

Volume II

Part III:

Strauß' Metaphysics: On the Way from Hegel to Kant

"The true value of man is not determined by his [*sic.*] possession, supposed or real, of Truth, but rather by his sincere exertion to get to the Truth. It is not possession of Truth by which he extends his powers and in which his ever-growing perfectibility is to be found. Possession makes one passive, indolent and proud. If God were to hold all Truth concealed in His right hand, and in His left only the steady and diligent drive for Truth, albeit with the proviso that I would always and forever err in the process, and to offer me the choice, I would with all humility take the left hand."

– Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, "A Rejoinder," Section I

1. Strauß refers to this quote from Lessing in *The Old and the New Faith* :219. Strauß comments about which Strauß wrote: "The saying has always made such a special impression on me because behind its subjective meaning I could still hear an objective one of infinite scope [...]"

If we can no longer defer to God the choice between existence without pain and death, but also without movement and life, and such a one, in which life and movement are bought by pain and death, then the choice arises for us, whether we want to try to understand the latter, or want to persist in fruitless denial of that which is, to prefer the former." *Ibid.*, 219–220

Vol. II: Introduction

Engagement of Strauß facilitates a re-engagement of purloined ‘metaphysics’ in the 21st C. I claim that Strauß is a ‘great’ thinker/theologian but not because he possessed the truth. His career is one of a rigorous seeker of truth. His inadequate understanding of Kant was shaped by the Anti-Enlightenment and anti-Kantian movement at the beginning of the 19th C, which Strauß encountered in Hegel, Schleiermacher, F.C. Baur, and Carl Daub. Their mis-understanding and flagrant distortions of Kant prevented Strauß from drawing upon invaluable resources for philosophical and theological reflection with the result that he represents a crucial, but incomplete, paradigm shift yet to be achieved.

A Call for a Re-engagement of ‘Metaphysics but Not just any and all Metaphysics’

The 20th C prided itself on the destruction (‘De-construction’) of metaphysics as a liberation from capricious authority. Jean-François Lyotard’s dismissal of all ‘meta-narratives’¹ in *The Postmodern Condition* appeared at an opportune moment and engendered a strong echo across disciplines. In addition to Lyotard’s identification of the collapse of all “grand narratives” which primarily for Lyotard meant Hegelianism, the thesis applied, Lyotard claimed, even to science’s “little narrative [...] of imaginative invention.”² Adorno’s one-dimensional reductionism of ‘Enlightenment’ to an instrument of technocracy in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and the shift of focus to the ‘sociological’ for (merely socially constructed) values bundled enough dry tinder for a conflagration. Derrida and Foucault, not to mention Jean Baudrillard, Slavoj

1. See Lyotard’s “Introduction” to *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, trans. (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1985): xxiii-xxiv.

2. See Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*: 60. Lyotard rejects meta-narrative, but he insists that “There has to be a metalanguage to determine whether a given language satisfies the formal conditions of an axiomatic [which retains an echo of Hegel, not echoes Kant’s practical reason]; that metalanguage is logic.” (emphasis added) (*The Postmodern Condition*: 42) He then suggests four criteria for determining the ‘legitimacy’ of logical axioms or the ‘syntax of a formal system:’ 1) consistency; 2) syntactic completeness; 3) decidability (procedure to decide if a proposition belongs in the system); and 4) independence of the axioms in relation to one another. (See *The Postmodern Condition*: 42) Nonetheless, Lyotard acknowledges that “all formal systems have internal limitations” (*The Postmodern Condition*: 43). Cynically, then, Lyotard draws the conclusion that “[t]he games of scientific language become the games of the rich, in which whoever is wealthiest has the best chance of being right. An equation between wealth, efficiency, and truth is thus established.” (*The Postmodern Condition*: 45)

Žižek, Giorgio Agamben, and Peter Sloterdijk fed the flames as did the struggle to 'ground' reason and morality in Rawls 'veil of ignorance' and Habermas' 'consensus discourse theory.' Lyotard notes Martin Heidegger's criticism of metaphysics (especially, what Lyotard calls the 'doubling unfortunate' character of Heidegger's May 27, 1933, inaugural rector address at the university in Freiburg-in-Breisgau for its 'legitimizing knowledge' 'in the realm of politics'³). Heidegger's anti-metaphysical 'fundamental ontology' grounded in 'concealed' possibilities of 'manifest' actualities, in turn, shaped 20th C Hermeneutics in the work, for example, of Paul Ricoeur⁴ and Hans-Georg Gadamer.⁵ Especially, when it comes to the emphasis upon liberation from authoritarianism, one ought not to ignore Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies*,⁶

3. See Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*: 33–37.

4. Particularly important is Ricoeur's work on metaphor, especially "Study 7: Metaphor and Reference" with its analysis of 'metaphorical truth' in *The Rule of Metaphor* but equally important, especially for my project, is his three-volume *Time and Narrative*, Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, trans. [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984–1985] with its key description of the understanding-shaping of reality in both fiction and non-fiction by means of the three-fold symbolic structure of always and already pre-figured symbols, which are con-figured by the 'new' author, and re-figured by the reader (in the broadest sense of reading that includes political action).

5. Rather than invoke (Hegelian) logic, Gadamer, for his part, invoked the strategy of jurisprudence as a legitimating model for hermeneutics – diverting attention, one must add, from Kant's 'Doctrine of Virtue' to the 'Doctrine of Right': "We are familiar with [...the] function of judgment especially from jurisprudence, where the supplementary function of 'hermeneutics' consists in producing a concretization of law. It is always a question of something more than the correct application of general principles. Moreover, our knowledge of law and morality is always supplemented from the individual case, even productively determined by it. The judge does not only apply the law in concreto but contributes through his (*sic.*) very judgment to the development of the law [emphasis added] ('judges' law'). Like law, morality is constantly developed through the fecundity of the individual case." (emphasis added) *Truth and Method* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975): 36–37. Gadamer returns to this theme in section "(C) The exemplary Significance of Legal Hermeneutics" where he underscores that the jurist does not blindly apply the law to the case at hand, but s/he looks beyond the "historical knowledge of the original meaning" of the law "to take account of the change in circumstances and hence define afresh the normative function of the law." *Ibid.*, 291–292 He concludes: "[t]he hermeneutical situation of both the historian and the jurist seems to me to be the same in that when faced with any text, we have an immediate expectation of meaning. *There can be no such thing as a direct approach to the historical object that would objectively reveal its historical value.* The historian has to undertake the same task of reflection as the jurist" (*ibid.*, 292) to fill in the gap between 'original meaning' and 'new context'. Unfortunately, Gadamer has collapsed Kant's distinction between "Right" (civic law) and "Virtue" that structure Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals*. Consequently, his hermeneutics is only concerned with what Kant calls theoretical reason, not practical reason and neither of them from the perspective of their *a priori* conditions of possibility, which alone provide a grounding in *necessities* to avoid social, systematic distortion of understanding. See the "Conclusion: John Dewey and the Enduring Need to De-Mythologize the Hegelian/Straußian Reading of Kant." especially the the section "A Blind Spot in Dewey's Hermeneutics."

6. Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, 2 Vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

whose first volume (*The Spell of Plato*) traces fascism to the metaphysics of Plato's *Republic*.⁷

All of these sociological, discourse, and hermeneutical strategies are a reaction to, and locate a false 'authority' in, either the metaphysics of 'revealed' Personal Theism (for example, the strategy of Thomas Aquinas⁸), the metaphysics of meta-narrative in the Hegelian sense, Heidegger's attack on the tyranny of 'actuality' (what Derrida calls philosophy of "presence") and technology, as well as a literary canon, or a political ideology. Lyotard called out at the end of the *Postmodern Condition*: "Let us wage war on totality; let us be witness to the unrepresentable; let us activate the differences and save the honor of the name."⁹

A corollary to the rejection of meta-narratives in philosophy, then, has been the celebration of social, especially religious, pluralism¹⁰ as consisting of the socially constructed discourses of communities and traditions on the basis of a claim that *all forms of diversity deserve respect precisely because of their objective differences*. Perhaps

7. It is actually not unwarranted to claim that both consciously and unconsciously no other text influenced the (Greek/Latin) Western tradition (even more than the bible) than Plato's Similes of the Sun and Line at the end of Book VI of the *Republic*. Alred North Whitehead, for example, claimed that the entire Western tradition is a footnote to Plato. See Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1969): 53.

8. Thomas Aquinas wrote in his *Summa Theologica* I, 99, 1: "By faith alone do we hold truths which are above nature, and what we believe rests on authority. Wherefore, in making any assertion, we must be guided by the nature of things, except in those things which are above nature, and are made known to us by Divine authority." At *Summa Theologica* I, 32, 1 he had said: "Therefore, we must not attempt to prove what is of faith, except by authority alone, to those who receive the authority; while as regards others it suffices to prove that what faith teaches is not impossible." He had already drawn the conclusion at *Summa Theologica* I, 1, 6: "Whatsoever is found in other sciences contrary to any truth of this science [sacred doctrine] must be condemned as false."

9. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*: 82. In this same final paragraph, Lyotard refers to Kant as having acknowledged "a chasm" between the faculties of reason [McG: theoretical and practical reason and aesthetic judgment] and Hegel as offering only a "transcendental illusion" [McG: Lyotard's ultimate form of metanarrative]. Unfortunately, what Lyotard overlooks is that the "bridge" for the "chasm" between the theoretical and practical reason is the reflecting judgment of aesthetic judgment, which is the focus of Kant's *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*. On the distinction between reflecting and re-producing judgment, see *The Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA VI: 179–180. On the chasm (Kluft) in transcendental consciousness, see AA V: 175–176. Kant suggests at AA VI: 195–197 that it is reflecting judgment that provides the "mediating concept" "through feeling" (!) between theoretical reason (understanding of nature to answer the question 'what is?') and practical reason (exercising of creative freedom above but never separate from nature to answer the question 'what ought to be?'). Why 'feeling'? Because reflecting judgment commits itself to 'lawfulness' as governing both domains out of a 'feeling of pleasure and displeasure' – otherwise, neither understanding nor responsible agency is possible. However, this is not a 'blind' feeling of pleasure and displeasure, but a feeling that is grounded in the universal, necessary conditions for experience, understanding, and responsible agency (that is, lawfulness, which evokes feeling).

10. See my paper on pluralism in Religious Studies: McGaughey, "One World, One Reason, One Faith, but Many Religions: Religious Studies." <https://criticalidealism.org/one-world-one-reason-one-faith-but-many-religions-religious-studies-in-an-age-of-pluralism/>.

the most trenchant formulation of this strategy for understanding religions is George A. Lindbeck's, *The Nature of Doctrine and Theology in a Post-Liberal Age*.¹¹ He is joined by Stanley Hauerwas and Nicholas Wolterstorff.¹² However, social construction, generally, and social construction in theology, particularly, conceals and oppresses in its own way. The social constructivist offers a convenient cover for protecting the self-interest of one's own tradition, which, under the guise of championing pluralism, is employed to justify its own clinging to blind, enthusiastic, dogmatic claims, and, as it claims to avoid cultural and intellectual imperialism, it is left with no basis for constructive criticism of the self or other. Especially Christian theologians frequently applaud pluralism, but they rarely, if ever, examine the theological virtues of the 'other.' Rather, they immediately turn to a defense of their own tradition.

There is absolutely no questioning on my part that all prejudices with respect to the external accidents of life are unacceptable! When it comes to pluralism, the claim to its acknowledgement is grounded not in objective subreptions that claim to know 'reality.' In other words, *as Kant formulated his recognition of religion within the limits of mere reason and as he called for the reining in of philosophical, 'enthusiastic,' speculations, and as he grounded the 'dignity' and absolute worth of individuals not in tradition or cultures of skills but in the imperceptible culture that promotes the moral will, so, too, the 'respect' owed to others, as well as, embracing of pluralism of all kinds, is not rudderless, but governed by what is necessary (in a non-causal sense). In short, taking pluralism to mean all truth is relative eliminates the grounds not only for criticism of the self or the other, but it eliminates the one strategy that protects us from systematic distortion in disciplines of all kinds as well as in conspiracy theories and political ideologies like the the Russkiy mir, "the Russian world."*¹³ One does not overcome prejudices evoked by external accidents (nationality, culture, religious traditions and institutions, race, sex, gender, age, economic status, etc.) by taking them to be beyond critique and to be all of equal value. One overcomes prejudices by *transcendental critique*.

The corrective strategy to such an embracing of 'let a million flowers bloom' is the overlooked strategy that respect for diversity is owed not because all external, perceptible, 'accidental' characteristics, over which one has little (and in many cases, no) control are of equal value. Rather, one seeks out the imperceptible, *universal* conditions, capacities, and lawful order that makes it possible for there to be an

11. George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine and Theology in a Post-Liberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984). See Douglas R. McGaughey, "Chapter 5: On George Lindbeck's Cultural-Linguistic Theological Model" in *Strangers and Pilgrims: On the Role of aporiai in Theology* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997)

12. See Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Religion in the University* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019) and "Theology and Science: Listening to Each Other" in *Religion and Science: History, Method, Dialogue*, Richardson, W. Mark and Wesley J. Wildman eds. (New York: Routledge, 1996: 95–104).

13. See James R. Cochrane, "The Cosmopolitan Christ: A Contemporary Agenda?" in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 177 (2023): especially, 26.

experience of diversity, in the first place. Rather than absolutizing from the get-go everything that is empirical as of equal value, all empirical phenomena, which include the accidents of culture, religious traditions, race, sex, gender, age, economic status, etc., are *the starting point of 'critique's' Copernican Turn* that lead to imperceptible, *universal structures* of experience, understanding, and responsible agency.¹⁴

For example, without acknowledgement of universal dignity, which is grounded not by the merely empirical assertion of 'rights' but by the Copernican Turn to the set of universal, transcendental conditions and capacities, differences of race, nationality, religion, cultural origin, sexual orientation, etc., not only conceal the universal structures of transcendental consciousness, but also no ground is left for *legitimate* criticism of exploitation (of persons and the environment), persecution, oppression, and injustice. All criteria for such criticism are reduced to socially constructed norms, rules, and values. In other words, the socially constructed accidents of norms, rules, and values leave unexamined their capricious and relative status that can result in devastating destruction of the environment and persons. Rather, virtue and human dignity are grounded in universal capacities as well as universal principles and moral principles that enable responsible engagement of the environment and interaction with all persons.

The choice, though, is not an either/or. It is a both/and. The grounds for celebrating pluralism are not the 'accidents' of individuality (race, gender, sexuality, national origin, religious affiliation, age, physical disability, etc.) and/or the particular and unique, constructed products of the various communities of humanity but, rather, the common transcendental capacities and lawfulness *that make it possible for* individuals to be who they are as individuals and that make it possible for societies and traditions to generate the historical content of their respective social systems and religions that they come to embrace. *It is a profound mistake to simply absolutize the status of historical accidents and simultaneously say that, as social constructions, the external rules and norms of traditions all are equally due respect.* Every (!) social order of what Kant calls 'hypothetical imperatives' depends upon a 'higher' set of internal, universal 'categorical imperatives,' which the individual invokes to 'give oneself permission' to achieve her/his particular, external goals by means of socially constructed hypothetical imperatives. In other words, not all imperatives are categorical!¹⁵

Again, as significant and crucial as *the 'narrow,' external, perceptible accidents* are for the establishment of 'identity,' they are not the key to the respect owed to all. Rather, the key to respect owed to all is *the 'broad,' internal, imperceptible conditions and capacities of transcendental consciousness* with its universal principles and laws that apply at all times and in all places that are the key to the respect owed to all. Martin Luther King, Jr., so much as says the same when he dreams of a day when we will not be judged by the color of our skin but by our *internal* character.

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

15. On 'categorical' and 'hypothetical' imperatives, see Chapter I: "Methodology:" 124, n. 65.

Furthermore, the 'wide' principles of virtue are not external, heteronomous list of 'morals' that one can use to judge the other by her/his appearance or any other accidental aspect of their being (e.g., the consequences of their agency). The 'wide' principles of virtue are internal, imperceptible, and their application is known only to the individual just as only the individual can experience and understand for her-/himself, not for someone else. Transcendental consciousness has little or no control over the visible accidentals even the consequences of personal agency (especially, when it comes to the long-run), but it does have control over the principles that the individual transcendental consciousness self-selects to 'give oneself permission' in the moment of decision taking to act externally in a certain way. In spite of the claim made by Luke 6:43–45, "judging a tree by its fruit" is inappropriate for understanding a human being. Trees have no choice about their fruit because they are the products of 'mechanical,' natural causality. The fruit of an animal with transcendental consciousness is the consequence of its own creative causality. Consequently, this animal, to a degree unlike other animals, is capable of (but, obviously, not required to) *consciously* assuming responsibility for its agency, not merely *instinctually*.

Furthermore, the individual is only capable of awareness of her/his own imperceptible decision-taking that resulted in what became a perceptible action. No one has direct access to the imperceptible decision-taking of another.

In addition, the conditions of possibility of transcendental consciousness require that the individual can never lose her/his capacity of autonomous freedom intentionally to initiate causal sequences that nature on its own cannot. Therefore, as well, the individual never loses her/his capacity to assume responsibility for that agency. Hence, s/he has dignity on the basis of *indelible*, universal capacities.

Society can, and does, hold an individual accountable on the basis of the 'Doctrine of Right' or civic law and socially constructed rules. When it comes to the 'Doctrine of Right,' then, one can and must judge by objectively observable 'fruits' of behavior. However, when it comes to the 'Doctrine of Virtue,'¹⁶ dignity is established not by means of the 'objective fruits' (or 'accidents') of action (governed by the 'Doctrine of Right') but by the universal, 'subjective conditions and capacities' of the individual.

Just as Consequentialism can only measure effects in the short run without the faintest awareness of the long-term effects of one's own or society's actions, so too with individual decision-taking. Judging by appearances is a popular game. However, we acknowledge the dignity of the 'other' *not because* all that is objectively accidental in life is of equal 'worth' *but because* dignity is subjectively grounded in the *universal autonomous freedom* of every transcendental consciousness.

When it comes to 'respect,' though, consequences do matter. However, one is owed respect not because of the 'objective' accidents of one's person or circumstances, and

16. Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* consists of two parts: the "Doctrine of Right" and the "Doctrine of Virtue."

respect is not ‘owed’ to the individual simply because s/he acts on the basis of merely socially constructed rules/norms. Rather, respect is owed *to the degree that* one has acted on the basis of a universal, imperceptible moral principle even when contrary to one’s own self-interest. Respect is grounded in the overall character¹⁷ of the individual, not merely the particular effects of the individual’s agency. In short, respect is owed to only those who make an effort to act not merely through the *power* of instrumental, technical reason but also according to the universal, subjective, imperceptible, lawful, moral order of practical reason.¹⁸

Whereas ‘dignity’ is absolute because of the capacity of autonomous freedom itself, ‘respect’ is relative to the degree one reins in one’s self-interest as the sole motivation for one’s agency. However, it is the imperceptible, subjective moral order of practical reason that makes it possible for one to act contrary to self-interest (but never independent of self-interest).¹⁹ ‘Relative worth’ is a matter of exchange of ‘accidents’ or ‘fruits’ (objects, money) of the public marketplace. The worth of something is determined by that for which it can be exchanged. However, there is one, and only one, ‘absolute worth,’ and that is human dignity because it is inalienable and no thing or no other can be substituted for it.²⁰

In other words, there are legitimate grounds for critiquing one’s own and another’s religious tradition (or pluralism, generally) *without succumbing to intellectual or cultural imperialism. We overcome enthusiastic, speculative metaphysics and dehumanizing prejudices neither by ignoring and discounting nor by absolutizing the differences and identities of particularity* but by *focusing on the universal conditions and capacities that make responsible creativity possible.*

When it comes to religious, metaphysical claims, particular, literal, anthropomorphic analogies are incapable of grounding theistic claims because the analogies constitute a vicious circle. We cannot be certain which of our grounding, human characteristics is the appropriate base for our analogies (e.g., thinking, planning, willing, creating, loving, etc.) used to describe God. Nonetheless, we project them onto God, and we declare that, whatever we’ve chosen among anthropomorphic characteristics to ground our claim, they were originally created by God. A vicious circle ensues: God *must have* intentionally created the human characteristics that are, in turn,

17. On ‘physical’ and ‘moral character’, see 801, n. 310.

18. For example, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin possesses dignity, but they are entirely undeserving of respect.

19. See the opening paragraphs of Section II of Kant’s, *Groundwork* AA IV: 406–408.

20. On ‘absolute worth’ and ‘human dignity’, see Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 434–43, 449–450. In *Religion*, Kant distinguishes among animality (Tierheit) or merely instinctual agency, humanity (Menschheit) or pursuit of social status and prestige, and personality (Persönlichkeit) or degree of self-selecting of moral principles to govern one’s autonomous freedom. On the individual as ‘self-selecting’ (not ‘self-legislating’) agent, see Chapter 7: 790, n. 265. On Kant’s notion of ‘respect’, see *Religion* AA VI: 26 ff. Respect is a matter of ‘humanity’ (social status and prestige) whereas dignity is a matter of ‘personality (imperceptible, responsible exercising of autonomous freedom)’.

projected upon Him [!]. For example, Scholastic ‘Occasionalism’/‘Voluntarism’ denied the universal lawfulness of nature and morality claimed by Scholastic ‘Intellectualism.’ ‘Occasionalism’/‘Voluntarism’ preserves God’s exercising His [!] power to perform miracles but destroys the possibility of coherent understanding of the world by finite consciousness.²¹

When it comes to the social construction of morality thesis, it substitutes hypothetical imperatives for categorical imperatives without acknowledging any differences between them.²² Racism, misogyny, homophobia, child abuse, human trafficking, agism, prejudice over national origin, religious allegiance, etc., are taken to be wrong because they violate relative values of social construction. In fact, though, these socially constructed values are ‘wrong’ when *they substitute capricious accidents over which the individual has no control* (race, sex, gender, childhood vulnerability, economic exploitation, age, place of birth, even status and prestige in the eyes of others etc.) *for universal conditions and capacities* (dignity) *governed by universal laws* (categorical, not hypothetical imperatives).²³ Among such categorical imperatives, for example,

21. On Kant’s rejection of miracles precisely because they make any and all understanding impossible, see in Chapter 8: 826.

22. On the difference between ‘categorical’ and ‘hypothetical’ imperatives, see Chapter 1: “Methodology:” 124, n. 65.

23. See Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 467–468: By pointing out that the recognition and identification of all prejudices is based on the ‘accidents’ of appearances, Kant’s statement here constitutes an explicit rejection not only of racism, ageism, sexism, power or weakness, status and prestige (e.g., aristocracy) as criteria for judging others, but it is also an implicit rejection of homophobia, nationalism, populism, and any other criteria for judging others, which are all based on merely empirical criteria of ‘theoretical reason’ to the entire neglect of the capacities and moral significance of ‘practical reason.’ Kant writes in this “Remark:” “Given the title to what has just been discussed [in this section entitled: “On Vices that Violate the Duty of Respect Owed to Other Persons”], it is clear that what has been said here does not so much extol virtues as, more importantly, condemns their contrary. However, this lies in the concept of respect [*Achtung*] that we are obliged to demonstrate toward others, which is only a negative duty. -I am not [!] obliged to venerate others, positively [!], by demonstrating my esteem for them (merely observable as people). The only respect to which I am obligated by nature is that for the law (*revere legem*) [respect’s condition 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: 468 (McGaughey translation). Especially to note is that Kant is no misogynist simply because, when he talks of women, he refers almost always to the ‘Frauenzimmer’ (‘women’s parlor’). On the ‘Frauenzimmer’ in the 18th C, see Christiane Brokmann-Nooren, *Weibliche Bildung im*

are that we not allow ourselves to be, or treat others as, mere means to ends but acknowledge all as ends in themselves,²⁴ the obligation of the maxims of the understanding that we think from the perspective of the other,²⁵ and the recognition that the preservation of the material conditions of life as the foundation for any and all experience, understanding, and exercising of responsible agency.

Put succinctly, philosophy can only point out ‘good’ and ‘bad’ news. The ‘good’ news is that it is possible to believe any and all causal explanations that one wishes! Because we only experience the effects of causes, our causal *explanations* of events come from us. They are not directly given with the appearances that are to be ‘explained’. Consequently, no one can prove us wrong. We always have the escape hatch of secondary causality or the illusion of grasping the most comprehensive totality of coherence that justifies our causal explanations even when parts are suspect. The ‘bad’ news, though, is that no one can prove us right! Because reason is limited by finite circumstances and the finite conditions of possibility and capacities of transcendental reason, we do not and cannot have access either to causes or to ‘all times and all places’ to establish the truth of the causal explanation we offer. The philosophical theologian draws the conclusion: We cannot establish with certainty the objective truth claims of our causal explanations of any given set of effects, but we can establish what the *necessary*, subjective conditions of possibility are for us to experience the phenomena that challenge us to provide a causal explanation. The touchstone of those

18. Jahrhundert. „Gelehrtes Frauenzimmer“ und „gefällige Gattin“ (Oldenburg: BIS Verlag, 1994). The ‘Frauenzimmer’ was the socially constructed institution for women of the upper classes and their maids that, parallel to the ‘men’s parlor’, constituted the environment for the ‘education’ of women. Kant’s own discussion of the ‘Frauenzimmer’ is neither a criticism of women universally nor a critique of the ‘women’s Parlor’ to establish its universal, transcendental conditions of possibility. He examines it as a very particular social institution of upper class women and their maids entirely in conformity with his understanding of a species as possessing a common ‘nature’ (seeds/Keimen), which must be cultivated and does so by means of interacting with its various, particular environments. In short, Kant does not judge what is worthy about women (or men, for that manner) on the basis of the particular products of their development or their achievements in the ‘Frauenzimmer’ but on the basis of their universal, transcendental capacities and potential.

Kant’s mother was no ‘Frauenzimmer’ either as a participant in a ‘women’s parlor’ or according to the pejorative dismissal of an individual woman. August Schreiner writes of Kant’s mother in Immanuel Kant, der Königsberger Weltweise (Königsberg, von Emil Rautenberg, 1861): 2-3: „For that time, she, as the wife of a craftsman, had a rare education, for which a house bible also serves as a certificate of this, in which she has written family news by hand according to the custom of that time [...]” Kant himself remembers his mother: as “ [...] a loving, sensitive, pious and righteous woman and a tender mother, who guided her children to the fear of God through pious teachings and by setting a virtuous example. She often took me outside the city, drew my attention to the works of God, [...] planted and nurtured the first seed of good in me, she opened my heart to the impressions of nature, she awakened and broadened my concepts, and her teachings have had a lasting, salutary influence on my life.” In Immanuel Kant. Ein Lebensbild nach Darstellungen der Zeitgenossen Borowski, Jachmann, Wasianski, Hermann Schwarz ed. (Halle a.S.: Hugo Peter, 1907): 168-169. Such a description by no means conveys the conviction of a misogynist.

24. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 429.

25. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* V: 293–294.

necessary, subjective conditions of objective experience is lawfulness. Where there is no lawfulness, there is no understanding, and the call to shut down understanding to allow for a causality that contradicts lawfulness is equivalent to putting a bullet through one's head.

Where there is no lawful order, there is no incentive to seek understanding. What we have learned, though, is that, if we assume lawfulness, we achieve a 'sovereignty' over (not a capricious subordination of) phenomena that enhances understanding the more our investigations lead to ever greater comprehension and coherence of the two lawful systems required for us to experience, understand, and exercise responsible creative agency (physical and moral laws).

This finite 'faith' is no absolute denial of the afterlife, Kant well understood.²⁶ However, he does strenuously question any conception of the afterlife that undermines our transcendental capacity to govern our decision-taking by self-selecting (not self-created),²⁷ universal moral principles, which are 'right because they are right,' not because they serve self-interest (see below). To be sure, we can never be certain that our motivation is not self-interest, but, if we consciously give ourselves permission to act on the basis of a moral principle that we would want to be universal like a law of nature, we can be certain that we have not acted merely on the basis of self-interest.²⁸

Lest the reader be tempted to respond in light of Paul's dismissal of human reason (I Corinthians 1:18–21) that "the philosopher is elevating human reason to the throne of God,"²⁹ by telling us what God is or is not and surreptitiously fostering some set of external, heteronomous (divine or culturally relative) system of ethical norms to privilege the self-interest of some social group (culturally, religious, economic, or political), it must be pointed out: It is not the philosopher who has elevated humanity to occupying the throne of God. Theology itself in all of its forms (with the exception of Kant's philosophical theology!³⁰) has from its very beginning placed humanity and not merely reason on the divine throne because all forms of theism require anthropomorphic analogies and apply anthropomorphic characteristics to God. We require analogies whenever we speak of God precisely because of the *limits to reason*. Even the Christian Platonist, Jonathan Edwards, warned against taking internal voices

26. See "5) Kant claimed no role for the resurrection and ascension of Christ." 836 ff.

27. On translating *selbstgesetzgebend* as 'self-selecting' rather than 'self-legislating', see 790, n. 265.

28. See the beginning of the Second Section of the *Groundwork* AA IV: 406–408.

29. This is the charge against Strauß made by Eschenmayer. See Strauß, "Die Herren [Carl August von] Eschenmayer und [Wolfgang] Menzel" (1837). In *Streitschriften* II: 37. It is also Karl Barth's claim in *Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert. Ihre Vorgeschichte und ihre Geschichte* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1981): 40, 53–56, 85 100 ff.

30. Kant calls his philosophy 'philosophical theology'. See the "Preface to the First Edition" of *Religion* AA VI: 9.

to be God's voice or angels' voices,³¹ which can be confused for God's voice or angels' voices only because we have already experience voices as finite beings.

The issue here is not a contradiction between philosophy and theology in which human hubris challenges God. Both philosophy and theology must, and only can, use anthropomorphic analogies when speaking of God, and, given the fact that, especially theological systems tend to view humanity as the pinnacle of finite reality, it perhaps appears natural to attribute what we experience as finite capacities to an infinite deity (to be sure 'perfectly') because that deity 'created' us. As Kant pointed out in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, though, the issue is not analogies or no analogies but 'literal,' anthropomorphic analogies and 'symbolic,' anthropomorphic analogies.³²

Without embracing 'symbolic' anthropomorphic analogies for understanding of God, we cannot understand experience (especially, our experience of top-down causality of biological systems that are 'more than the sum of their parts' but, nonetheless, adheres to lawfulness). However, those 'symbolic,' anthropomorphic analogies are of value not for what they objectively say about 'God' but only to the extent that they give us an insight into the subjective conditions that allow us to be the responsible, finite creatures that we are capable of being, but not required to be.

The same is true of the afterlife. Denial of the afterlife would be a re-producing (*bestimmende*) judgment beyond our finite limits.³³ However, the fact that we cannot deny the afterlife is no justification for our conceiving it, again, on the basis of anthropomorphic analogies, as a physical location beyond this world reached by the apocalypse and/or the grace of God. Such anthropomorphic analogies, in fact, undermine humanity's moral efforts.

In addition to the 'culture of skills,' Kant speaks of the 'culture that promotes the (moral) will,' morally but not heteronomously.³⁴ A 'culture that promotes the (moral) will' fosters human creativity and the conducting of one's life on the basis of an internal moral order, knowable only to the individual, that emphasizes moral effort on the basis of 'what is right' and shared with all transcendental consciousness as a 'moral culture.' However, the goal of moral effort is not moral perfection³⁵ in this or the 'next' life or winning divine praise, nor does it consist of heteronomous moralism that seeks external imposition of a socially constructed ethic on the individual. Rather, moral

31. See the "First Sign" in Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, Vol. 2 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959): 210–211.

32. See Kant, *Prolegomena*: AA IV: 356–357.

33. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 769–770 where he rejects Johann Georg Sulzer's confidence that one day there will be a proof of God and the afterlife. Kant equally recognizes that there cannot be a disproof of God and the afterlife, either. The importance of these ideas (along with the other ideas of pure reason) is their role with respect to what we know is necessary for us to exercise our theoretical and practical reason in this life.

34. See Kant's distinction between the 'culture of skills' and the 'culture that promotes the (moral) will' in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 431–432.

35. On moral perfection as a capacity not an achievement, see the "Foreword: 28, n. 11.

effort is required in this life to be(come) a finite human being and is anchored in universal dignity (not in external accomplishment, especially not external respect/honor).

A 'culture that promotes the (moral) will' also calls for the pursuit of republican government based on the separation of powers,³⁶ and the establishment of an international order (not world government) to adjudicate international issues for the benefit of all. The only version of 'perpetual peace' that is compatible with our finite, transcendental consciousness is a perpetual peace in this life. Should it turn out that there is an afterlife, there is nothing about the pursuit of perpetual peace in this life that would deny one's being 'rewarded' in the next life.³⁷

20th C anti-metaphysics threw the baby out with the bathwater with its facile rejection of all notions of metaphysics and its embrace of morality as grounded merely in the relative socially constructed rules and norms of individual communities, institutions, and traditions.

Open-ended understanding either in the form of Gadamer's juridical model or Ricoeur's three-fold mimesis of narrative pre-, con-, and re-figuration,³⁸ elevates cleverness (even understanding the author better than her-/himself³⁹) above what *ought to be understood and done* – although Gadamer reminds us that we are accountable to the text.⁴⁰ However, it is not that Ricoeur and Gadamer are wrong with their interpretive claims about the 'text.' The problem is that their focus is on 'objective' knowledge claims, which can never be certain, to the neglect of the 'subjective,' yet universal, conditions of possibility and capacities of transcendental consciousness required for there to be anything like an experience of an 'objective' reality. In other

36. On the requirement of a republican constitution and the separation of powers, see Kant *Perpetual Peace* AA VIII: 352, where he speaks of the administrative and legislative powers. However, see as well, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 313, 316 where he adds the 'judiciary power' and the subordination of all three 'as moral persons' to the republican constitution AA VI: 316. The first description of a constitution (*politeia*) based on the separation of powers was not Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Laws* (1748) (most likely Kant's source), but Polybius (200 – 118 BCE) who wrote in his *Histories* Book VI: 11–16 of the Roman constitution of his day that the structure: Consuls (Administration), Senate (Budget, Judiciary), and Tribunes/People (Legislative) with the success or failure dependent upon the virtue of those exercising the different offices. Polybius wrote: "As for the Roman constitution, it had three elements each of them possessing sovereign powers: and their respective share of power in the whole state had been regulated with such a scrupulous regard to equality and equilibrium, that no one could say for certain, not even a native, whether the constitution as a whole were an aristocracy or democracy or despotism. And no wonder: for if we confine our observation to the power of the Consuls we should be inclined to regard it as despotic; if on that of the Senate, as aristocratic; and if finally one looks at the power possessed by the people it would seem a clear case of a democracy". (Book VI: 11) From the Perseus Digital Library (November 13, 2024): <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/xmlchunk?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0234%3Abook%3D6%3Achapter%3D11>.

37. See Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project* AA VIII: 343–86.

38. See Paul Ricoeur, Vol. I of *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984): 45–71.

39. See Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975): 323.

40. See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*: 236, 260, and 278.

words, they have appropriately emphasized what Kant called the enthusiasm of ‘wit’ over what are the disciplined necessities of ‘reflecting judgment’,⁴¹ but they do so without Kant’s metaphysics of transcendental consciousness that consists of the universal, *a priori* synthetic elements of theoretical reason and practical reason. We are left applauding the clever insights of interpreters and being more concerned about whose metaphors are dominating a discipline while leaving ourselves culpable for the injustices of everyone (including our own) because there is only epistemological and moral relativism. Most destructive is that, with the unreflective emphasis in the natural sciences on empiricism, what Kant means by practical reason is entirely eclipsed and understanding becomes exclusively a concern of theoretical (more accurately, *instrumental*) reason driven by ‘scientism,’ not science.

Strauß’ Metaphysics

I will demonstrate that Strauß’ own metaphysics across his career employed three, related dialectics from Hegelian metaphysics for his ‘Panlogism.’⁴²

- a) "The Hegelian, Logical Dialectic of Epistemology" based on a distinction between content (*Inhalt*) and representations (*Form*). This distinction is taken to be that between ‘truth and actuality,’ knowledge and imagination. It provides the logic of ‘husk’ (*Form*) and ‘kernel’ (*Inhalt*), but also is a reversal of Kant’s notions of content (*Inhalt*; *sinnliche Anschauung*) and form (abstraction, *intellektuelle Anschauung*), which illustrates the profound difference between rapturist (*schwärmerische*),⁴³ Hegelian Idealism and Kant’s Critical Idealism;
- b) "The Hegelian, *a posteriori* Logical Dialectic of Negation" based on ‘identity and difference’ that distinguishes between ‘this and that,’ which is claimed to account for creation arising out of Hegel’s sole *a priori* synthetic judgment, Absolute Spirit; and
- c) "The Hegelian, Logical Dialectic of Theodicy" based on good and evil that distinguishes between ‘morality’ (abstract duties) and ‘ethics’ (concrete life-world attempts of application of abstract duties) that denies moral ‘success.’⁴⁴

41. On the difference among ‘wit’, imagination, and reflecting judgment, see: 20, n. 3.

42. Strauß’ biographer, Theobald Ziegler, calls Hegel a ‘Panlogist’ and ‘Arch-Rationalist’. See Theobald Ziegler, I: 257: "For Hegel reason was Logos, the ratio World Principle; he was a Panlogist, which one could translate as ‘Arch-Rationalist.’" I prefer the label ‘Pan-en-theist’. On Hegel as a Pan-en-theist, see: 214, n. 1.

43. On the difference between an ‘enthusiast’ and a ‘rapturist,’ see the "Foreword:" 27, n. 10.

44. I will point out, though, that the later Strauß, in addition to Hegel’s Logical Dialectic of Theodicy that stresses the unachievability of moral perfection, employs Jakob Böhme’s thesis of evil as necessary negation to account for the dynamic process of life.

Although Strauß rejected Hegel's meta-narrative, these dialectics continued to shape his later work. All three illuminate Strauß' *nominal similarity* with, *but ultimate differences* from, Kant's Critical Idealism.

Kant's Defense of Metaphysics

Kant calls all philosophy that is based on experience 'empirical,' which includes his own metaphysics. Nonetheless, to the extent that philosophy requires *a priori* principles, it is 'pure.' However, *pure* ideas are not *empty* ideas because they occur for finite, transcendental consciousness only in and through appearances. *It would never dawn on us to look for the imperceptible, a priori capacities that make experience, understanding, and agency possible, did we not experience, first, empirical phenomena.*

Logic is *formally* 'pure' because it is concerned solely with *a priori* principles. It is a canon (rules) without an organon of moral principles that govern the canon.⁴⁵ Metaphysics, in contrast, is concerned with *a priori* principles of theoretical reason that are required by the particulars of experience as well as concerned with the moral principles and free agency of practical reason. The quintessential form of metaphysics is mathematics, which is a canon with an organon. Unlike formal logic, mathematics is a set of rules that require phenomena. In short, metaphysics, for Kant, stands between formal, pure logic and reductionist materialism. Its *a priori* elements, which are not given directly in phenomena, are 'pure' yet are required by experience because they are required in order for there to be anything like a conscious (and intentional) experience of, and with, phenomena:

One can call empirical all philosophy in so far as it is based on grounds of experience; one can call philosophy that presents its doctrines solely from *a priori* principles *pure* philosophy. The latter, if it is merely formal, is called *logic*;⁴⁶ but if it is restricted [*ingeschränkt*] to particular [*bestimmte*] objects of the understanding it is called *metaphysics*.⁴⁷

45. On logic as a canon without an organon and mathematics as a canon inseparable from an organon, see: 49, n. 36.

46. For a further clarification of logic as pure philosophy, see Kant's "The Concept of Logic" in *Logic* AA IX: 11–16.

47. Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 388. In the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*, Kant further distinguishes between 'metaphysical' principles of theoretical and practical reason and the 'transcendental' principles of consciousness itself that are the required conditions of possibility for metaphysics. See Section V of the "Introduction:" AA V: 181 ff.

Kant's understanding of metaphysics, then, is profoundly different from either a 'standing'/vertical Platonism (Christianity's Personal Theism) or a 'reclining'/horizontal Platonism (Hegel's Absolute Spirit).⁴⁸

Platonism in both these forms claims to provide an *eminent, efficient, causal explanation* (independent of the causal sequence itself) for all 'that is.' The 'ultimate' cause of 'what is' for Personal Theism is an anthropomorphic deity who creates copies and shadows (λόγος προφορικός) by following a mental plan of ideas (λόγος ἐνδιάθετος (Philo's explanation for why there are two accounts of creation at the opening of Genesis)).⁴⁹ The *ultimate, efficient, causal explanation* of 'what is' for Hegel is the sole *a priori* Concept (Absolute Spirit) for whom all other ideas are *a posteriori* products of dialectic because they are the result of a logic of negation.⁵⁰

Metaphysics for Kant, then, is neither Hegel's epistemological dialectic of content (*Inhalt*) and representations (*Form*), nor Hegel's meta-narrative driven by the 'necessary' (meaning determining) of an *a posteriori* dialectical logic of Double Negation, nor Hegel's dialectical logic of absolute duty and failed ethics whose synthesis, for Hegel, is to escape sensuousness by means of the divinization, that is, the 'turn to indifference' of the Second Negation that 'returns' to Absolute Spirit.

Kant's notion of metaphysics is a 'pure,' *intelligible dimension* of experience *inseparable from phenomena's sensible dimension* that explicitly dismisses all *ultimate, efficient, causal, explanations* of 'what is' as speculative enthusiasm as enthusiasm if not rapture.⁵¹ In other words, *Kant's 'pure' reason is not Hegel's 'pure thought'*.⁵²

For Critical Idealism, neither the *a priori* synthetic elements of transcendental consciousness nor facts alone drive understanding. *Understanding always begins with appearances (but not merely Hegel's representational images of 'actuality' that are gov-*

48. On reading Plato's Simile of the Line as 'vertical' or 'horizontal', see: 19, n. 1 and Chapter 8: "1) Hegel's Reclined Plato and Kant as a 'Subjectivist'." 811 ff.

49. Philo of Alexandria employed this 'two-step' conception of creativity to account for the two accounts of creation at the opening of the Book of Genesis. See paragraph 16 of *de opificio mundi* and, especially, the clarifying footnote concerning the "double" creation of humanity in "Über die Welterschöpfung" [*de opificio mundi*] in Band I of *Philo von Alexandria. Die Werke in deutscher Übersetzung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1962): 53, n. 2.

Max Pohlenz acknowledges that it is not clear whether the distinction between λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and λόγος προφορικός comes from the Platonic Academy or the Stoics. See Pohlenz, *Die Stoa. Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung*. 7. Ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992): 39, 185. It appears to be what structures Plato's account of the Demiurge's creation of the world in the *Timaeus* (27d ff; 69b-70a). Unquestionably, it is a foundational distinction for the Stoics (see Polenz, *op. cit.*, 35-47. It is a distinction ubiquitous in the Western tradition (e.g., see Pohlenz, *ibid.*: Philo of Alexandria (373-375), Areios of Alexandria (435), Justin Martyr (412), Tertullian (439), Augustine (451)).

50. On Hegel's sole *a priori* Concept, see above "Preface:" 61. On Kant's rejection of dialectic for grounding the ultimate, causal ground of 'what is,' see *Critique of Pure Reason* B 697 and Chapter 6: 670.

51. For Kant's understanding of enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) and rapture (*Schwärmerei*), see: 27, n. 10.

52. See Chapter 6: "Grand Narratives of Theoretical Reason:" 654.

erned by the ‘cunning of reason’). However, *understanding must add elements* (universal, *a priori* synthetic judgments/assumptions) *that are not in the appearances*. These elements must be distinguished from elements that are only wishful thinking and serving of merely self- and communal interest. The assumptions that drive not only proper understanding of ‘what is’ (theoretical reason) but also for properly seeking to achieve ‘what ought to be’ (practical reason) ‘rise above’ merely sensuous interest – *even as they are inseparable from sensuous interest*.

The distinction between ‘what is required to make sense of appearances (theoretical reason) and to exercise responsible agency’ (practical reason) in contrast to ‘what is merely sensuous self-interest’ makes all the difference between a creature mechanically determined by natural causality and a creature capable of assuming responsibility for its agency.

In other words, what is required of a creature to be able to assume accountability for its agency (practical reason) is grounded in a paradoxical ‘requirement:’ the capability of autonomous, creative freedom-for intentional, creative agency that is an inseparable freedom-from nature’s ‘blind’ causality. Freedom-for, then, is never experienced independent of nature but not reducible to nature. Autonomous freedom is a finite, eminent *cause* that is incapable of proof/disproof because it can never appear directly in the senses (as the case with all causal ‘explanations’/accounts) but is capable of defense.⁵³

Kant provides a defense of autonomous freedom on the basis of the *a priori* synthetic necessities of theoretical and practical reason already in the *Critique of Pure Reason* when he rejects Platonic Idealism in support of his claim that the *necessities* of reason are inseparable from perception (*sensible Anschauung*).⁵⁴ In short, his defense of Critical Idealism is that the necessities of reason are inseparable from perception (*sensible Anschauung*) and that all causal explanation for transcendental consciousness is inseparable from space and time. In contrast, Platonic Idealism not only claims that there is a dimension of ideas independent of space and time but also claims that they have causal efficacy in themselves. Kant points out that ‘everything actual is possible;’ “some possibilities are actual;” “there is much that is possible that is not actual.” However, it is impossible for understanding “to grasp the totality of the possible” because all understanding requires coupling with perception (*sensible Anschauung*).⁵⁵ Therefore, ‘ideas’ are no causal realm independent of perception in space and time, but autonomous freedom is an appropriate deduction of one of the necessary conditions of possibility that are required in order for us to experience, understand, and exercise responsible agency in a world of space and time – along with all other finite, *a priori* synthetic judgments of causality.

53. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 459.

54. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* the “Explanation” and “Refutation of Idealism” in “4. The Postulates of Empirical Thought in General” B 266 – B 294.

55. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 283- B 284.

Despite the misleading label for reason as the capacity of ‘desire,’⁵⁶ which gives the impression that reason was defined by its objective goals, Kant provides, in addition to his defense (absent an explanation) of autonomous freedom in the *Groundwork*,⁵⁷ a ‘negative method’ in his ‘philosophical anthropology’ by which he distinguishes himself from the Stoics, Epicureans, the Cynics, Sophists, morbid melancholy, alcohol as well as mystical escapism, and passively waiting on divine grace.⁵⁸ Furthermore, in his *Menschenkunde*, section “36) The Capacity for (Rational) Desire (*Begehrungsvermögen*),” he gives an account of the role of the ‘formal inclinations’ (*Hänge*) of reason, which has no particular object but is, nonetheless, always related to objects, in contrast to the ‘material inclinations’ (*Hänge*) of sense perception, which are driven by their objects.⁵⁹ Rather than *Lust und Unlust* (pleasure and displeasure or happiness and pain) recommending a ‘turn inward’ to ‘escape’ from (or to achieve a status of ‘equanimity’ with respect to) the world as with the Stoics, Epicureans, Cynics, etc., when it comes to the *Lust/Unlust* of reason, Kant shifts the focus, from such ‘material inclinations’ to concentrate on ‘formal inclinations.’ In his philosophical anthropology, freedom-from (*Unlust*) and freedom-for (*Lust*) have a function in addition to their being deduced causalities out of perception (*sensible Anschauungen*) and ‘unique’ (to be sure in degree) to transcendental consciousness.

Pleasure and displeasure motivate human agency as a set of internal capacities whose ultimate goal is moral culture. Moral culture, though, aims to act not only as individuals but also as a society, and a species on the basis of a universal (wide) moral principles, not narrow self-interest. However, this is no ‘reduction’ of the human condition to the pursuit of ethical consequences Kant defines ‘taste’ as ‘judgment about what pleases universally.’⁶⁰ Taste is not mere enjoyment (*Genießen*),⁶¹ not fashion (which is a matter of barbarism),⁶² not the proclivity of savoring (*Geschmacksneigung*) (which is weakness),⁶³ not a proclivity to sensuous ‘goodness’,⁶⁴ but a ‘matter of reason’⁶⁵ in that “[t]aste promotes ideal pleasures and makes us capable of pleasures that we could not have through the enjoyment of the senses.”⁶⁶

Taste is a consequence of sociability, and its formation is an education of the human being, in view of its true perfection, which brings one closer to morality.

56. See the “Introduction” to the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 198.

57. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 459–460.

58. See “Kant’s ‘Negative Method’:” at 45, n. 28.

59. See Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1140–1142; Olms ed.: 334–336.

60. On taste as what ‘pleases universally,’ see Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1095; Olms ed.: 279.

61. On taste as not mere enjoyment, see Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1098; Olms ed.: 283.

62. On taste as not fashion, see Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1099; on fashion as barbarism, see Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1105; Olms ed.: 284, 291.

63. On taste as not savoring, see Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1099–1100; Olms ed.: 285.

64. On taste as not sensuous ‘goodness,’ see Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1100; Olms ed.: 286.

65. On taste as a matter of reason, see Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1100, 1102; Olms ed.: 286, 288.

66. On taste promoting ideal pleasures, see Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1102; Olms ed.: 288.

The more a person's taste is developed, the more receptive and capable one is of transitioning into good thinking [= the pleasure of thought/reason].⁶⁷

Another example of pleasure motivating agency is studying, which Kant calls 'pleasure pleasing itself.'⁶⁸

However, the purpose of displeasure/pain is to motivate agency, also. Rather than pain and suffering leading to the conclusion that they are the fundamental condition because all 'happiness' is transient and presupposes pain, which justifies escaping from (or seeking a state of equanimity with respect to) the world (a form of *autonomous freedom-from*) and rather than leading to ennui as well as to suicidal depression, Kant points out that pain and suffering are a motivation to responsible agency (*autonomous freedom-for*).⁶⁹ In other words, displeasure/pain stimulates self-conscious, creative agency in order to escape displeasure/pain. Only a creature with such a transcendental consciousness can exercise, intentionally, creative agency, and only such an intentionally, creative agent can (but is not required to) hold itself accountable for its actions. Displeasure/pain, then, is a stimulus to morality.

Humanity achieves its morally highest aim in that culture which 1) promotes the moral will, not merely in a culture of technical skill,⁷⁰ and such a moral culture 2) seeks a 'republican' government with its separation of the administrative, legislative, and judiciary powers⁷¹ and, possibly, even cosmopolitanism of the human community beyond national states.⁷² All this is only possible because "[r]eason must employ the law of association [reflecting judgment] so that [the deduction of] rules lead to their laws and provide reason with its goals [...] This law of association (not to be confused with the 'shared understanding' of *sensus communis*) must always serve understanding in order to provide fantasy with guardrails."⁷³ Kant does not deny that happiness/pleasure presupposes pain/displeasure, but he maintains that "[...] a great happiness [...] is good when we can extract a consolation from all adversities [...]."⁷⁴

Only for a creature that both is determined and, to a degree, is 'free' of external determination is it left up to that creature to decide whether or not it will assume responsibility for its agency. In other words, only a creature possessing autonomous

67. Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1096; Olms ed.: 281.

68. Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1093; Olms ed.:277.

69. See Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1069–1072; Olms ed.: 249–252.

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

71. See Kant *Perpetual Peace* AA VIII: 352, where he speaks of the administrative and legislative powers. However, see as well, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 313, 316 and the subordination of all three 'as moral persons' to the republican constitution AA VI: 316.

72. See Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties*, AA VII: 85–94. See as well, Kant's *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* AA VIII: 17–31. In *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project*, Kant proposes a "federation of free states" (AA VIII: 354 ff.) at the minimum a "peace alliance" (*ibid.*, 356, 385). See as well, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* (AA VIII: 24 ff.) and §54 of the "Doctrine of Right" in the *Metaphysics of Morals* (AA VI: 344).

73. Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 948; Olms ed.: 110.

74. Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1095; Olms. ed.: 279.

freedom, which is the capacity intentionally to do things that material nature on its own could never accomplish, has the capacity (but is not required) to assume personal responsibility for what it does. This shift in perspective from external achievement to internal capacity, then, is crucial for understanding the human condition as capable of being a moral creature. *We are not moral beings because we 'should be' but because we 'can be.'*⁷⁵

"The Moral View of the World"

The "Moral View of the World is Hegel's account of Personal Theism's moral duty: God as a Person, the 'absolute, other consciousness' over against 'finite, individual consciousness' bound to the world of sensuality. The moral world of Personal Theism," according to Hegel, is divided into 'Morality' and 'Ethics.' The former is the absolute, perfect, and abstract, divine, moral command 'in-and-for itself' whereas the latter is the actual fulfilment (or lack of fulfilment) of the abstract command limited by the circumstances of natural, sensuous aims of individuals 'in-and-for themselves.'⁷⁶ 'Morality' (*Moralität/Pflicht*) itself consists of ideal, abstract duty. Yet, according to Hegel, moral consciousness "cannot renounce happiness [which comes with the actualization of morality by means of the natural, sensuous aims that is ethics]. Nonetheless, the harmony of morality and happiness (ethical fulfilment) is a postulate, not an actuality."⁷⁷ In actuality, ethics (*Sittlichkeit*) is an unobtainable, abstract consciousness of moral duty in conflict with the impulses evoked by sensuality.⁷⁸ With sensuality

75. See Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties* AA VII: 43–44 although he acknowledges a possible role of 'grace' here to assist our ability to act according to the moral law, he immediately qualifies that grace is no necessary doctrine. Not to be overlooked, of course, is that Kant's notion of 'moral improvement' does not demand external perfection but internal effort. See Kant's "General Remark" in at the very end of Part IV of *Religion* AA VI: 191–202. Kant's formulation in the *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 4* is that "[...] freedom, indeed, is the moral law's *ratio essendi*, but the moral law is freedom's *ratio cognoscendi*." In other words, autonomous freedom is the reason for there being anything like a moral law, whereas the identification of even a single moral law 'requires' that there be a species capable of autonomous freedom. *Every causal system* (in this case, autonomous freedom) *presupposes a lawful order that governs it*. In the case of physical nature, material causality requires physical lawfulness whereas, the causal system of autonomous freedom requires wide, moral laws – above socially constructed rules and civic laws. Consequently, the identification of merely one such moral law (for example, 'one should not lie,' 'one should keep one's promises,' 'one should not take advantage of the ignorance of others,' 'one should not bear false witness,' 'one should develop one's talents,' 'one should respond to the suffering of others') is sufficient to illuminate the causal system of autonomous freedom that such a moral law presupposes.

76. Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 442–443 (Baillie trans: 615–616).

77. Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 444–445 (Baillie trans: 617).

78. Hegel had stressed the unattainability of ethics (*Sittlichkeit*) already in 1803 in "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten:" GW II: 484–485.

as the opposite to, and negation of, pure duty and with the abstract unity of moral duty as the ultimate essence of morality, "[...] it seems as if the unity [that resolves the opposition between morality and sensibility/ethics] can be brought about only by doing away with sensuality."⁷⁹

However, sensuality is the moment of actuality [*Wirklichkeit*], which ensures that moral duty is no 'empty abstraction', so that unity *must be* brought about by "sensuality being in conformity with morality."⁸⁰ "Concrete action" which connects the two "final purposes" of morality and sensuality ("pure" duty" of morality and the 'substantial duty* of ethics).⁸¹ "Pure duty" is sacred and "*indifferent*"⁸² towards all specific content."⁸³ The other, ethical 'substantial existence' of concrete sensuality] "[...] contains the equally essential relation to the process of action, and the necessity, therefore, of determinant content"⁸⁴ because, otherwise, moral duty would be 'empty'.

In the 'moral' view of the world, according to Hegel, God as the "Absolute" (not Hegel's Absolute Spirit) "[...] distributes ["by means of grace"⁸⁵] happiness according to 'worthiness,' i.e. according to the 'merit' ascribed to imperfect consciousness."⁸⁶ Hegel says the distribution of merit according to worthiness "constitutes the meaning [failure] of the moral attitude."⁸⁷ In this moral world view, morality is freedom as "pure thought" over against sensuality or nature, which for itself "is equally free."⁸⁸ Given the disharmony between these two 'freedoms,' there is always a "want of harmony between the consciousness of duty and actual reality" of ethics with the consequence that "there is no actual existence which is moral"⁸⁹ although it "ought to be."

Hegel writes at the conclusion to "The Moral View of the World:"

[...][T]he first proposition, that there is a moral self-consciousness, is [...] bound up with the second that there is none; that is to say, there is one, but merely in idea. *In other words,*

79. Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 446 (Baillie trans: 619).

80. Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 446 (Baillie trans: 619).

81. Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 447–448 (Baillie trans: 620–621). Duty as 'wholly and absolutely' 'sacred' 'falls outside' 'concrete action'. GW III: 449.

82. Note Hegel's use of 'indifference' here is exactly as it is used in the "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten." On 'indifference' as both a turn to non-difference (One-ness) and affectless (irrelevant) as the 'point of indifference,' see the "Preface:" 50.

83. Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 448 (Baillie trans: 621–622). Hegel says of duty that it "[...] falls outside actual consciousness[:] this latter [...] stands altogether on one side as incomplete moral consciousness" (GW III: 449 (Baillie trans: 623) because duty is perfect in opposition to actuality (GW III: 449 [Baillie trans: 623]).

84. Hegel, *Phänomenologie*: GW III: 448 (Baillie trans: 622).

85. Hegel, *Phänomenologie*: GW III: 449–450 (Baillie trans.: 623).

86. Hegel, *Phänomenologie*: GW III: 450 (Baillie trans.: 624).

87. Hegel, *Phänomenologie*: GW III: 450 (Baillie trans.: 624).

88. Hegel, *Phänomenologie*: GW III: 451 (Baillie trans.: 625).

89. Hegel, *Phänomenologie*: GW III: 452 (Baillie trans.: 626).

*there is indeed none, but it is all the same allowed by some other consciousness [the God of Personal Theism] to pass for one.*⁹⁰ (emphasis added)

In contrast to "The Moral View of the World," Hegel's own resolution to the impossibility of ethical fulfilment of moral duty is achieved not by a notion of divine grace but by 'God' (now, as Hegel's non-Personal Absolute Spirit) working Itself out by means of a dialectical logic of Double Negation to achieve Its Self-awareness in spite of the moral efforts of humanity. In the "Introduction" to his posthumously published *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, Hegel asserts that the actual world is not an ethical abomination. Rather,

[t]he insight [...] to which [...] philosophy is to lead us, is that the real world is as it ought to be -that *the truly good – universal divine reason – is* not a mere abstraction, but a vital principle capable of *realizing itself*. This Good, this Reason, in its most concrete form, is God. God governs the world; the actual working of his government—the carrying out of His plan—is the History of the World.⁹¹ (emphasis added)

Hegel had written earlier in the "Introduction" that this plan is never

[...] exposed to danger. It remains in the background, untouched and uninjured. This may be called the *cunning of reason* [...] The particular is for the most part of too trifling value as compared with the general: individuals are sacrificed and abandoned [...] [I]ndividuals come under the category of means to an ulterior end, – there is one aspect of human individuality which we should hesitate to regard in that subordinate light, even in relation to the highest; since it is absolutely no subordinate element, but exists in those individuals as inherently eternal and divine. I mean, morality, ethics, religion [...] That is to say, *man is an object of existence in himself only in virtue of the divine that is in him*, – that which was designated at the outset as *reason* [...] ⁹² (emphasis added)

In short, Hegel's understanding of religion is not concerned with morality and ethics but the achievement of Self-awareness on the part of God 'Itself' (by Absolute Reason or the Concept Itself) under the finite conditions of history. The purpose of all finite conditions of history, including the purpose of morality and ethics, is not the consequentialist aim of what they can and cannot accomplish in themselves. Rather, their purpose is the extent that they are understood as *the veil of the truth of Reason* (non unlike the 'veil of Mithra'), working Its aim out in the background. All else is subordinate to this ultimate goal – even the frustrations of ethics by humanity's inability to live up to the absolute standards of morality. In short, ethical failure, which is the individual's failure to fulfil its moral duty in order to achieve the merit of being

90. Hegel, *Phänomenologie*: GW III: 452 (Baillie trans.: 626–627).

91. Hegel, "Introduction" to *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: GW XII: 53. (Sibree trans.: 38).

92. Hegel, "Introduction" to *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* GW XII: 49 (Sibree trans.: 34–35).

"well-pleasing" to God, is subordinated to Reason and sacrificed as of too trifling value compared with the achievement of Reason. *Ethical failure is only a signal of the achievement of Reason.*

Hegel on "I should, but I can't" in Contrast to Kant's "If I should, I can"

According to Hegel, morality is naïve if taken to mean "If I should, I can" because one can't be ethical. Ethical perfection is an illusion. Nevertheless, 'the world is still good' – not because of the individual's ethical achievements but because of Absolute Spirit's 'cunning of reason.' Hegel maintains the absolute demand of moral perfection, but he relativizes the failures of ethical achievement by subordinating all finite experience to the meta-narrative of Reason coming to awareness of itself. *The world is good because Reason is good!*⁹³

In dramatic contrast to Hegel, morality, for Kant, is not driven by 'should' but by 'can.' Whether there is another species that can or not, we experience ourselves as capable of exercising autonomous agency over against nature, and it is the degree to which we exercise an autonomy *above our naturally determined capacities*, not that we possess a degree of freedom over against social institutions, that defines our autonomous freedom.

Equally significant, autonomous freedom is not a matter of mere degree of spontaneous choice. This shift from 'content' or the 'should' of moral laws to 'capacities' or the 'can' of autonomous freedom is the crucial (required, but not determining) condition for there to be a creature capable of assuming responsibility for its agency. Furthermore, the distinction between 'what is required' for us to be responsible agents and 'what is merely wishful self-interest' (or between capacities and giving ourselves permission to exercise those capacities) is what allows us to distinguish between: "If I *can*, I should;" and "If I *should*, I can!"⁹⁴

93. Hegel is taking Plato's ἐπίκεινα τῆς οὐσίας (the 'above' Being/ideas) of the *Republic* 509b to be the Good in a moral sense (*It is perfection*), not in the Kantian (and Plato's?) amoral sense of the 'good' is the transcendental conditions of experience (which include the Noumenon) without which nothing could be.

94. Kant's formulation '(If I should/I can)' was reversed '(I can/I should)' already by Johann Gottlieb Fichte's "Über den Grund unseres Glaubens an eine göttliche Weltregierung" in the *Philosophisches Journal einer Gesellschaft Teutscher Gelehrter*, hg. von Johann Gottlieb Fichte und Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer, Bd. VIII, Erstes Heft, Jena und Leipzig (1798): 1–20. See in Johann Gottlieb Fichte's *Sämmtliche Werke*, J.H. Fichte, hrsg. (Berlin; Verlag von Veit und Comp., 1845): 183–184.

Nicholas Wolterstorff, consciously or unconsciously following Hegel's understanding of "The Moral View of the World," places Kant's formulation ("ought implies can") in the context of the goal of moral effort is "to be well-pleasing to God." See Nicholas P. Wolterstorff, "Conundrums in Kant's Rational Religion" in *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Reconsidered*, edited by Philip J. Rossi and Michael Wreen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991): 42. Wolterstorff takes "can" to mean that moral

'If I can, I should' can be taken as a free pass to pursue unbridled self-interest. There are no reasons to curtail oneself. If one has discovered that one has the capacity to do something – better do it before someone else does and takes advantage of one in the short and/or long run.

However, 'if I can, I should' can also be taken as a heteronomous, moral imperative: 'If I have the capacity to be moral, I must be moral.' Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" in the *Phenomenology* takes the 'If I can, I should' to be the naïve expectation that I 'can' be *morally perfect*.⁹⁵ In Hegel's "The Moral View of the World," though, humanity is incapable of fulfilling ethical obligations because it is limited by its external circumstances. Yet, rather than compensate with grace the failures of humanity's ethical efforts made known by the absolute duty of abstract moral principles to achieve the status of being morally "well-pleasing" to God, Hegel subordinates all finite activity to the 'cunning of reason' that is the hidden plan of Absolute Spirit working its way out through history – even *in spite of humanity*.

However, according to Kant, "if I should, I can" means that I am able to exercise a form of finite, eminent⁹⁶ causality (autonomous freedom) that is capable of accomplishing, intentionally, things that nature on its own cannot. In short, one's creative actions are under the control of the subject her-/himself⁹⁷ to the degree that one

perfection is possible but claims that Kant requires divine grace to achieve it. See as well, Chris Firestone and Nathan Jacobs, *In Defense of Kant's Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008): 49–50.

In dramatic contrast, Kant's understanding of 'can' is that humanity possesses an indelible capacity (Anlage), which is more than a mere disposition but is 'autonomous freedom' that is intentionally able to initiate sequences of events that nature cannot accomplish on its own. Kant's 'can' is focused on a rejection of the determinism of Augustinian Christian 'original sin'. Rather, for Kant, humanity intentionally 'can' do things that nature alone cannot do, and humanity 'can' assume responsibility for its agency. Humanity is neither determined by divine dictum (*Machtspruch*) to have inherited an evil for its 'original parents' nor determined by the mechanical determinism of reductionist determinism. Kant is no proponent of "original sin!" See *Metaphysik Mrongovius* (AA XXIX: 771), *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* (AA VIII: 1–22), and *Religion* (AA VI: 19–20, 22, 35, 42–43). Kant explicitly says that the origin of evil remains inexplicable for us (*Ibid.*, AA VI: 43).

Schubert Ogden switches to the second person, when he formulates the moral imperative: "You can, so you should" (see Schubert Ogden, *Christ without Myth: A Study Based on the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann* [New York: Harper & Row, Pubs, 1961: 118]). As ultimately heteronomous impositions of a moral order on humanity with the goal of pleasing a 'God' rather than assuming responsibility for one's autonomous freedom to the best of one's ability, both Wolterstorff's and Ogden's formulations turn the Kantian notion of autonomy into heteronomy. Of course, the most blatant violation of Kant's moral theory is Henri Bergson's *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977) in which he turns Kant's categorical imperative into a closed, "static," heteronomous moral system.

95. See Hegel, "The Moral View of the World" in *Phänomenologie*: GW III: 442–452 (Baillie trans.: 615–627). See as well, *Phänomenologie*: GW II: 263–270 (Baillie trans.: 263–270) and Chapter 7: "Practical Reason Elevates Theoretical Reason:" the section "Hegel's Account of 'The Moral View of the World' is not Kant's Morality:" 727 ff.

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

97. See Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 49*.

must give oneself permission, internally, to act whenever one exercises one's agency, externally. Without this capacity of finite, causality the very notion of a moral principle is meaningless. However, the capacity does not depend upon external success or failure to establish one's 'worthiness'. The conscious exercising of one's capacities on the internal selection of a universal, moral principle to give oneself permission, regardless of the consequences, is the foundation of any and all worthiness. Only the individual knows!

Unlike Hegel, morality (and achievement of 'perfection'), according to Kant, is not an 'empty,' abstract idea that requires ethical sovereignty over sensuality. Rather, for Kant, the world of appearances along with the experienced capacity of finite, eminent causality inseparable from the world of appearances provide the 'perfect capacities' that allow for moral effort *in concrete experience*. Morality is not an abstract call to perfection with a Personal Deity dispensing happiness proportional to one's concrete, ethical success by grace or the 'cunning of reason.' Kant's morality is no consequentialist ethic that cowers before a Personal God quivering in anxiety over ethical failure. Morality consists in the internal self-selecting (but not creation) of universal, moral principles that one invokes to give oneself permission to exercise one's finite, eminent causality of autonomous freedom *in the world*. Perfection for Kant refers, then, to *a priori* transcendental capacity whose 'moral improvement' consists in training oneself to reflect and invoke a categorical (not a hypothetical) imperative when giving oneself permission to act. *As with all transcendental capacities, in and of themselves the perfect capacity that is practical reason determines nothing. It requires 'education'/'training' to cultivate it.*

Given that moral principles can exist only if there is a finite, eminent causality to which they apply, the individual's ability to acknowledge a moral 'should' inseparably includes with it the creative, autonomous freedom to act on the basis of *the self-selected* [rather than self-selected], moral principle, which one selects when giving oneself 'permission' to act. Without autonomous freedom, moral principles not only would be empty abstractions, but they also could never arise. Kant expressed this relationship between moral principles and autonomous freedom in the "Preface" to the *Critique of Practical Reason*: "[...] [F]reedom is [...] the *ratio essendi* [the essential ground] for the moral law, but the moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi* (the ground of cognition) for freedom."⁹⁸ Just as I can no more explain from where physical laws come, I am unable to explain from where moral laws come. Yet, it is left up to me to understand and to govern (or not govern) my understanding and actions by both sets of laws.

In other words, when it comes to my moral effort, *if I should self-select (but not create) the categorical imperative* required⁹⁹ for me to do 'what is right because it is

98. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 4*.

99. On concepts as 'functions,' neither a priori metaphysical entities nor a posteriori abstractions, see Chapter 5: "Traces of an Intellectual Crisis:" 575, n. 54; and Chapter 6: "Grand Narratives of

right regardless of self-interest' (although never free of self-interest¹⁰⁰), I *must possess the capacity* that makes it possible for me to self-select that moral principle to 'do what is right regardless of self-interest.' In short, for Kant, "If I should, I can' is a rejection of anything remotely like Augustine's Original Sin that prohibits from the get go the effort to act morally. In fact, thanks to his notion of autonomous, creative freedom, Kant explicitly emphasizes that the individual is always 'in a state of innocence' when s/he gives her-/himself permission to act.¹⁰¹

Furthermore, Kant's "If I should, I can" is also a rejection of Hegel's claim that ethics are incapable of realization because of the limits that nature's freedom places on humanity, which leads Hegel to reduce ethical effort to a matter of indifference in the face of the 'higher plan' that is the 'cunning of reason.

The heteronomous 'should' that is the moral duty of Hegel's "Moral View of the World" dampens passion for lawfulness by stressing 'can't. If taken seriously, the claim that belief in the law is naïve would mean that both theoretical and practical reason are naïve. For theoretical reason, our 'failures' of understanding nature would only confirm that it is naïve to believe that nature is governed by physical lawfulness. For practical reason, the fact that we can do otherwise or that we fail to act according to universal, moral principles would only confirm that it is naïve to believe that we could act according to universal, moral principles.

In dramatic contrast, the 'can' of Kant's autonomous freedom (the capacity intentionally to initiate sequences of events that nature on its own cannot) fires passion to self-select (but not create) lawfulness (physical and moral laws) to understand and act responsibly. In other words, *lawfulness makes possible not only science but also moral effort* – even if moral perfection is impossible given the limits to reason. A commitment to lawfulness makes it possible for transcendental consciousness to experience, understand, and exercise responsibly its transcendental capacities.

Furthermore, the universal, causal capacity of autonomous freedom is what grounds human dignity and requires moral imperatives 'above' technical imperatives.¹⁰² The universality here is not established by means of a dictum (*Machtspruch*) of anthropomorphic speculation about God or Absolute Spirit (either of Personal Theism or Hegel's meta-narrative). This universality has nothing to do with absolutizing culturally relative rules and norms or with wishful thinking (enthusiasm or rapture) about what 'ought to be'. Rather, this universality is established by what is required for transcendental consciousness to be able to experience, understand, and exercise responsible agency in the world, as we do.

Theoretical Reason:" 709, n. 205. On the erroneous claim that Kant's moral principles are capricious self-constructions, see Chapter 8: "Strauß' Reading of Kant Over His Career:" 790, n. 265.

100. See the opening paragraphs of "Section II" in the *Groundwork* AA IV: 406–413.

101. See Kant, *Religion*: AA VI: 41.

102. On the 'dignity' and 'absolute worth' of transcendental consciousness, see Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 434–436, 449–450.

Categorical (not hypothetical) imperatives make it possible to give oneself permission to do (or not do) what one decides one 'ought' to do. If such wide, moral laws are possible, and they are possible only if a creature possesses creative autonomous freedom, then there must be a species with a creative capacity not entirely determined by nature's efficient causality because a creature determined by nature is incapable of assuming responsibility for what it does. If I should, I must have the capacity to decide and act according to categorical imperatives.

For Kant, one's moral status is not established by ethical achievement in Hegel's sense. To be sure, Kant recognizes that individual has little influence, not to speak of control, over the effects of her/his agency. However, *the individual does have control over what moral principle s/he self-selects to govern her/his agency*. In other words, one's moral worth is not established by the consequences of one's agency but by the universal, moral principle that one applied to give oneself 'permission' to act.

Understanding is not Merely Information and Causal Explanations. The Role of Metaphysics in Understanding

There is far more to understanding than either (correct) information transfer (what Kant calls *Schulwissenschaft*/school knowledge¹⁰³) or causal explanation. *Reducing understanding to information sharing*, on the one hand, treats the metaphors of concepts as innate metaphysical ideas (e.g., Plato and Hegel) and leaves to others the task of understanding the imperceptible order of the manifold of perception for us because the individual is flooded with information 'needed to be learned' at all cost. *Reducing understanding to causal explanations*, on the other hand, treats causes as 'given' with their perceptible effects (e.g., materialistic reductionism or 'scientism') and leaves to others the task of grasping the imperceptible the lawfulness (physical laws, statistical significance, and algorithms) that is concealed by the effects of causality because that's the technical skill they have developed.

However, understanding is a process, it is not a pre-packaged product. Understanding is a process because it involves not merely the individual's own lifting of the 'veil of Isis' (though, not Hegel's veil) but also a reading of perceived phenomena as structured by an imperceptible, coherent order of relationalities, which are no merely random aggregate of data. 'Lifting the veil of Isis' to *dis-cover* the order to the manifold of perception is the task of *reflecting* judgment, neither the mere acquisition of always

103. On Kant's notion of *Schulwissenschaft* as merely the 'technical expressions of scholasticism', see his *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 853; Olms ed.: 1. Kant, of course, recognized that there is a proper role for *Schulwissenschaft*, but it is no substitute for the self's own understanding.

and already 'established,' *re-produced* judgment¹⁰⁴ nor transferring knowledge about some Hegelian Absolute Spirit. As Kant points out in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*, deep satisfaction occurs with the *dis-covering* of the coherent, hierarchy of 'lawfulness' of a set of phenomena¹⁰⁵ within the framework of an ever-expanding intellectual grasp of the architectonic of lawfulness¹⁰⁶ that reins in all fantasies¹⁰⁷ (and makes possible) experience, not merely understanding and responsible agency.

When it comes to understanding, humanity needs much more than mere access to the internet's information of *rep-producing* judgments. In addition, there is much more to understanding than simply 'knowing' either the 'correct' revealed (e.g., traditional Christian Personal Theism) or logical metaphysics (e.g., Platonic or Hegelian), or what the right causal explanation (either of particular, technical skills and pragmatic self-interest, which Kant describes as the 'culture of skills'); or of knowing the ultimate, metaphysical ground of reality (such as the claim of two-step creation of 'original' and 'copy' of *Logos* theology or Hegel's Absolute Spirit's Double Negation), or even what comes from understanding as the "fusion of horizons" by means of concealed possibilities (e.g., Heidegger and Gadamer) between past and present even with its liberating of understanding by being open-ended. Mere information, causal explanations, and shared logical coherence are nowhere adequate to the task of understanding.

Already with experience itself (prior to any acquired 'information,' 'causal explanation,' and 'coherence'), we must add universal, *a priori* synthetic elements to the phenomena of experience *that are not directly given with the manifold of perception*. These are a limited number of *required (but not capricious!)* elements, which are arrived at by *reflecting* judgment, not *re-producing* judgments of mere information and causal explanation.

104. On Kant's distinction between reflecting and re-producing judgment, see *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 179 ff and the "Introduction:" 86, n. 26.

105. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 188. Although this is by no means the highest satisfaction capable of being brought about by reflecting judgment. See Kant, *Metaphysik Mrongovius*, AA XXIX: 948: "[...] man finds no satisfaction for his reason [... other] than striving to recognize and achieve his summum bonum, i.e. the ultimate aim of all his goals, which [consists in] the highest degree of worthiness to be happy combined with the greatest morality."

106. Locating one's reflecting judgments within the framework of an ever-expanding hierarchy of understood order to the manifold of phenomena is a cornerstone of Kant's methodology. See "The Architectonic of Pure Reason" in *Critique of Pure Reason* B 748–763.

107. Kant stresses that it is the task of the philosopher (understanding) to unmask even 'healthy illusions,' such as literal anthropomorphic claims for God on the basis of the necessary assumption of 'teleological purposiveness' for understanding nature. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 462. The strategy of understanding driven by reflecting judgment is to seek out not 'what the object is in itself,' which would be a set of re-produced judgments communicable by merely information transfer, but 'what it is for us,' reflectively, 'according to the necessary rational principles for our judging' (not innate ideas or apodictic causal explanations). See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 462–463.

These insights into understanding allow a *(re-)turn to metaphysics but not a return to the authority of revealed or logical meta-narratives, literary canons, or brute, political power. Rather, it allows a return to an option that has been misunderstood, distorted, and suppressed (paradigmatically, by Hegel!) since its emergence: It requires Kant's Critical Idealism, which I prefer to call 'archaeologist' and 'intentionalist'*¹⁰⁸ in

108. The metaphors moral 'intentionalist' and 'archaeologist' are subject, of course, to metaphorical interference. I do not use them either as a defense of 'intending' chaos or destructive agency in order that nature's 'unsocial sociality' might achieve a greater good beyond the individual's control, nor do I use 'Kant is an intentionalist' in the narrow, Husserlian sense of 'intentional' consciousness.

The metaphor 'Kant is an archaeologist' emphasizes that the focus of moral worth is on the 'origin' of responsible agency. 'Intentionalist', in turn, here emphasizes that the individual consciously gives her-/himself permission to act on the basis of a broad, universal, moral principle (a categorical, not a hypothetical imperative) regardless of the recognized or unrecognized harm to one's own or group's self-interest. In other words, Kant's 'archaeologist'/intentionalist' moral theory is no encouragement of intending social chaos or nature's 'unsocial sociality' in order to achieve some 'higher goal,' however well-intended or vague. Rather, it means to focus on original, responsible intent to give oneself permission to act on the basis of a categorical imperative that, while hoping that it contributes to the 'higher good,' recognizes that it only has control over the moral principle s/he invoked in giving permission to act – and is not valued for its achievement of a 'good' over which it has no control. Kant expresses this theme in the 'first preface' to *Religion*. See *Religion* AA VI: 4–7, especially the note on page 6. Kant's criticism of consequentialism has the four moments: 1) morality requires self-permission (see also 796); 2) we have control only over the maxim invoked to give ourselves permission; 3) consequentialism requires an impossible omniscience (see also 840); and 4) moral success/failure is recognized internally, not externally (see also 787); all of which are summed up by the understanding that moral faith internally selects its principles (see 832).

As a key representative of the 'Freiburg Kantian School', Husserl's notion of 'constituting consciousness' is limited to Kant's 'theoretical' reason (to the exclusion of 'practical reason'), which is focused on understanding of phenomena. Constituting consciousness treats consciousness as 'constructivist'. It commences with Husserl's 'epoché' (Cartesian Meditations: 18–21, 69–74) or 'bracketing' of the issue of 'existence' to focus on the 'constitutive productivity' of consciousness (Cartesian Meditations: 148–149). In his "Philosophy as Rigorous Science" of 1911, Husserl writes: "Everything psychical which is thus an 'experienced' is [...] order in an overall connection, in a 'monadic' unity of consciousness, a unity that in itself has nothing at all to do with nature, with space and time or substantiality and causality, but has its thoroughly peculiar 'forms'. It is a flow of phenomena, unlimited at both ends, traversed by an intentional line that is, as it were, the index of the all-pervading unity. It is the line of an immanent 'time' without beginning or end, a time that no chronometers measure." Husserl, "Philosophy as Rigorous Science" in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, Quentin Lauer, trans. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965): 107–108. See as well, Husserl's posthumous *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, W.R. Boyce Gibson trans. (London: Collier Books, 1969): 55–56; "The intentional object [...] first becomes an apprehended object through a distinctively 'objectifying' turn of thought" (ibid.: 110); see as well ibid.: 118–119. Martin Heidegger's edition of Husserl's *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1980): 484 claims: "In inner consciousness we [...] have 'intentional experiences,' as there are perceptions, judgments, feelings, desires and the like. These units can function as substrates. Instead of positing and objectifying them [...] a meaning lives into their intentionality, and thus the meaning 'takes' from them the objects implicitly intended in them and makes them intentional in the concise sense of objectifying positing." Husserl adds a page later (485): "It is part of the nature of [...] the object that it is a non-independent thing, that it cannot be without 'its' mode of representation, i.e. without the ideal possibility of making it into an object and passing over to it again [...]" Robert Sokolowski points out that "In providing only subjectivity as a

contrast to the Aristotelian of 'wisdom' as 'consequentialist.' This metaphysical option is, precisely, what is encouraged by Strauß' career as he struggled with the Hegelian meta-narrative and, as of the 1860s, increasingly, if never entirely, turns to Kant to shape his understanding of religion.

By examining carefully both what he does and doesn't say about Kant across his career, I suggest that Strauß exemplifies Lessing's choice of the left hand (what Kant calls 'reflecting' judgment) over the right hand of truth (what Kant calls 'determining' judgments, which, properly understood, were themselves, *originally* 'reflecting' judgments).

condition of possibility, Husserl is left with the content of constitution [the stimulating phenomena] as an unexplained residuum, a pure facticity which escapes the principles of his philosophy," Sokolowski, *The Formation of Husserl's Concept of Constitution* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964): 218. Rather than Husserl's dualistic epistemology, Kant's epistemology (theoretical reason) and personal agency (practical reason) are not concerned with the categorical as the determination of objective certainty (e.g., as does Husserl in *Ideas*: 54–55, 61–62). Rather, Kant's concern is with those necessary (in the sense of required, not causality) a priori elements that must be originally added to phenomena in order for phenomena to be experienced and understood (theoretical reason) as well as to exercise responsible agency in the world (practical reason). These a priori elements are 'certain' in that they are necessary, not because they can be empirically 'proved'. Furthermore, Kant distinguishes between 'categorical' and 'hypothetical' imperatives with the latter referring to the 'narrow' necessities of technical skill and pragmatic, personal self-interest and the former referring the 'broader' principles that the individual necessarily invokes to give her-/himself permission to exercise her/his autonomous freedom.

Applied to ethics (practical reason), the notion of 'intentionalist' here is, also, not meant in sense of an 'intentionalist ethic,' which is the consequentialist concern with intent. Rather, it is taken in the sense of Kant's 'archaeological' concern with the moral principle that one applies in the decision process prior to active to give oneself permission to act. I wrote in *Strangers and Pilgrims: On the Role of Aporiai in Theology*: "[... Ricoeur's] definition of 'ethical intention is:' 'Let us define 'ethical intention' as aiming at the 'good life' with and for others, in just institutions.'" (emphasis in the original) (Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, Kathleen Blamey, trans. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992]: 172) Though he is clear that the "ethical intention" is indebted to the actions and sufferings of those who have gone before: "The ultimate equivocalness with respect to the status of the Other in the phenomenon of conscience is perhaps what needs to be preserved in the final analysis ... Although set on the plane of science, psychoanalysis concurs here with innumerable popular beliefs that the voices of our ancestors continue to make themselves heard among the living and in this way ensure, not only the transmission of wisdom, but its intimate personal reception at every stage. This dimension, which could be called generational, is an undeniable component of the phenomenon of injunction and, all the more so, of that of indebtedness" (McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims: On the Role of Aporiai in Theology* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1997]: 353).

Nonetheless, the metaphor 'intentionalist' is appropriate for Kant's philosophy because, although concerned dualistic epistemology with universal conditions of possibility and capacities, Kant recognizes that no one can experience, understand, and exercise responsible agency for another. However, this no more turns Kant into a solipsist than the natural scientist is a solipsist because s/he can understand physical lawfulness only for her-/himself.

In short, the metaphors 'Kant is an intentionalist' and 'Kant is an archaeologist' are not concerned with individual, subjective construction of subjectively relative, personal meaning and self-interest or with a consequentialist, objective ethical aim but with the universal conditions required on the part of individual consciousness to experience, understand, and act responsibly in the world.

Furthermore, the Copernican Turn from 'historical' to 'pure' religion¹⁰⁹ not only remains incomplete in Strauß but also offers the widest and most comprehensive option for us to achieve a proper understanding of both science and religion yet today.

For its part, science is not merely an exercise in 'opening of one's eyes' simply distinguishing sets of phenomena from one another *a posteriori* on the basis merely of perceptible differences. The lawfulness of nature (physical 'laws,' statistical significance, and/or algorithms) required for 'scientific' understanding is not given with the phenomena of nature. Our grasp of the lawfulness of nature is an example of what Kant calls *a priori* synthetic judgment as opposed to *a posteriori* or *a priori* analytic judgment.¹¹⁰

Critical Idealism is, then, no meta-narrative that explains from where everything comes, where everything is ultimately ending up, and what the ultimate meaning of everything is. Rather, metaphysics is understood within the limits of finite, transcendental consciousness that begins with phenomena not to causally explain them by merely objective certainties but to seek out the subjective, transcendental capacities and conditions of consciousness that are required for us to be able to experience those phenomena, in the first place.

Transcendental metaphysics locates meaning where finite, transcendental consciousness can experience it: in creative, responsible agency in the world whose very capacities and conditions of transcendental consciousness make moral accountability

109. It is unfortunate that the term 'pure' encourages inappropriate, anachronistic conclusions. In the case of the Critique of Pure Reason, 'pure' religion is not defined by a dyadic structure of 'pure' versus 'impure' (incorrupt/corrupt, authentic/inauthentic, better/worse – or any similar dualistic conception). It is especially important to grasp that 'pure' here is not a 'good' will in contrast to 'evil' nature/sensuousness that dominates free-will and drives self-interest, which is the erroneous reading of Kant made especially by F.C. Baur and Carl Daub and which Strauß shared. Both 'pure' reason and 'pure' religion are concerned with what is imperceptible in experience as the universal conditions of possibility for perceptible experience itself. In the case of reason, 'pure' reason is what makes possible understanding of empirical experience whereas in the case of religion, 'pure' religion is what makes possible the appropriate experience not only of perceptible, historical manifestation of religion (ritual, revelation, doctrine, institutional structure) but also, and more importantly, the understanding and agency of humanity's practical reason, which needs the support of a community. In short, neither 'pure' reason nor 'pure' religion is possible or inseparable from the phenomena that require them. In his "Drafts for the Preface to the Second Edition" of Religion Kant makes clear that his use of 'bloßen Vernunft' is meant to acknowledge the 'pure,' subjective conditions of religion, which are necessary for its practical importance (that is, moral culture by no means merely individual moral efforts). Hence, already in the title Kant is speaking of 'pure' religion that as a subset of the religious phenomena that is objective, revealed religion. See "(Aus dem Nachlaß – Phase w2: ca. 1793 -1794) I. Vorredeentwürfe zur zweiten Auflage 1794" AA XXIII: 96.

110. In contrast to analytic judgments, which are "elucidating," "exemplifying" (Erläuterungsurteile), *a priori* synthetic judgments are "enhancing," "ampliative" (Erweiterungsurteile) (see *Critique of Pure Reason* A 7 and *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XXIX: 968) because *a priori* synthetic judgments increase understanding beyond the mere appearances. See *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* (AA IV: 266): 968. In the *Opus postumum* (XXII: 555), Kant points out that analytic judgment is "distributive and logical" in contrast to synthetic judgment, which is "collective and general experience."

possible. *The meaning achieved by the exercising of these transcendental elements is a meaning anchored in an immeasurable satisfaction that needs no external applause.* This goal requires a moral community's encouraging the individual to 'do the right thing' even when it appears to be contrary to her, his, or the community's best interest. The thesis here, then, is *no reduction of religion to individual morality but the encouragement of a creative, moral culture*^{III} that not merely inspires responsible, individual, creativity but also contradicts the materialist claim of a zero-sum game. In addition, a moral culture also responds to the suffering, needs, exploitation, persecution, oppression, and genocide of humanity, as well as, to misogyny, racism, xenophobia, agism, and destruction of the material basis upon which any and all experience, understanding, and exercising of agency depends. There is no historical Indifferentism to the metaphysics of Critical Idealism. This second volume on Strauß provides an accounting of Strauß' intellectual odyssey. It demonstrates that the understanding of experience, including the experience of reading the bible, cannot and does not lead to some final, absolute understanding of God, humanity, and/or history.

Strauß had no alternative limb to crawl onto once he had sawed off most of the Hegelian limb on which he was sitting. His post-*LJ* metaphysical reflections document his attempt to find one. Although he turned to Kant for help, the enduring influence of Hegelianism and his unshakable assumptions about what Kant '*must have meant*' prevented him from grasping anywhere near the strength of the Kantian limb onto which he could have climbed but didn't. However, Strauß clearly articulates the deep background that make recognition of the anomalies (the limits) of the foreground. Most importantly, he allows recognition of the sharp differences of the spectrum that stretches from Judeo-Christian Platonism (which includes Personal Theism, Mysticism, and Rationalism), over Hegelian Immanentism, Kantian Critical Idealism, to Materialism which allows retrieval of Critical Idealism believed by so many to have been left on the trash heap of history – just as contemporary gospel criticism claims to be the case with respect to Strauß.

In other words, Strauß is a 'great' theologian who has left a task for each and all in the yet untapped understanding and life-guiding significance of transcendental consciousness for creatively responding responsibly to today's massive challenges. Quintessentially, then, Strauß demonstrates that the ultimate task of understanding and responsible agency is not in grasping 'what was' or 'what is' but in each individual's responsible *re-figuration* of the *pre-figured* and *con-figured* of what 'can' and 'ought to be.'

III. On the distinction between the "culture of the will/moral improvement" and the "culture of skills," see *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* (AA V: 431–432) and 848, n. 161.

