism as the path to subsuming a set of phenomena under a conceptual scheme. However, Kant's reflecting judgment is an exercise in *epistemological* 'faith' [*Fürwahrhalten*] that is grounded in feeling/desire to understand, not a *metaphysical* claims to causally explain the origin of 'true' concepts (either according to Nominalism or Idealism). It is not grounded in a dictum that reality is the way humanity conceives it to be, which is, in the end, the claim of Nominalism and Idealism. Rather, truth *κατ' ἀνθρώπων* is driven by *the desire to understand phenomena* (theoretical reason) *and moral imperatives* (practical reason) as governed, epistemologically, by imperceptible laws/rules, which are ultimately, incapable of proof, yet necessarily apply at all times in all places *if there is to be the kind of theoretical and practical experience that we have in this world*. In the case of theoretical reason, these laws/rules are physical laws, statistical significance, and algorithms. In the case of practical reason, these laws are the wide, categorical (not merely hypothetical) imperatives of morality.¹⁹³

In dramatic contrast both Hegel and Strauß formulate the relationship of humanity to nature as "subjugating nature"¹⁹⁴ This is strikingly different from Kant's understanding of the 'domains' of nature and freedom. To be sure *ditio* (Kant's Latin for 'domain') *literally means 'sovereignty' or 'dominion,' but it does not mean 'subjugation.'* Ultimately, *ditio* is grounded in imperceptible capacities of transcendental consciousness as a consequence of a capacity to discern relationalities in appearances that are required for the world/cosmos to be experienced *and the domain of creative, responsible agency*, not just pursuit of personal or social gain through subjugation. This capacity for the deduction of the order of relationalities in experience is a form of transcendental consciousness' causal capacity of autonomous freedom, intentionally to bring concepts into play and things into existence that nature on its own cannot. Nature cannot 'think' or 'intentionally act' anywhere like the degree to which a transcendental consciousness 'above' but 'in' nature can), which serves as the very condition of possibility for humanity to assume responsibility for its agency. The autonomous freedom of transcendental consciousness is the location for an open-endedness to nature that is not exhaustively the consequence of merely physical causality.

193. See the *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 390–391.

194. Strauß, *LJ*. 780. See Strauß, "Einige Bemerkungen über die Recension meines Lebens Jesu von Herrn Dr. J. Müller" ["Remarks on the Review of my *Life of Jesus* by Dr. J. Müller"] in *Streitschriften* III: 167.

In the *Streitschriften*, Strauß addresses the theme of ‘subjugation’ of nature in the *LJ* by saying that his detractors took his comment to be concerned with ‘external’ nature. For that reason, to the sentence on page 780 of the *LJ* that reads “[...] the spirit more and more completely subjugates nature” he inserted as of the second edition “both within and around man” and continues with “until it lies before him as the inert matter on which he exercises his active power [...]”¹⁹⁵ To the sentence on page 781 of the *LJ* that questions “shall we interest ourselves more in the cure of some sick people in Galilee, than in the miracles belonging to the history of the world,” he added after the word “miracles” “of intellectual [*Gemüthsleben*] and moral life” and continues, or “—in the increasing the almost incredible dominion of man over nature—in the irresistible force of ideas, to which no unintelligent matter, whatever its magnitude, can oppose any enduring resistance?”¹⁹⁶ In addition, he rebukes those critics for their ‘shallowness of imagination’ (*Seichtigkeit der Vorstellung*) who take his praise for the invention of the compass and the steam engine “as higher than the perfection of a virtuous character.”¹⁹⁷

Nevertheless, Strauß’ attempt to address criticism of his statements on the subjugation of nature doesn’t begin to come close to Kant’s notions of reflecting judgment as the ‘sovereign (not subjugating) link’ between freedom and nature¹⁹⁸ that is the required condition of possibility for responsible agency in the world. *Hegel and the early Strauß are concerned, metaphysically, to divinize humanity in Absolute Freedom beyond nature. Kant is concerned to keep humanity human as an agency of autonomous freedom in nature.*

In short, the issue of Absolute Knowledge beyond nature turns out to be a speculative illusion.¹⁹⁹ In a reversal of content and form as found in Strauß/Hegel, Kant underscores that there is no *a priori* synthetic judgment (autonomous freedom) without a world of phenomena (nature). Furthermore, a speculative metaphysical logic of Double Negation is a *non sequitur* because logic is ‘formal’ and independent of sense perception. Understanding (or knowledge) that is ‘higher’ than imagination (representations of form) provides no guarantee of Absolute Knowledge/Truth, which is claimed to be the ultimate cause of understanding and imagination by means of a vicious, hermeneutical circle. Logic is a ‘canon’ without an ‘organon.’ The ‘empty

195. Strauß, *Streitschriften* III: 167.

196. See Strauß, *Streitschriften* III: 167.

197. Strauß, *Streitschriften* III: 167.

198. See Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 4* as well as 29–30. Already here in the “Preface” Kant establishes the centrality of creative, autonomous freedom-from nature as the “condition” required for any notion of morality, which requires a capacity of freedom-for initiating a finite eminent causality under the conditions of nature’s formal causality.

199. Strauß came to realize the speculative illusion. In a letter to Märklin, this time from November 3. 1839, Strauß invokes the question that was to become central in his *The Old Faith and the New*: “Are we still Christians?,” which he now answers by dismissing unity of content and form as an “illusion.” There is “nothing essential to history.” (Ziegler II: 333)

space' of a 'non-resistant' vacuum that is Absolute Spirit is a fantasy. *Rather than a broad Absolute Knowledge that take us out of the world and treats history with profound indifference,*²⁰⁰ Kant's narrowing application of reflecting judgment to experience,

200. Hegel's dialectical logic that results in profound historical indifference (events as merely place markers of Absolute Spirit) also governs his sense of morality (Kant's practical reason). This is nowhere more clear than in their respective accounting for 'great' and/or 'good' persons. According to Hegel, 'great' leaders are to be valued as events of Absolute Spirit regardless of their pursuit of merely self-interest. According to Kant, 'good' leaders are of greater significance than 'great' leaders because 'good' people have moral character.

Hegel writes of the 'great' leaders of history: "It is different when we come to great historical personalities. Here it is precisely where the great collisions arise between the existing, recognized duties, laws and rights and the possibilities which are opposed to this system, which violate it, even destroy its foundation and reality, and at the same time have a content which can also seem good, advantageous on the whole, essential and necessary. These possibilities now become historical; they include a universality of a different kind than the universality that forms the basis of the existence of a people or state. This universality is a Moment of the Producing Idea, a moment of Truth striving and driving towards Itself. Historical men (*sic.*), the *world-historical individuals*, are those in whose purposes such a universality lies.

Caesar essentially belongs here, who was in danger of losing the position, if not of supremacy, at least of equality, to which he had risen alongside the others who stood at the head of the state, and of succumbing to those who were about to become his enemies. These enemies, who at the same time intended to further their personal ends, had the formal constitution of the state and the power of legal appearance for themselves. Caesar fought in the interest of preserving his position, honor and security, and the victory over his opponents, in that their power over the provinces of the Roman Empire, was at the same time the conquest of the entire empire: Thus, leaving the form of the state constitution intact, he became the individual ruler in the state. What thereby acquired for him the realization of his initially negative purpose, the sole rule of Rome, was at the same time a necessary destiny in Rome's and the world's history so that it was not only his particular gain but also an instinct that accomplished what was in and of itself the time. *These are the great men in history whose own particular purposes contain the substantial which is the will of the world spirit.* They are to be called *heroes* inasmuch as they have drawn their purposes and their vocation not merely from the calm, orderly course of things, sanctified by the existing system, but from a source whose content is hidden and has not flourished into a present existence, from the inner spirit, which is still subterranean, which throbs against the outer world as against the shell and bursts it, because it is a different kernel from the kernel of this shell, – who thus seem to draw from themselves and whose deeds have produced a state and world conditions which seem to be only *their* cause and *their* work.

Such individuals did not have consciousness of the Idea at all in their purpose, but were practical and political men. However, at the same time they were thinkers who had an insight into what was necessary and what *was timely*. That is precisely the truth of their time and their world, the next species, so to speak, which was already present within them. It was their business to know this universal, necessary, next stage of their world, to make it their purpose and to put their energy into it. World-historical men (*sic.*), the heroes of an age, are therefore to be recognized as the insightful ones; their actions, their speeches are the best of the time. Great men (*sic.*) have willed to satisfy themselves, not others. What they would have learned from others in terms of well-meant intentions and advice would rather have been the more narrow-minded and crooked, because they are the ones who understood it best and from whom everyone learned it and found it good, or at least joined in. The advanced Spirit is the inner soul of all individuals, but it is an unconscious inwardness which the great men bring to consciousness. That is why the others follow these guides of the soul because in such great men they feel the irresistible force of their own inner Spirit confronting them." Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* GW XII: 44–46

understand, and exercise responsible, creative agency anchors humanity squarely in the world.

Reflecting judgment plays the key role of transcendental consciousness not only for theoretical reason's understanding of 'what is,' but it is also central to practical reason to which I now turn. The following chapter demonstrates how Hegel entirely distorted Kant's notion of practical reason.

Addendum: On 20th C 'Critique' and the 'End of Metaphysics'

On this side of the 20th C, the meaning of the term metaphysics is lost in a shroud of myths (narratives). Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*²⁰¹ reflected the long-established opinion of many that we are in a 'post-metaphysical' world. 'Everyone' talks about metaphysics as if the term was univocal. Language is not univocal but consists of a plurivocity of living and dead metaphors (literally dead, not merely worn-out and awaiting new poetic rejuvenation).

As polyvalent plurivocity is, it does not eliminate distinguishing between and among metaphors. Those who reject metaphysics are trapped, paradoxically, in a 'metaphysics' that rejects 'essences' but distinguishes between 'identity' and 'difference' (the very definition of 'essence') because, presumably, the univocal metaphysics that is rejected is 'identifiable' and 'different' from non-metaphysics. Stated otherwise: chaos presupposes order; non-Being presupposes Being – *without Being having to refer to*

The contrast with Kant couldn't be greater. Kant writes over 'great' and 'good' leaders: "There is a difference between a good and a great prince. The greatness concerns the talent, the goodness the way of thinking, and the use s/he makes of Her/his talents. Because the sensible greatness does not so much depend on the talents as on the good use of them, we are more moved by the greatness of talent, by untiring diligence, than by another who does not have all these talents in greatness, but has the best will. – We may applaud the latter, but we will not feel the same admiration for him that we feel for the former. History does not praise the good princes, but the great ones; for the good ones were like a cheerful day that will soon pass; but the great ones, who showed talent and waged bloody wars, have been preserved in history; this must lie in the nature of humanity, which is not yet completely moralized. Men are not yet so far advanced that all the education of which we are capable is already present in human history, and we are childishly moved only by the great. Great princes are sometimes given the title of good when they have done so much evil that there is no more evil left for them to do. Now they begin to show themselves good, because they have no opportunity of appearing otherwise. We have an unconditional respect for such a character. People of real sentiments, who are moved by good, and take an interest in it, are interested in speaking of morality. Our conversations have all sorts of material, e.g. city news, political news, etc., then comes a matter that concerns the human heart, but rarely. There are people of great intellect who never have such a conversation and feel no pleasure in it at all. However, the original good principles can hardly be deeply rooted in such a person. Kant: *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1106–1107; Olms ed.]: 292–293

201. Jean-François Lyotard wrote in *The Postmodern Condition*: 77: "Modernity, in whatever age it appears, cannot exist without a shattering of belief and without discovery of the 'lack of reality' of reality, together with the invention of other realities'.

enduring/eternal substances. However, at the end of the 18th C, when ‘modernism’ supposedly commenced, *Kant already describes a metaphysics that is necessary but ‘grounded’ in relationalities, not substances or absolute causes.*

Kant spoke of twelve ‘categories of the understanding’ in a table consisting of three categories each in four divisions. His labels for the four divisions are: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Modality.²⁰² Under the items of ‘Relation,’ he lists the three fundamental relations that are required for there to be experience and understanding of phenomena: the relation between ‘substance and accidents;’ the relation between ‘cause’ and ‘effect;’ and the relation of ‘reciprocity between agent and recipient.’ He does not speak of substance, causality, and reciprocity as either ‘eternal ideas’ or ‘enduring things’ but as ‘relations.’ In other words, both substance and cause, according to Kant, are relations capable of being understood only by a transcendental consciousness able to grasp relations. Our experience (hence, understanding) is not of enduring ‘things themselves’ or of ‘abstract essences’ independent of things but of relations of appearance.

In a footnote to the second “Preface” of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant explicitly addresses the issue of the ‘representation of something that endures in existence’ [*Vorstellung von etwas Beharrlichem in Dasein*] and the ‘representation of permanence’ itself [*Vorstellung des Beharrlichen*]. He stresses that they are not equivalent but also not separable. The first is an ‘appearance,’ and the other is ‘matter.’ He then acknowledges that nothing in our experience of appearances is enduring, which includes matter! However, he adds, for us to experience as we do, ‘appearances’ must be grounded in a simultaneously, ‘transient’ permanence:

[...] though the representation of something permanent may be very transitory and *variable like all our other representations, not excepting those of matter*, it [our representation] refers to something permanent. *This latter must therefore be an external thing* [McG: as ‘thing-in-itself’] *distinct from all my representations, and its existence must be included in the determination of my own existence, constituting with it but a single experience* [McG: not a dualism!] *such as would not take place even internally* [*innerlich*] *if it were not also at the same time, in part, external* [*äußerlich*]. *How this should be possible we are as little capable of* [McG: causally] *explaining further as we are of accounting for our being able to think the abiding in time, the co-existence of which with the changing generates the concept of alteration.*²⁰³ (emphasis added)

Nonetheless, we have no direct access to ‘permanence,’ ‘matter,’ which doesn’t appear. Its understanding is a product of adding the notion of permanence to our experience

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

203. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B xli a.

of transient appearances that we arrive at only through discernment of enduring relationalities between and among the appearances.²⁰⁴

Kant writes in the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe* from 1786, the year before the publication of the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, that the only manner by which matter is capable of being properly understood is by means of mathematically calculable, relational forces. In "Remark I" to "Explanation 4" he stresses that matter "[...] must be regarded only as relative impenetrability" because matter is understandable by the interaction of two causal forces: expansion and contraction. In his "Remark II," Kant maintains that his account of matter is not trapped in the 'vicious circle' that 'matter is impenetrable because it is impenetrable.'

The appeal to the repulsive [expansive] force is free from this reproach. For *even if this force cannot be further explained according to its possibility, and must therefore be assumed as a basic force*, it nevertheless gives a concept of an acting cause and its laws, according to which the effect, namely the resistance in the filled space, can be estimated according to its degrees.²⁰⁵ (emphasis added)

204. Cassirer attributes the epistemological shift from 'substances' to 'functions' (relationality) to Kant even as he documents how the concept of function was developed further over the course of the 19th C to lead to 'general relativity.' See especially chapters seven and eight of Ernst Cassirer, *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1910): 410–459, as well as, Cassirer, Section V. of "Achstes Buch. Die kritische Philosophie" in *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit*, Band II (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994): 638–647 and Cassirer's discussion of Kant in *ibid.*, 662 ff., esp., 672–678. See as well, Cassirer's *The Problem of Knowledge: 74–76*. Finally, see Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen, Dritter Teil: Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis*, Band 13 of Cassirer's *Gesammelte Werke* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002): 328 ff, esp., 358–361.

205. Kant, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe* AA IV: 502. Kant wrote already in 1755: "If something is, then it is. However, how it comes about that the concepts of the sides of the enclosed space etc. are at the service of thinking, that is, that there is something at all that can be thought, from which then later, by connecting, limiting, and determining, the concept of every conceivable thing results could not be understood if not in God, the source of all reality, whose reality is contained in His concept. I know, however, that Descartes himself took the proof of God's existence from God's inner concept itself; but how much he erred in doing so can be seen from the "Addendum" [*Zusatz*] to the preceding paragraph. God is of all beings the only one in which existence is earlier to or, if one prefers, identical with possibility; and there remains no concept of the latter, if one departs from this existence of the same." "A New Exposition of the First Principles of Metaphysical Knowledge" AA I: 395–396. The "Addendum" to the preceding paragraph" points out that an *a posteriori* 'explanation' "does not create the truth, but only explains (that is 'gives an accounting for) it." (*Ibid.*: AA I: 394). Kant takes Descartes' 'proof of God' as absolute, causal explanation to be an *a posteriori* conclusion that perhaps 'explains' (accounts for) the notion of God, but it does not establish the truth of God's existence. It is clear that what Kant means here by 'explanation' is not a certainty of 'causal explanation' (κατ' ἀλήθειαν) but is an *a posteriori* accounting for (κατ' ἀνθρώπων) an unperceived cause. On the difference between κατ' ἀλήθειαν and κατ' ἀνθρώπων, see Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 767–768.

With the suggestion that "God is of all beings the only one in which existence is earlier to or, if one prefers, identical with possibility," Kant is proleptically anticipating Natorp and Heidegger!:

"Proposition 4" [*Lehrsatz 4*] that follows states: "Matter is infinitely divisible into parts [*Theile*], which parts, in turn, are matter."²⁰⁶ However, this 'matter' is not the 'substances' of things-in-themselves. Substance is a judgment of appearances. Nonetheless, the 'something' that is 'matter' is not no-thing. Already in *Metaphysik Mrongovius* (1783), Kant speaks of nothingness as 'possibility,' which is not 'actuality' but also not no-thing.²⁰⁷

Although Ernst Cassirer correctly attributes the notion of 'function' ('relationality') to Kant's theoretical reason, he erroneously claims that Kant defends a 'conceptual dualism' of appearance and matter that he derived from 'classical mechanics' (that is, Newton):

[... Kant] explains²⁰⁸ [...] the material substance as that in space, which is movable for itself, i.e. separated from everything else, what exists in space apart from it. [Cassirer footnotes here to *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe* (1786): AA IV: 502 f.] The axiom that space itself and the space-filling, the materially real in it, are separated from each other *in such a way that they can be split conceptually*, so to speak, into two sharply separated modes of being, is taken from the system of 'classical mechanics' [McG: Newton]. However, with this, Kant's doctrine of 'pure perception' and with it the whole relation, which he assumes between 'transcendental analytics' and 'transcendental aesthetics,' is afflicted with a difficulty, which had to become clearly apparent as soon as this very axiom itself began to waver – as soon as the transition from classical mechanics to the general theory of relativity took place.²⁰⁹ (emphasis added)

In light of the fact that Kant explicitly rejects the claim that there can be an 'explanation' of 'matter,' he is just as likely to have his notion of 'matter' as 'possibility' (NOT actuality) from Aristotle and is not inescapably anchored in Newtonian mechanics. Heinz Happ's thesis is that for Aristotle "[A]ll individual cases of ἐνέργεια are founded in *actus purus*, of δύναμις in 'pure possibility,' which are opposed to each other as 'primordial opposition' dynamis/energeia."²¹⁰ Although one may appropriately speak of 'differences' here, even in Aristotle the 'opposition' is no unbridgeable dualism. However, particularly for Kant, he explicitly emphasizes that the conceptual differences between and among appearances, things-in-themselves, and matter are relational conceptions and that experience consists only of appearances.²¹¹

206. Kant, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe* AA IV: 503.

207. See Kant, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XXIX: 960 ff. See, for example, as well as the *Opus Postumum* AA XXII: 195–197. *Motion is not a thing but also not no-thing*.

208. Kant explicitly rejects the notion that transcendental consciousness can give an *a priori*, causal 'explanation' for 'matter' in the very text to which Cassirer himself cites. See above: 709.

209. Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, Band 13, *Gesammelte Werke*: 532–533.

210. Heinz Happ, *Hyle. Studien zum Aristotelischen Materie Begriff* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971): 687:

211. See, again, Kant's emphasis on a 'single experience' in *Critique of Pure Reason* B xli a, referred to above: 203.

Granted, following Derrida's formulation of the 'two strategies of deconstruction'²¹² as a result of Heidegger's "destruction of metaphysical humanism," the Deconstructionists reject the very notion of 'identity'/'essence' as a remnant of an illusory philosophy of 'presence.'²¹³ There are no essences, and reality is 'traces'/'ghosts'²¹⁴ all the way down. Yet the Deconstructionists, as well, fall into the paradox of a philosophy of 'presence.' To claim that *everything* is a 'trace' is to claim that there is at least one 'enduring essence' distinguished from everything else: trace. Furthermore, and far more importantly, by failing to distinguish among the polyvalent meanings of 'metaphysics,' Deconstructionists throw all meanings of metaphysics into the same basket as if their differences make no difference. A de-mythologization of metaphysics is surely appropriate.

In Greek, the term metaphysics is already polyvalent. The term 'meta' can mean 'after' as well as 'beyond.' 'After' refers to an asymmetrical, linear sequence, whereas 'beyond,' especially when combined with 'physics' suggests a 'reality' beyond physical reality.

The term 'physics' is, of course, itself polyvalent. 'Physics' can refer to 'all of physical reality' or to a specific 'thing' (e.g., a manuscript by Aristotle). Whereas, usually, 'physics' refers to the totality of reality, (meta-)physics can refer to the 'accidental' fact that, in Aristotle's sequence of manuscripts, the manuscript of the "Physics" was followed by a manuscript labelled the "Metaphysics" or "After the Physics."

In common parlance today, the 'meta-' of metaphysics, though, refers to something that is 'beyond' physics and that is 'objectively' independent of physics. However, the 'beyond physics' of meta-physics is itself polyvalent. It can refer to a dualism in 'reality' that separates the physical world of perception (finite matter) from some dimension that is totally beyond the physical universe (e.g., infinite Spirit with Its eternal ideas). It can also refer to a monism of reality that distinguishes (but does not separate) the physically perceptible from the intangible, imperceptibly intelligible within that monism (e.g., Kant's Critical Idealism or Process Theology's Dipolar Theism). Here, though, even the term 'monism' raises ambiguities. Is the 'monism' an aggregate of physical 'substances' (e.g., Critical Realism), does the 'monism' claim to be a causal explanation of reality (e.g., Process Theology) or does it merely refer to ubiquitous

212. In the section "Reading Us" of "The Ends of Man" in *Margins of Philosophy*, Alan Bass trans. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), Derrida describes these two strategies as: "a. To attempt an exit and a deconstruction without changing terrain [he attributes this strategy to Heidegger], by repeating what is implicit in the founding concepts and the original problematic [...], which] risks sinking into the autism of the closure." (135) "b. To decide to change terrain in a discontinuous and irruptive fashion [he attributes this strategy to the 'French'] [...] by affirming an absolute break and difference." (135)

213. See Jacques Derrida, "4. The Pharmakon" in *Dissemination*, Barbara Johnson trans. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981: 114.

214. Derrida speaks of the ,trace' as a 'ghost' "[... that] can no longer be distinguished [...] from truth, reality, living flesh, etc. One must accept the fact that here [...] to leave a ghost behind will [...] be to salvage nothing." *Dissemination*: 104.

‘appearances’ as ‘what is’ and as the required condition for agency to establish ‘what ought to be’ (e.g., Kant’s Critical Idealism)?

If one takes the ‘physical’ to refer ‘merely’ to appearances, then one must decide if the appearances mean that experience of them is simply an illusion (*maya*) with no enduring significance (e.g., as in mysticism or Hegelianism), or are the appearances manifestations of individual, intangible essences that, as intangible, are ‘the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow’ (e.g., as in Platonic Realism’s ideas and Process Theology’s ‘eternal objects’), or do appearances indirectly require assumption, but no proof, of a schema of categories for making sense of particular sets of appearances and to guide agency (Kant’s Critical Idealism)?

There are further ambiguities when it comes to ‘metaphysics’ (e.g., Heidegger’s possible, ‘Negative Theology’ of the event of the Being-of beings as concealed possibility²¹⁵), but for my purposes these noted ambiguities already suffice to point out the ridiculousness of lumping all ‘metaphysics’ into the same pile. To claim that we live in a post-metaphysical world presupposes that we know what a metaphysical world is. Without teasing out the polyvalent meanings of ‘metaphysical,’ we are no better than a magician waving a wand over illusions.

I take it to be crucial to distinguish between metaphysics as ‘objectively, the beyond of everything physical’ and metaphysics as the ‘beyond of appearances.’ The former is only a dogmatic exercise of unbridled speculation. The latter is a reflective exercise of identifying just what the assumed, imperceptible conditions have to be in order for there to be anything like an experience of appearances.

Kant was a monist, not a dualist. Kant pointed out that experience is a ceaseless flow of appearances. We experience only relationalities between and among perceptible appearances and don’t have direct access to ‘substances’ (or ‘matter,’ as I pointed out above) any more than to ‘causes’ because substances, matter, and causes can only be experienced indirectly through their effects. Yet, and this is the crucial step of his ‘metaphysics,’ he points out that ‘appearances’ are not merely a random aggregation of a phantasm. They are ‘ordered’! However, that order (or those orders) is not directly given with perceptible appearances any more than are substances, matter, and causes. Appearances are the effect of order, but not order itself. As appearances, they are merely an aggregate. The grasp of their ‘order(s)’ *requires adding imperceptible elements to the appearances*. These imperceptible elements Kant calls a *priori* synthetic judgments that constitute ‘metaphysics.’

These imperceptible elements are the elements and capacities of *finite*, transcendental consciousness. They consist of the ‘pure intuition’ of space and time because we never experience space and time directly, only ‘things’ ‘in’ space and ‘in’ time;²¹⁶ the

215. See the enigmatic footnote in Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1979): 427, n. 1.

216. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 37 ff, and B 46 ff.

schema of the categories of the twelve ‘categories’²¹⁷ of the understanding; the ideas of ‘pure’ reason (God, the enduring identity of the ‘soul,’ and a cosmological order that allows for autonomous freedom);²¹⁸ reflecting judgment that ‘unites’ theoretical and practical reason as the crucial activity of consciousness to seek out ‘concepts’ among the relationalities of appearances,²¹⁹ which leads not only to the ability to understand ‘what is’ (theoretical reason)²²⁰ and ‘what ought to be’ (practical reason)²²¹ but also to the ability to make aesthetic judgments. The latter consist of judgments of beauty that employ the capacities of transcendental consciousness in a ‘free play’ of those transcendental capacities *without a concept*²²² and of judgments of the sublime that elevate reason above the perceptible to grasp its infinity and limitless power of its imperceptibility.²²³

The imperceptible ‘order(s)’ of experience are what indicate that there is something ‘more’ than merely appearances.²²⁴ Nonetheless, this ‘more’ is nothing that we have ever experienced unrelated to appearances. In other words, opening the door to ‘more’ than appearances is no license to introduce wild speculations.²²⁵

Of course, humanity has generated such dogmatic speculations based on anthropomorphic projections with devastating consequences for our fellow human beings and for nature. It is not philosophy that elevated humanity to the throne of God. Rather, religion long before ‘critical,’ reflective thought emerged placed humanity on the throne of God by means of anthropomorphic analogies. However, Kant provides the strategy for avoiding such wild, metaphysical speculations a set of anthropomorphic analogies. He does so, though, *without rejecting metaphysics but by limiting*

217. The categories of the understanding are not Platonic ideas, and they involve a set) of *a priori* synthetic judgments with respect to the categories that an individual, finite, transcendental consciousness must *add* to its experience of appearances, which together constitute a schema (*Critique of Pure Reason* B 177–178, B 181) (in a in order to understand them. Concepts are never merely singular, according to Kant. They arise only in the context of appearances, and they are applied by reflecting judgment by means of the table of categories (*Critique of Pure Reason*: B 106 ff.) Furthermore, Kant does speak of three ‘ideas’ of *pure* reason (God, the enduring identity of the self, and cosmological order/creative freedom), but these, as well, are neither *constitutive*, Platonic ideas, nor merely a capricious aggregate, but *regulative* (assumed) ideas that can nowhere appear in perception but must be assumed in order to experience, understand, and exercise responsible agency as we can.

218. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 395*.

219. See the distinction between reflecting (*reflektierende*) judgment distinguished from re-producing (*bestimmende*) judgment in “IV. On Judgment as an *a priori* legislative faculty” in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 179 ff.

220. See the “Introduction” to the *Critique of Practical Reason*: AA V: 15 ff.

221. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 830.

222. See “§ 16. The Judgment of Taste through which an object is declared to be beautiful under the condition of a determinate concept is not pure” in *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*

223. See the discussion of the ‘mathematical sublime’ (*Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 248 ff.) and the ‘dynamical sublime’ (*Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA. V. 260 ff.).

224. See Kant, *Prolegomena* AA IV: 292–293.

225. On the imperceptible (subreptive claims) as no license for wild speculation, see the “Preface:” 64, n. 84.

metaphysical claims to what is required of imperceptible elements by perceptible appearances in order for finite, transcendental consciousness to be able to experience those perceptible appearances. In short, rather than metaphysics opening the speculative door to the ‘more’ that leads away from appearances, Kant insists on always returning to appearances as the litmus test for any and all claims about the ‘more.’ The question is simply: do the appearances, themselves, *require* and *adhere to a lawfully ordered* (!) ‘more’ for them to be experience?

Kant’s strategy is as remarkable as it is ‘simple.’ It allows for the identification of certainties in the very midst of non-substantial, uncertain perceptible appearances.²²⁶ What is certain, though, are not judgments about the ‘objective’ appearances themselves. Rather, what is certain are judgments about the imperceptible elements that are *required* for any and all transcendental consciousness (including non-human transcendental consciousness were there to be such a thing) to encounter perceptible appearances as relationalities. In turn, though, these *required* elements are nothing capriciously or spontaneously created by finite, transcendental consciousness – contrary to Hegel’s claim. To be sure, finite, transcendental consciousness has the capacity for fanciful capriciousness, but recognition of this *required* capacity holds the key to reining in its fancies. Transcendental consciousness *requires* its imperceptible capacities only so long as it is anchored in the lawful order(s) of perceptible appearances. Fanciful, capricious, subjective constructions are like the dreams of a dove that wants to believe that it would be easier to fly in a vacuum.²²⁷

Although the *required*, imperceptible capacities of finite, transcendental consciousness are driven by the experience and conviction of order, ‘order’ is itself an ambiguous metaphor. Among the options for understanding ‘order’ is to claim that it is a denial of liberty or, in dramatic contrast, as a condition and facilitator of finite, creative freedom. The former is succinctly summarized by the claim that education only means ‘just another brick in the wall’ as Pink Floyd maintained. However, Pink Floyd could not have created his music without ‘order.’ Music itself is an ordered system as anyone who has studied music theory will attest – even when music is used as the vehicle for chaos precisely because communicating chaos presupposes order. Education involves no simple alternative between external determinism and internal liberty to do whatever one wishes.

Both dogmatic religion and the natural sciences have too frequently succumbed to determinism and the rejection of liberty. Dogmatic religion does so, for example in Christianity, with the teaching of (double) predestination: It is predestined (that is, pre-determined) by God’s plan that only some are saved. However, the natural sciences frequently fall victim to determinism, as well, when ‘scientism’ insists that everything is determined by material causes. Both versions of determinism fail to

226. See Kant, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XXIX: 939–940 quoted as note 32 on 660.

227. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 8–9. See as well, *Groundwork* AA IV: 462–463.

recognize that there is no such thing as direct access to causes. Causes are experienced only through their effects.

Retrospectively, when it comes to understanding, everything is determined – even the consequences of one’s creative novelty! Prospectively, though, there is one place in the material order of which we are confident that is not determined by merely material causality. That one, *partially open-ended* location, is finite, transcendental consciousness that is capable of initiating *intentionally*, sequences of events that material causality on its own cannot initiate. This open-endedness is what allows us to speak of *autonomous freedom*, not merely the liberty to do indiscriminately and spontaneously do whatever one wishes.

Nonetheless, the one place of partial open-endedness in nature that is autonomous freedom, paradoxically, is itself what makes possible the generating of wild, speculative fantasies based on anthropomorphism about ultimate causality. Again, humanity’s partial, open-endedness has led, ever again, to the enslavement of humanity by itself.²²⁸ The only pathway out of enslavement is education, not the rejection of education. This is neither an education demanded by an authoritarian power, which determines what must be learned because it serves the interests of the authoritarian power, nor is education a mere set of fanciful dreams that privilege and/or make humanity an exception to ‘the order of things.’ Rather, it is the kind of education that recognizes that only a finite, transcendental consciousness can acquire and apply imperceptible, symbol systems in order to *grasp the order(s) that govern appearances in the world and to act responsibly on the basis of its understanding*. Education is necessary because finite, transcendental consciousness is not born in possession of imperceptible, symbol systems that are *required* to grasp ‘order.’²²⁹ Those symbol systems must be learned, and a finite, transcendental consciousness must also learn that it is the only place in the ‘order of things,’ so far as we have experienced, that can ask the question ‘what ought to be.’²³⁰

Raising the question ‘what ought to be?’ illuminates a second ‘order’ to appearances. It is a moral order of ‘wide’ moral principles (the categorical imperatives) that govern the ‘proper’ achievement of the ‘narrow,’ particular goals (governed by hypothetical imperatives) of finite creativity. Note: *not all imperatives are categorical*, according to Kant. Remarkably, *only the individual can grasp* the two imperceptible systems that are the inseparable, physical and moral orders of experience. *Nonetheless, neither order is merely the capricious construction/creation* of the individual. We no more can causally explain from where physical laws come than we can causally explain from where moral laws come.

228. Kant defines ‘Enlightenment’ as the overcoming of one’s self-imposed immaturity. See *An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment? (Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?)* AA VIII: 35.

229. See Kant, *Pädagogik* AA IX: 441, 443.

230. This observation Kant made already in his *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie* (1774/1775): 29.

Remarkably, as well, *only the individual knows* whether the orders of experience have been invoked to govern (give permission for) one's agency. A metaphysics of eminent,²³¹ finite, transcendental consciousness is necessary in order for transcendental consciousness to be, and to become, responsible, if there is to be responsible agency. In other words, a metaphysics of transcendental consciousness is required in order for it to be(come) what it is in the perceptible order of things. One can *symbolically* say, the imperceptible order of things constitutes an imperceptible 'commonweal of God' as *the unknown and unknowable origin* of 'what is' and its 'orders.' Recognizing that such a label is grounded in an anthropomorphism, its legitimacy is not because it is a literal, 'objective' claim independent of a perceiving subject but, precisely, *a symbolic, heuristic claim* on the part of an eminent, finite, transcendental consciousness for such a species to become responsibly what it is capable of becoming.

Michel Foucault wrote dismissively of transcendental critique in reference to Kant.

Critique no longer consists of the search for formal structures with universal validity but is, preferably, the historical investigation of events that have led to the constitution and acknowledgement of ourselves as the subjects who do, think, and say what we do. In this sense, critique is not transcendental, and its goal is not the possibility of a metaphysics: critique is in its intent genealogical and in its method archaeological.²³² (emphasis added)

Foucault is calling metaphysics "formal structures with universal validity," which sounds very 'Kantian' However, Foucault is employing Kantian metaphors to reject Platonic and Hegelian 'metaphysics' and hasn't begun to reject Kantian metaphysics. In fact, Foucault presupposes Kantian metaphysics.

Yes, Kant means by 'metaphysics' 'formal structures with universal validity,' but his metaphysics is not a speculative, transcendental, 'objective' claim about reality independent of, and explanatory of, the empirical world as well as the 'subject.' According to Foucault, critique (more correctly from a Kantian perspective, 'criticism') is not transcendental because it can only be empirical, and its goal is not the possibility of a metaphysics but the end of metaphysics: critique is analytical 'diairesis' (διαίρεσις) and it achieves its archaeological method by the analysis of strictly empirical origins. For Foucault *we have before us an either/or*: Either 'critique' searches for 'formal structures with universal validity' taken *in the sense of an objective, metaphysical dimension beyond experience*, or critique is 'genealogical and archaeological' occurring in, and limited to, empirical experience: That is a paralogism that is clever, but, applied to Kant, it is both a distortion and ridiculous.

231. On the difference between eminent and efficient causality, see the "Introduction:" 84, n. 23.

232. Michel Foucault, "*Was ist Aufklärung?*" ["*What is Enlightenment?*"] was published in Eva Erdman, Rainer Forst, Axel Honneth (eds.): *Ethos der Moderne* (Frankfurt a.M.-New York: Campus Verlag, 1990): 49. See McGaughey, "Enlightenment: Reflections on Michel Foucault's 'Was ist Aufklärung?' ['What is Enlightenment?']" at https://criticalidealism.org/enlightenment-reflections-on-michel-foucaults-was-ist-aufklarung-what-is-enlightenment-7-february-2016/2/#_ftn2 (31 October 2023).

Kant's notion of *transcendental consciousness* is neither concerned with a metaphysics in the sense of an *objective* dimension 'beyond experience' nor does its metaphysics consist in a 'causal explanation of experience.' Finite, transcendental consciousness is aware of itself only because it is in the world. Its metaphysics consists of those *a priori* synthetic elements that must be added to appearances in order to experience and understand them. Yet, finite, transcendental consciousness does not create the content of experience (the empirical), and its understanding occurs in a supersensible realm that we are aware of only because we experience empirical appearances. The metaphysical anchors in the world. It does not call us out of the world.

In other words, Kant's 'critique' does not prescribe²³³ (*vorschreibt*) 'what is' and/or 'what ought to be' from some speculative dimension beyond the world but deduces²³⁴ the schema of the categories and the laws of nature and morality. *The deduction of the law is no metaphysical absolute of 'universal validity' beyond the world but the product of discernment of what is required as the conditions of possibility in order to experience the 'order' of the world and the 'order' of autonomous freedom* in that world. Especially the transcendental consciousness' "structures and universal validity" of 'pure reason,' Kant explicitly and frequently says, are *regulative* (a 'hypothetical,' not an 'apodictic' exercise of reason²³⁵). They constitute a presupposed 'as if' that is required for discernment of *the greatest unity and breadth*²³⁶ that makes possible experience, understanding, and agency. They are a metaphysically, *presupposed, heuristic* necessity but are not metaphysically, absolutely necessary.²³⁷ Their origin is not known²³⁸ and cannot be known – contrary to the claims of traditional metaphysics (e.g., Plato, Hegel), but they also cannot contradict the laws of nature.²³⁹

Experience and understanding can only occur in a world/cosmos. The identification of conditions and transcendental structures that make possible experience and understanding constitute *regulative ideas, not constitutive ideas*. *Constitutive* 'apodictic' principles are mathematical, whose elements are connected by an '=' sign, in contrast

233. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 185–186: "Judgment [...] prescribes [*vorschreibt*] a law, not to nature (as autonomy) but to itself (as heautonomy) for reflection on nature, which one could call the law of the specification of nature with regard to its empirical laws, which it does not cognize in nature *a priori* but rather assumes on behalf of an order of nature cognizable for our understanding [...]"

234. See Kant's discussion of the difference between 'reflecting' and 're-producing' judgment in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 179–181. See as well, the "Introduction:" 86, n. 26. Kant does not claim that transcendental consciousness *creates* or *prescribes* the concept or law for nature for that, of course, would be radical solipsism.

235. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 675.

236. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 672.

237. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 644, see B 725–726 on use of anthropomorphic analogies as regulative.

238. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 704.

239. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 708.

to philosophy's regulative, dynamic principles,²⁴⁰ whose elements are open to change because they are not absolute.²⁴¹ Kant claims that taking regulative principles to be constitutive principles is "lazy reason"²⁴² and is the very 'perversion' (*perversa ratio*) of reason²⁴³ because it takes an assumption to be a substantial (*hypostatic*), actual ground. In short, the totality that is transcendental consciousness is not a *hypostatic* axiom but a *hypothetical* 'problem' that denies 'an infinite regress' but is a required condition for there to be any understanding, whatsoever.²⁴⁴

Foucault echoes Strauß' definition of critique as *diairesis* that leaves a black hole at the core of understanding *without any accounting for how* an empirical, genealogical critique's archaeological method is possible. Most importantly, *we are left with theoretical description of 'what is' as a merely relative, aggregation of elements* – not to mention our being left *with no ground for determining 'what ought to be.'* A *theoretical description* is only a vicious circle of appearances of a relative, aggregate and has, other than appearances, nothing in common with Kant's notion of *theoretical reason* that is concerned with understanding 'what is' as a lawfully ordered system grasped by understanding's schema of imperceptible categories. With Foucault and Strauß theoretical reason fails to understand itself and practical reason (what 'ought to be') is eclipsed in the name of description and 'social constructions.' Foucault's liberation from authority is purchased with relativism and mutual culpability without any moral criteria to guide either theoretical or practical reason.

Kant's critique, in dramatic contrast, illuminates a distinction (but, absolutely, no separation) between *theoretical reason* that understands phenomena ('what is') and *practical reason* that governs responsible agency ('what ought to be'). However, for Kant, both theoretical and practical reason include required, *a priori*, transcendental elements that can never appear in the senses directly. In this respect, *Kant's notion of 'critique' involves the greatest unity and is far broader than Hegel's, Strauß', and Foucault's notion of critique.* Hegel, Strauß, and Foucault are narrowly concerned with a *posteriori* theoretical reason without investigating the transcendental, *a priori* elements²⁴⁵ of theoretical reason that make theoretical, much less, practical reason

240. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 222–223.

241. This insight is especially important in light of the fact that frequently (e.g., see for example, Alisdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984:266) insist that Kant has been left on the trash heap of history precisely because he was Euclidean and Newtonian. Such a claim says more about the claimant's superficial reading of Kant than it does about Kant's understanding of science.

242. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 717.

243. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 720.

244. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 536–537.

245. Hegel has one, single *a priori* synthetic judgment that is a dogmatic claim for the existence of Absolute Spirit as the objective, ultimate, causal source of all that is. Hegel claims that "[...] the Concept [...], without the variety of perception, is empty and without content, although *it is a priori a synthesis*. Because it is this, it has determination and difference in itself. As the determinateness of the Concept, absolute determinateness, the uniqueness, the Concept is *the basis and source of all*

possible for us to investigate phenomena, in the first place. Hegel, *Strauß*, and *Foucault* are practicing the criticism of a posteriori analytic diairesis. They have little in common with Kant's a priori synthetic critique of transcendental consciousness.

finite determinateness and multiplicity" (*Wissenschaft der Logik* II (1832) GW VI: 261); and Hegel claims that the I and the Concept (One) are an a priori unity: "That I am the One and that I am active as thinking, setting unity, is, however, not so precisely stated in Kant. That which thinking produces is unity; thus, it produces itself, for it is the One [the Concept]. (The unity can also be called relation; insofar as a manifold is presupposed and this remains on one side as manifold, it is called related). This is transcendental apperception; *the pure apperception of self-consciousness is the synthesizing function.*" *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* GW XX: 344. Hegel's ,I' here is not the ,I' of finite consciousness. It is Absolute Spirit. Absolute Spirit is the Absolute Unity of the 'divisible I' that is mental ideality (*Idee*) over against perceptible phenomena'. Perceptible phenomena are the 'unreasonable many' of the 'divisible non-I' that is empirical actuality (*Realität*). See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten:" GW II: 455–456.

