Chapter 7: Practical Reason Elevates Theoretical Reason within Reason's Limits

Chapter Overview

Whereas the *Life of Jesus Critically Examined* of 1835 is shaped by a 'gnostic' escapism from the material world, as of "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity" of 1838, Strauß' understanding of religion down to the end of his career is shaped by the two themes of linear history and moral philosophy.

The chapter begins with a presentation of Hegel's two accounts of morality, which thoroughly shaped Strauß' understanding of practical reason. The first is Hegel's version of Kant's bottom-up ,constructivist,' practical reason in "Über die wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts" of 1802. The second is his version of Pauline, Augustinian, and Lutheran 'top-down' account of morality in "The Moral View of the World" of the *Phänomenologie*. One finds these two, very different versions of practical reason conflated in Strauß' reflections on morality.

Five themes are examined with respect to Strauß' grasp of 'practical reason:' 1) Kant's 'Subjective' Philosophy; 2) Kant's 'Empty Ideas' – "I should, but I can't;" 3) Freedom is only Freedom-from; 4) Evil as a Causality; 5) Moral Consequentialism.

The same five themes are employed to establish the contrast with Kant's understanding of practical reason.

When it comes to the core issue of practical reason, "what ought to be," Strauß follows two key elements of Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" in the *Phenomenology*:[1] morality is concerned with 'overcoming sensuous desire' (hence, a matter of 'consequences' of agency) and consists of the two dimensions of moral duty (empty ideas of obligation) (*Moralität*) and ethical (failed!) fulfilment (*Sinnlichkeit*).[2] Whereas he early on rejected Hegel's meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit that eclipses practical reason in favor of theoretical reason's Absolute Knowledge (gnosis), he engaged in various attempts to articulate a meaningful theme of 'moral improvement' that is formulated in terms of the species, not the individual, and, eventually, is anchored in hylozoism.

The section "Hegel and Strauß on 'Theoretical Reason' in Chapter 6 provides an overview of Hegel's distinguishing between 'theoretical spirit' (theoretical reason) and 'practical spirit' (practical reason).[3]

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1. See Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 442–452 (Baillie trans.: 615–627) and Vol. II "Introduction:" "Hegel on 'I should, but I can't' in Contrast to Kant's 'If I should, I can:'" 550 ff.

2. These two themes (morality as the overcoming of sensuousness and morality as 'empty abstraction') Strauß also encountered in F.C. Baur. On overcoming sensuousness, see Baur's *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung*: 114–115, 135. On 'empty abstraction' and Baur's reading of Kant as 'subjectivist,' See the "Preface:" 51, n. 47.

3. See in Chapter 6: "Grand Narratives of Theoretical Reason" the section "Hegel and Strauß on 'Theoretical Reason'" 652 ff.

Kant's Practical Reason: A Contrast To Hegel's Account of Kant

Kant's understanding of practical reason is completely unrecognizable in both Hegel's account of Kant's practical reason in "Über die wissenschaftlichen Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts" of 1803 and in Hegel's account of "The Moral View of the World" of 1807. Hegel employs Kant's metaphors for 'theoretical' and 'practical' reason, but he takes 'theoretical' reason to be the contemplation of the sole *a priori* synthetic element that is *Absolute* Spirit[4] and 'practical' reason to consist of relative, *a posteriori* analytical constructions subordinate to Absolute Spirit with the latter consisting of Absolute Knowledge and Absolute Freedom. Kant and Hegel share the same metaphors, but their meanings couldn't be more different.

Hegel presents two approaches to 'practical' reason. His first account is found in "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" (1803) in which he presents his understanding of what he calls Kant's ‚practical' reason as 'constructivist'.[5] His second account in "The Moral View of the World" of the *Phenomenology of Spirit/Mind* (1807) presents a formulation of 'practical reason' on the basis of absolute, heteronomous 'duty' from the perspective of the Apostle Paul, Augustine of Hippo, and Martin Luther.[6]

In 1802, Hegel takes theoretical reason to refer to the 'contemplation' (θεωρία, θεωρούμενος) of *a priori* Spirit (the intelligible realm),[7] and he takes practical reason to refer to the *a posteriori* 'construction' of moral principles/ideas out of appearances (the perceptible realm). As relative and the opposite of the Absolute, practical reason, for Hegel, is only a 'mimicking' of the Absolute.[8] In other words, theoretical reason and practical reason are labels for the dualism of mind and matter (Spirit and representations),[9] which Hegel takes to be a dualism of Freedom and Nature[10] (otherwise stated, a dualism of Absolute Freedom that is Spirit and the relative freedom that is animality and the pursuit of self-interest in social institutions[11]). Hegel accuses Kant

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4. On Hegel's sole *a priori* Concept, see above "Preface:" 61.

5. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten:" GW II: 459–461. See as well: 657 and in Chapter 6: "Grand Narratives of Theoretical Reason" in section "Hegel and Strauß on 'Theoretical Reason:'" 658.

6. See Vol. II: "Introduction:" "The Moral View of the World:" 547 ff.

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

8. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten:" GW II: 468–469.

9. See Hegel's account of Kant's dualism in "Glauben und Wissen:" "A [...] formal idealism, which [...] puts an absolute point of egoism and its mind on the one hand and absolute manifoldness or sensation on the other, is a dualism." "Glauben und Wissen" AA II: 314.

10. See Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen" AA II: 322.

11. See Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* GW XIII: 30–31, 34–35.

of attempting to overcome dualism only 'dogmatically,' whereas Hegel claims that his Absolute Spirit overcomes dualism 'rationally.'[12]

In contrast, according to Kant, theoretical and practical reason are not two sides of a dualism between mind and matter, Spirit and representations, and/or freedom and nature. Both theoretical and practical reason are concerned with *a priori* synthetic elements that must be *added to* phenomena. Neither is derived *out of* phenomena. Theoretical reason is concerned with the *a priori* elements that are necessary to understand appearances ('What can I know?'). Practical reason is concerned with the *a priori* elements that are necessary in order that I can assume responsibility for my agency in a world of appearances ('What ought I to do?').[13]

In 1807, Hegel's account of "The Moral View of the World" maintains his dualism of intellectual perception (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) and sense perception (*sinnliche Anschauung*) and insistence that, whereas intellectual perception is 'truth,' it requires sense perception for it to be 'actual' and not merely 'empty ideas.' In light of the ethical impossibility of fulfilling the expectations of moral duty, "The Moral View of the World" is that "I should, but I can't" and the fault lies with sense perception (*sinnliche Anschauungen*) whose conditions make the fulfilment of perfect moral duty impossible.

In contrast, Kant's aphorism for morality is "If I should, then I can."[14] His aphorism is a rejection of any form of absolute determinism of the self (materially or by Original Sin). Moral principles arise only because there is a transcendental consciousness capable of autonomous freedom, and autonomous freedom is what establishes the *degree of independence* from all kinds of external determinisms.

What Hegel's two accounts of morality have in common is Hegel's distinction between 'intellectual perception' (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) and 'sense perception' (*sinnliche Anschauung*). 'Theoretical' reason is concerned with 'intellectual perception' (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) whereas, dualistically,[15] 'practical' reason is concerned with agency in, and sovereignty over, the seductions of the world of 'sense perception

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12. See Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen" AA II: 313.

13. See Kant's formulation of the questions of philosophy in the three-fold version of the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 832–833 and four all four-fold version in the *Logic* AA IX: 24–5.

14. See "Vol. II: Introduction:" "The Moral View of the World" 547 ff.

15. Hegel had written in "Glauben und Wissen:" "In explaining the coexistence (*Gemeinschaft*) of the soul with the body, Kant rightly finds the difficulty (not of explaining, but of understanding) in the presupposed dissimilarity of the soul with the objects of external senses. However, if one considers that both kinds of objects [soul and body] do not differ from each other in this respect internally, but only insofar as one appears externally to the other, consequently *that which lies at the basis of the appearance of matter, as a thing in itself, should perhaps not be so dissimilar*, then the difficulty disappears, and none remains but that of how a coexistence (*Gemeinschaft*) of substances is possible at all (it was superfluous to conceal the difficulty here), which to solve – without doubt – also lies outside the field of human cognition [because it is solved only by Absolute Spirit]. One can see that it is for the sake of beloved humanity and its cognitive faculty that Kant does so little honor to his thought that [... the coexistence of the soul and body] are perhaps not so dissimilar in themselves, but only in appearance,

(*sinnliche Anschauung*). However, the primary focus in 1802 is epistemological: How do practical reason's moral principles come about when one 'neglects' theoretical reason's Absolute Spirit as ultimate, eminent cause[16] of 'what is'? In 1807, the primary focus is the presumed distinction between abstract (hence, 'empty') 'moral duty' and failed concrete 'ethical' effort. The two foci of these two engagements of practical reason are crucial for understanding Strauß' moral theory.

Hegel's Issue with Sensuality in Contrast to Kant's

For Hegel, the ultimate issue is not human sinfulness but the failure to grasp the significance of Absolute Spirit. The common denominator to ethical failure and failure to grasp the significance of Absolute Spirit is sense perception (*sinnliche Anschauungen*). Humanity's 'blessedness' can only be achieved by overcoming (gaining sovereignty over) sensuousness.

Whereas Hegel's immanentism rejects the notion of the Personal God of Traditional Theism and rejects that ethical perfection would be the achievement of moral perfection in sensuousness capable of achievement only by the grace of God, Hegel's understanding of 'blessedness' is acquisition of Absolute Knowledge of Absolute Spirit and Its Freedom 'above' sensuousness. Hegel's 'blessedness' is always and already contained in the very condition (Absolute Spirit) that creates sensuousness so that 'blessedness' is achieved by 'turning inward' by means of 'the point of indifference' by which Absolute Spirit is 'known.' Hegel's notion of the 'cunning of reason' maintains that this blessedness is being accomplished by Absolute Spirit even 'behind the backs' of humanity.

Hegel points out, correctly, that this form of 'blessedness' that is achieved by turning attention to Absolute Spirit is nowhere to be found in Kant. However, the reason that it is absent is not because Kant is a relative, moral (or epistemological) constructivist or because Kant dogmatically limited understanding to sense perception (*sinnliche Anschauungen*) to the neglect of absolute intellectual perception (*intellektuelle Anschauungen*) of Absolute Spirit, as Hegel claims that Kant did.

However, Kant's anchoring of his philosophy, generally, and practical reason, in particular, in the perceptible (*sinnliche Anschauungen*) means neither that the moral concern of Kant's practical reason is to 'overcome' or 'subjugate' sensuousness nor that moral 'success' is defined by Kant to consist of the degree that practical reason has conquered sensuousness. Kant explicitly rejects the notion that either sensuousness or reason are the ground of evil:

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and considers this thought to be the mere conceit of a maybe and not rational." (emphasis added) "Glauben und Wissen" GW II: 313–314

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

> Sensuous nature […] contains too little to provide a ground of moral evil in the human being, for, to the extent that it eliminates the incentives originating in freedom, it makes of the human a purely animal being; a reason exonerated from the moral law, an evil reason as it were (an absolutely evil will), would on the contrary contain too much, because resistance to the law would itself be thereby elevated to incentive […] and so the subject would be made a diabolical being.[17]

Kant's aim is neither to escape from sensuousness nor is he a consequentialist ethicist.[18]

Kant's philosophy is anchored in sense perception because that is what we experience. We seek understanding only because we experience phenomena. His philosophy, granted, is not concerned to give *ultimate, causal explanations*. His theoretical reason seeks to identify those imperceptible elements that are required in order for us to experience phenomena.

Furthermore, Kant's practical reason is not concerned with achieving the goal of ethical sovereignty in nature, much less with perfectly fulfilling the demands of merely abstract, 'moral duty.' Whereas Hegel's practical reason is thoroughly *consequentialist,* Kant proposes that moral duty has a worth "*without regard for the ends*" because ends and their objects inspire *inclination* but never *respect* in light of the fact that ends and their objects are "effects and not an activity of a will."[19] The key to Kant's understanding of moral 'worthiness' is moral intent (whether or not a moral principle was consciously invoked to give oneself permission to act),[20] which can be known only be the individual, not the determination of empirical consequences of one's ethical efforts.

Kant by no means denies the importance of the consequences of agency.[21] Rather than in 'moral worth' consisting in the achievement (or non-achievement) of a moral goal, Kant locates 'moral worthiness' in one's internal disposition to act on the basis of a moral principle:

> "[…] *an action from duty* has its moral worth not in the [external] purpose that is to be attained by it, but in the [internal] maxim according to which it is resolved upon, and thus

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17. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 34–35.

18. See Chapter 8: "4) Sensuousness is evil:" 832 ff. and "6) Strauß misunderstands moral perfection in Kant:" 839 ff.

19. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 399–400.

20. Kant is an 'archaeologist'/'intentionalist,' not a 'consequentialist'. On reading Kant as an 'archaeologist'/'intentionalist' rather than a 'Consequentialist,' see 556; n. 108.

21. Although the ground for morality is not the good or bad ontological status of our soul (see *Religion* AA VI: 39–44) or the consequences of our actions (see *Groundwork*: AA IV: 399–400, Kant does suggest in the "First Preface" to *Religion* that our hope is that there is a connection between the categorical and the contingent. It is precisely this connection, which, among other elements to be sure, requires belief in (but no proof of!) God (see *Religion* AA IV: 6*). Explicitly though, Kant speaks of religious hope not (!) in terms of receiving divine assistance (grace) but in terms of maintaining our moral attitude (see *Religion* AA VI: 68–69).

> it *does not depend on the actuality of the object of the action, but merely on the principle of willing* according to which – regardless of any object of the desiderative faculty – the action is done [...] [T]*he* [external] *purposes that we may have when we act, and their effects, as ends and incentives of the will can bestow on actions no unconditional and moral worth* [...] In what, then, can this worth lie, if it is not consist of the will with reference to their hoped-for effect? It can lie nowhere else than in the principle of the will, *regardless of the ends that can be effected by such action*; for *the will stands halfway between it's a priori principle, which is formed, and it's a posteriori incentive, which is material, as it were at a crossroads, and because it must [...] be determined by something, it will have to be determined by the formal principle of willing as such when an action is done from duty because every material principle has been eliminated.*[22]

What is in our control is our internal disposition to determine the moral principle that one gives oneself to grant one permission to exercise autonomous, creative freedom.[23] Couched in the language of Christology as the internal 'prototype' of *a priori* moral principles always and already in every individual, Kant writes

> [...] only a human being conscious of [...] a moral disposition in her-/himself as enables her/him to believe and self-assuredly trust that he [...] would steadfastly cling to the prototype of humanity and remain similar to its example in faithful discipleship *[...] only such a human being, and he alone, is entitled to consider her-/himself not an unworthy object of divine pleasure.*[24] (emphasis added)

Worthiness is known only to the individual because only the individual can know the maxim that was prescribed to give the individual permission to exercise its agency. "[...] [I]n fact *we can never, even by the most strenuous* [empirical] *examination, get entirely behind our covert incentives, because when moral worth is at issue what counts is not the actions, which we see, but their inner principles, which one does not see.*"[25] Emphasizing the criterion of the moral principle over the action itself, Kant writes that cultivation of morality consists in doing 'duty from duty' (that is, the determination of the 'moral disposition') not consequences:

> At first sight this looks like a narrow obligation, and the principle of duty seems to prescribe with the precision and strictness of a law not only the legality but also the morality of every action, that is, the disposition. However, in fact the law [...] prescribes

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22. Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 399–400.

23. Kant writes in *Religion* AA VI: 62: "only faith in the practical validity of the idea that lies in our reason has moral worth. (emphasis added)

24. Kant, *Religion*: AA VI: 62. In contrast to Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" in the *Phenomenology*, whose portrayal of moral duty and ethics was shared by Strauß, the issue of fulfilment of moral duty is not defined by Kant in terms of ethical consequences with subsequent achievement of divine pleasure but with the self-selection of the moral law. In short, Hegel/Strauß are ethical consequentialists whereas Kant is a moral archaeologist/intentionalist. On Kant's moral theory as 'archaeologist'/'intentionalist', see: 556, n. 108.

25. Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 407.

only the maxim of the action, that of seeking the basis of obligation solely in the law and not in sensible impulse (advantage or disadvantage), and hence not the action itself [...] [For when it comes to the action alone], it remains hidden from the agent her-/himself how much pure moral content there has been in her/his disposition.[26] (parentheses from Kant)

Speaking of 'pure' religion as grounded in (but not exhausted by) morality#, Kant writes: "[...] [R]eligion is not a public condition; each human being can become conscious of the advances which s/he has made in this faith only for her-/himself."[27] In the "General Remark" at the end of *Religion*, Kant adds:

> The *true (moral) service of God*, which the faithful must render as subjects belonging to His kingdom but no less also as its citizens (under laws of freedom), is itself just as invisible as the kingdom, that is, it *is in a service of the heart (in spirit and truth) and can consist only in the disposition of obedience to all true duties as divine commands, not in actions* determined exclusively for God. Yet for humanity the invisible needs to be represented through something visible (sensible) [...]; which, although it is a not an entirely dispensable means, it is at the same time very much subject to the danger of misinterpretation. That is, to make us only imagine our duty in the service of God, which is nevertheless easily taken for the service of God itself, by a delusion that overtakes us [...][28] (parentheses from Kant)

Hegel's Account of 'The Moral View of the World' is not Kant's Morality

Although not infrequently proposed that "The Moral View of the World" in the *Phenomenology* (1807) is Hegel's reading of Kant on morality,[29] what Hegel presents as Kant's 'practical reason' in his "Über die wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts" (1802) is irreconcilable with Hegel's description of morality in "The Moral View of the World" in the *Phenomenology* (1807).

In the "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten," Hegel writes unambiguously of Kant's account of the source of practical reason's ‚moral law' (ideas) as a bottom-up construction of a 'maxim of arbitrariness' that is applied top-down by the individual to serve its self-interest.[30] If Kant's 'moral law' arises out of representations as he describes here in the "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten," then Hegel takes Kant to

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26. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 392–393.
27. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 124.
28. Kant, *Religion* AA 192.
29. See for example, Kenneth R. Westphal, "Hegel's Critique of Kant's Moral World View" in *Philosophical Topics*, 19/2 (1991): 133–76. Westphal claims "that Kant holds virtually all the tenets Hegel ascribes to 'the moral world view'."
30. On Hegel's description of Kant as a moral constructivist, see in Chapter 6: 657 and 658.

be a moral relativist,[31] not a top-down moral absolutist as he portrays morality in "The Moral View of the World."

Speaking of the individual's self-selecting of moral principles as subjective, hence, relative constructions of the individual (in contrast to what Kant claims), Hegel writes in 1802:

> [...] [A] maxim of your will [must] at the same time be regarded as a principle of a universal legislation [...]. This fundamental law of pure[32] practical reason expresses that some determinacy [according to the maxim of arbitrariness], which constitutes the content of the maxim of the particular will [= constructivism], is set as a concept, as a universal. However, every determinacy is capable of being taken up into the conceptual form and set as a quality, and *there is nothing at all that cannot be made a moral law in this way*.[33] (emphasis added)

In other words, Hegel portrays Kant as drawing a moral law out of experience of particularities *a posteriori*, which allows one to capriciously declare anything one wishes to be a moral law.

Hegel, apparently, is taking the term 'synthesis' to mean the *a posteriori* product of a dialectic that determines a common element between two, otherwise, disparate thesis and antithesis. He, therefore, has no framework for understanding 'synthesis' as an *a priori* adding of elements to phenomena.[34] In short, for Kant *a priori* synthetic does not mean the *a posteriori* synthesis of dialectic and analytic that occurs by means of the diairesis of discursive, empirical thinking.

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31. Hegel had written of Kant in "Glauben und Wissen:" "[T]he objectivity of the categories in experience and the necessity of these relations themselves [becomes] again something accidental and subjective. This understanding is human understanding, a part of the cognitive faculty understanding of a fixed point of the ego. *Things, as they are known by the understanding are only appearances, nothing in itself, – which is quite true.* The immediate conclusion, however, is that *an understanding which recognizes only appearances and nothing-in-itself is itself an appearance and nothing-in-itself*. However, the *discursive understanding*, which recognizes *in this [Kantian] way, is regarded as in itself and absolute, and dogmatically the recognition of appearances is regarded as the only way of recognition*, and *knowledge of reason is denied*. If the forms, through which the object is, are nothing in themselves, then they must also be nothing in themselves for a recognizing reason; but *Kant seems never to have had the slightest doubt that understanding is what is absolute for the human spirit, but understanding is the absolutely fixed insurmountable finiteness of human reason*." (emphasis added) "Glauben und Wissen" GW II: 313

32. One must wonder what Hegel means by 'pure' here. It appears to mean independent of theoretical reason's contemplation of Absolute Spirit, not Kant's notion of 'pure' as independent (but inseparable from) sense perception.

33. Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 461.

34. On Hegel's reading of On Kant's notions of 'canon' and 'organon,' of dialectic, see: 49.

In dramatic contrast to Hegel's presentation of Kant's 'practical reason' in "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten," in "The Moral View of the World,"[35] 'moral duty,' consists in the heteronomous insistence on morality as an external expectation of the perfect fulfilment of 'moral duty,' and the impossibility of its actual, 'ethical' fulfilment means that the individual is incapable of achieving 'moral worthiness.'

According to Hegel here, morality is the struggle between theoretical (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) and practical reason (*sinnliche Anschauung*), but it is a 'false' struggle because it is concerned with only an '*apparent*' opposition that is overcome only from the perspective of 'theoretical' reason's Absolute Spirit, not individual, moral effort. Therefore, humanity's problem is not 'sin,' according to Hegel, but ignorance about Absolute Spirit that clings to the merely 'apparent' opposition between intellectual perception (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) and sense perception (*sinnliche Anschauung*).

Hegel treats 'moral duty' within the epistemological framework of contemplative, 'theoretical' reason, not 'practical reason'. Abstract 'moral duty' consists of 'empty ideas' that are incapable of realization in the concrete world of representations.[36] As 'the' system of absolute moral imperatives (not the plural systems of relative moral principles of 1802), 'moral duty' is incapable of ethical realization in the world because of the limitations placed on the individual by nature and social context. Nature is responsible for ethical failure, not Spirit. Hence, in this account of morality, humanity's successful achievement of the consequentialist goal of its ethical efforts, that is, it's achievement of 'happiness according to worthiness,'[37] is dependent upon divine grace of a Personal God.[38] In other words, in contrast to the relative constructions of 'practical reason' of "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten," moral principles here are not, relative constructions derived bottom-up out of representations. Rather, in "The Moral View of the World" of 1807, moral principles are a top-down set of *abstract, absolute* moral principles (of 'theoretical reason's' contemplation (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) in stark contrast to the 1802 account of practical reason's *concrete, relative 'representations'* in the actual world of 'practical reason's' sensuousness (*sinnliche Anschauung*).[39]

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35. See Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" in *Phänomenologie* GW II 442–452 (Baillie trans. 615–627). For a summary of "The Moral View of the World," see Vol. II "Introduction:" "Hegel on 'I should, but I can't' in Contrast to Kant's 'If I should, I can':" 550 ff.

36. See Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 442–444 (Baillie trans.: 615–617).

37. Hegel defines "worthiness" [*Würdigkeit*] as proportionate to the degree one has earned happiness, "which completes the meaning of the moral attitude." See Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 450 (Baillie trans.: 623–624).

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

39. Of course, from the perspective of 'theoretical' reason's Absolute Spirit, the 'opposition' between 'theoretical' and 'practical' reason is '*only apparent*' because they are ultimately united by/in Absolute Spirit. See Hegel, "Addendum" to the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaft* (1830) GW X: 237–238. However, the 'appearance' of difference between 'content' (*Inhalt*) and 'representations' (*Form*) is, in fact, a necessary opposition because it is required, according to Hegel, both for the awareness of 'theoretical' reason and for ensuring that 'theoretical' reason's ideas are not 'merely empty'. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 453–456.

However, Hegel's portrayal of Kant's practical reason (moral theory) of "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" cannot possibly be the target of Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" in the *Phenomenology*. Whereas "The Moral View of the World" dismisses moral duty as merely a top-down 'empty idea' (*Inhalt*) because it is incapable of achievement in actuality (representations/*Form*) and, therefore, dependent upon grace dispensed by a Personal God, Hegel's presentation and dismissal of Kant's moral theory of practical reason in "Wissenschaftlichen Behandlungsarten" is that it is bottom-up constructivist and socially relative – by no means either universal, absolute imperatives of 'moral duty' or 'Ideas' of Absolute Spirit.

When it comes to Kant, Hegel's primary concern in "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" in 1802 is to assert that *Kant backs away from acknowledging the significance of Absolute Knowledge as the 'true' goal of human agency, not to speak of humanity's 'true' goal as the 'point of indifference' to 'think' Absolute Spirit.* However, Hegel's primary concern in "The Moral View of the World" is the impossibility of ethical success and worthiness without the aid of a Personal God. The ultimate aim of ethical achievement is the '*measurable*' *fulfilment of universal, moral imperatives based on observation* and depends upon applause and assistance by God.

What the two accounts of 'practical reason' have in common is that, in Hegel's judgment, both neglect the conscious 'point of indifference' that negates multiplicity to think Absolute Spirit. In the case of Kant, Hegel claims, he 'knew' of Absolute Spirit but brackets it, whereas "The Moral View of the World" remains ignorant of Absolute Spirit. The achievement of awareness of the 'point of indifference' is not a matter of grace, Hegel eventually claims, but the consequence of the 'cunning of reason.'[40]

In short, in 1802, Hegel claims that Kant's 'practical' reason is bottom-up *constructivist and relative* and demonstrates that Kant 'failed' to grasp the significance of Absolute Spirit/Absolute Knowledge. In 1807, Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" claims that morality is concerned with top-down, *absolute, moral duties*, and the goal of morality is to be morally 'well-pleasing' to God, which can only be possible by the aid of divine grace of a Personal God.

Hegel's Deeper Conundrum than Ethical Failure

A close reading of Hegel, though, recognizes in Hegel's two accounts of practical reason a far deeper dilemma than the conundrum of absolute morality and failed ethics. Whether or not practical reason (morality) is concerned with moral principles as

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40. See Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (1837) "B" GW XII: 49. Hegel's three-fold account of 'revelation' in his 'Addendum' [*Zusatz*] to *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaft* (1830) § 384 in GW X: 30–32 makes it clear that the process of revelation is Absolute Spirit's revealing Itself to Itself under the presupposition of the 'cunning of reason'.

relative constructions and/or with absolute, 'empty ideas.,' the devastating conundrum for Hegel is with respect to his claim to ground Absolute Spirit ('true' content/*Inhalt*) in 'actuality' (representations/*Form*), not the moral status of the individual. *How does one determine whether the representations that are taken to assure that one's ideas are not 'merely empty' are not, rather, generating merely relative, false constructions of 'ideas'?*

If moral principles are relative constructions, they arise out of representations. Hegel's dismissal of moral principles as relative requires him to claim that Kant's moral principles of practical reason are 'false'/illusions. *Although representations can't guarantee that one's thoughts are 'true' (they can be merely relative, 'false' constructions), representations without their 'true' ideas are definitely relative, 'false' illusions.* Where do ideas come from?

Theoretical reason, according to Hegel, is the top-down guarantee of 'true' content regardless of the truth, relativity, falsehood, or illusoriness of representations. Hegel claims by way of Kant that principles of practical reason (the ideas of morality) are generated out of representations 'bottom-up.' Hence, they are 'false' and illusory *because they don't acknowledge the Idea of Absolute Spirit as the ultimate, eminent causality of ideas and 'all that is.' It turns out that whether one embraces an 'empty idea' or an 'actual' idea has nothing to do with representations but with the 'knowledge'* (or lack of knowledge) of Absolute Spirit *by the one judging. It is the 'philosopher' who possesses Absolute Knowledge who knows whether or not the idea is 'empty.'* Anyone who doesn't know (for example and especially, Kant) is a relative 'subjectivist.'[41]

More directly: The issue is the status of ideas in terms of their ultimate origin/cause, not whether they are 'empty' or 'actual.' Hegel's Idealism ('science') claims that the ultimate origin and cause of ideas is Absolute Spirit (*intellektuelle Anschauung*). It is Absolute Spirit's dialogical logic of Negation that brings about 'representations' (*sinnliche Anschauung*). If the idea does not emerge in and through representations, it is 'empty.' However, the *representations (sinnliche Anschauung) do not guarantee their own 'truth' as perceived phenomena because their 'truth' is the intellectual content (the 'idea') that is appropriate to them.* Whether sense perception is a hallucination, a conspiracy theory, or 'truth' is dependent on the judger's *a priori* knowledge, not the 'facts' of representations. *Hegel's Idealism* (both theoretical and practical) *throws the barn doors wide open to illusions and conspiracy theories.*

Consequently, according to Hegel, whether or not a moral principle is an 'analytical' construction out of objective appearances of perception (*sinnliche Anschauung*) is irrelevant. The 'truth' of moral principles has always and already been determined by their 'true' content, Absolute Spirit, which can be experienced only subjectively (*intellektuelle Anschauung*).

Hegel's criticism of Kant's 'practical' reason in "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" is not that the abstractions drawn out of sense perception (*sinnliche*

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

Anschauung) are in principle false/illusory because they are merely representations. Rather, his criticism of Kant's 'practical' reason is that it is not 'theoretical' (Kant doesn't embrace Absolute Knowledge). Kant, according to Hegel, fails to grasp that the 'true' content (*Inhalt*) of 'representations' (*Form*) is *the proper 'idea' of intellectual perception* (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) not sense perception itself (*sinnliche Anschauung*).

However, this leads to the devastating consequence for Hegel that: Because truth (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) is independent of appearances (*sinnliche Anschauung*) and the actuality of appearance in sense perception is irrelevant when one possesses the truth, then *Absolute Spirit and its intellectual perceptions* (*intellektuelle Anschauungen*) *are, themselves, 'empty' and nothing 'actual.'* Hegel is caught in an inescapably vicious, hermeneutical circle. *Absolute Spirit* (pure *intellektuelle Anschauung*) *is 'true' because Hegel thinks that it is true, and its actuality is confirmed because Absolute Spirit must be* (!) *the ultimate, causal source of all sense perception* (*sinnliche Anschauung*).[42]

Strauß on Kant in the LJ in Agreement with Hegel

In agreement with Hegel's "The Moral View of the World," Strauß claimed in the *LJ* that Kant required an 'ought' that can never be an 'is:' "I should, but I can't!" We 'ought' to achieve moral perfection that makes one worthy of happiness, but it is ethically impossible. Therefore, Hegel and Strauß claim that Kant confronts humanity with 'empty ideas and ideals'[43] that consist in the idea (content/*Inhalt*) of moral imperatives but without actuality (representations/*Wirklichkeit*).[44] Strauß repeats the theme in § 51 "The Last Dilemma" by anchoring the final end of history in the inclusive, eternal incarnation (the becoming of the God/Man in the species, not in an individual). In point of fact, though, it is Hegel and the early Strauß who are defending what Kant calls a 'canon' (logic) without an 'organon' (appearances).[45]

The following passage confirms that Strauß' Christology (not merely his moral theory in the *Life of Jesus*) consists in overcoming the consequences of sensuousness, again in agreement with Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" and F.C. Baur. I have

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42. Kant pointed out in the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 630, 643 that simply thinking something doesn't make it true or confirm its existence. Granted, Kant also adds in the *Groundwork* AA IV: 419 that simply because we don't perceive a cause does not mean that it doesn't exist. However, the appropriateness of one's 'causal explanation' is not that it is unequivocally grounded in 'things-themselves' but for its heuristic success in furthering understanding within an ever-developing, imperceptible, architectonic of 'lawfulness'. See Kant's 'transcendental methodology' of Critical Idealism at the conclusion of the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 823 ff. Once again, this is conformation of Hegel's Platonic Idealism.

43. See Strauß, *LJ*, 776.

44. See Strauß, *LJ*, 779.

45. On Kant's notions of 'canon' and 'organon,' see: 49.

translated the passage because the Elliot version suppresses the dynamic between *the truth* [*Inhalt*] of the Idea and *the actuality* [representation by form] of the incarnation:

> [...] [F]rom *the truth that the suppression of natural existence* [that is, sensuousness/*sinnliche Anschauung*] *is the resurrection of the spirit*, the bodily resurrection of the individual will never follow.
> Were that to be the case, we would have sunk back again into Kant's position, which we have found to be unsatisfactory, which is: Were the Idea to have no corresponding actuality [*Wirklichkeit*], then it is an empty obligation and ideal. However, does this, then, deprive the idea of all actuality [*Wirklichkeit*]? By no means! We reject only that which does not follow from the premises. If the Idea of the unity of the divine and human nature has reality [*Realität*/actuality] attributed to it, does that mean that the Idea of the God/Man unity must have actually occurred only once in a single individual like at no time before or after? That is simply not the way that the Idea realizes Itself; emptying its entire fullness in a single exemplar. Rather it realizes itself in a multiplicity of exemplars, which supplement one another. It loves to distribute its fullness by the alternation between establishing and annulling of individuals. Is this not the true actuality [*Wirklichkeit*/reality] of the Idea? Would not the Idea of the unity of the divine/human nature be real [*reale*] in an infinitely higher sense than were I to select out a single person for this unity? Would that not be the true, incarnation of God from all eternity rather than at a single limited point in time?"[46] (emphasis added)

Morality as the (unsuccessful) *struggle with sensuousness*, is at the core of Strauß' understanding of humanity across his career. Especially, for the early Strauß for whom *the ultimate aim of humanity is not the achievement of 'moral perfection' in conformity with 'moral duty' but the elevation above sensuousness*. Furthermore, what ensures that the 'Idea' above sensuousness is not an 'empty obligation/idea,' according to Strauß, is not dependent upon a single set of representations as the 'historical' God/Man of a single place and time. Rather, what ensures that the 'Idea' is not an 'empty obligation/idea' is that its representation includes all of human consciousness.[47] Nonetheless, the fly in the ointment is the *a priori* assumption that one knows that the 'truth' is the 'resurrection of the spirit' (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) that 'suppresses natural existence' (*sinnliche Anschauung*). Divinization of the entire species is Strauß' version of Hegel's cunning of reason that is limited either to a specific individual (the resurrected Christ) or to those philosopher's who attain Absolute Knowledge.

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46. Strauß, *LJ*: 779–780 (First German edition: 734).

47. Formulated with Kant's language of canon and organon of which Strauß, apparently, was unaware, Strauß' universal Christology could have been defended by the claim that what prohibits the God/Man from being a mere logical canon (empty Idea) is its *universal realization in humanity* (all of human consciousness is the God/Man). (On Kant's notions of 'canon' and 'organon,' see: 49.) However, Strauß defended his universal Christology on the basis of the epistemology of Idealism: an idea is 'present' in all of its particulars, which, according to Kant, is a claim of subreption. See the discussion of Strauß' Christology in the section "History or Myth?: On the Role of Hegelianism in the *Life of Jesus*:" 127 ff.

Strauß on Kant's Practical Reason

In the *LJ* of 1835, Strauß embraces the following elements of *Hegelian practical reason*: He takes God (Absolute Spirit) to be the ultimate source of the logic of negation that enables creation. Spirit is the 'true,' conscious content (*Inhalt*) of all phenomenal 'actuality.' However, according to Hegel and the early Strauß, the goal of humanity is not moral perfection (the overcoming of sin). Therefore, they have no need of a Personal Deity dispensing grace. Rather, the goal of humanity is to attain knowledge (gnosis[48]) of Absolute Freedom in Absolute Spirit 'over against nature's freedom,'[49] which seduces the individual with sensualism and makes her/him un-free. It is not violation of the 'law' that condemns humanity but 'blasphemy against the Spirit' (Matthew 12:30–32, Mark 9:40, Luke 11:23, 1 John 3:16).

Thematic Analysis of Strauß' Reading of Kant' Practical Reason

Strauß' explicit reading of Kant's practical reason (as pure moral religion) addresses the following five themes:

I)   Kant's 'Subjective' Philosophy:
     Kant's philosophy, generally, and particularly his moral theory are taken by

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48. Hegel's Gnostic emanationism is clear from the very notion of the First Negation that 'creates twoness' to initiate the logical dialectic of negation that leads to the material order that is the condition for the emergence of consciousness. Hegel's Gnostic influx is clear from the "knowledge" (Gnosis) that 'returns' to Absolute Spirit by means of the Second Negation in individual consciousness. Strauß cited F.C. Baur's *Gnosis*. See Strauß, *LJ*: 775, n. 5. In this massive study of Gnosticism, Baur presents Hegel as a Gnostic: "Already this general overview of the Hegelian system as a whole brings us to the point where its close relationship to the systems of ancient gnosis is clearly visible.." (*Gnosis*: 675) "The similarity between Hegel's philosophy of religion and the old gnosis [...] consists [...] mainly in the fact that here, as there, it is the same process by which Absolute Being mediates Itself with Itself, the process of distinguishing itself, of separating. and going back into itself, in the three moments of being in itself, for itself, and with itself, or the moments of the substantial absolute unity, which is the Idea in its self-same affirmation, of distinguishing, and of the going back of that which was distinguished to the absolute affirmation (Th. I [*Phil. der Rel.* I: Part I]: 131). In addition, gnostic systems are based on the assumption that God is only in this process a living God, Absolute Spirit or thinking reason, because life is not without movement, thinking not without mediating activity; true knowledge is only the Concept itself, as far as It explicates Itself in the three moments as a Concept in itself, as a determined concept, and as the concept coming to itself from the determinateness and restoring itself from limitedness (*Phil. der Rel.* I: 32). Without the world, therefore, God is not God, either. At the same time, however, the great difference is already evident between the purely logically determined concept of the process [Hegel], and the purely posited, only postulated, Platonic-Gnostic idea of an apostasy from the Absolute, as it still has a very essential and profound meaning even in the earlier representations of Schelling's philosophy (cf. especially *Philos. u. Relig.* 1804. p. 34. F)." (*Gnosis*: 681–682).

49. In "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten," Hegel distinguishes between Absolute Freedom and nature's freedom. See GW II: 457–458.

Hegel and the early Strauß to be 'merely subjective.' Kant overlooks what for Hegel and Strauß is 'above understanding:' Absolute Reason. In the *LJ*, Strauß maintains that Kant's moral principles are relative and come from his own reflections and the social convictions of his day.[50] He faults Kant for not providing an account of the origin of moral principles in the scriptures (either as social constructions or by means of the 'genetic mythical principle'[51]).

II)   Kant's 'Empty Ideas' – "I should, but I can't":
       Strauß reads Kant as representing Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" and F.C. Baur in that Kant was only concerned with 'empty ideas' (abstractions) incapable of realization in 'reality' (the concrete world of experience) The Hegelian/Straußian mantra of morality is: "I should, but I can't![52]

III)   Freedom is only Freedom-from:
       Strauß takes 'freedom' to be 'freedom-from' sensualism; completely ignoring Kant's notion of autonomous freedom as 'freedom-for' creativity as the condition required for responsible agency.

IV)   Evil as a Causality:
       As of the *Glaubenslehre* of 1841, Strauß takes 'evil' to be the driving force of all living things, not merely moral progress to the neglect of Kant's notion of 'radical' evil.

V)   Moral Consequentialism:
       Strauß' understanding of 'progress' shifts from the 'spiritual progress' of his *inclusive*, Christology in 1835[53] that elevates humanity out of history, to his understanding of religion as fulfilled in reason's recognition of the 'eternal in every moment' in 1838, to the 'moral improvement' of humanity *as a species* in 1864[54] and, finally, to 'nature' 'turning inward' on itself to continue its advancement as the condition for the moral improvement of the species in 1872.[55]

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50. See Strauß, *LJ*: 52.

51. See Strauß, *LJ*: 52. The ‚genetic mythical principle,' of course, is the key to Strauß' reading of the gospels. See Chapter 1, "Methodology:" "The 'Genetic *Mythical Principle*'" 137 ff.

52. On the differences between Kant's "If I should, I can" and Hegel/Strauß' "I should, but I can't," see "Vol. II: Introduction" "Hegel on 'I should, but I can't' in Contrast to Kant's "If I should, I can':" 547 ff.

53. Strauß writes in the *LJ* that Christology is awareness of Absolute Spirit, but, "not in the mind only, as with Kant" but is the "idea of the race [...] Humanity is the union of the two natures—God becoming man, the infinite manifesting itself in the finite, and the finite spirit remembering its infinitude [...]" (emphasis added) *LJ*: 780.

54. See, especially, Section 100 in the "Conclusion" of Strauß, *LJEGP*: 624–627.

55. Strauß, *The Old and the New Faith*: 240, 345. On the transition from a 'Personal God' to nature as 'personal building,' see *ibid.*: 145.

I now examine the five themes in detail:

I) Kant's 'Subjective' Philosophy:

I address Hegel's/Strauß' *general reading* of Kant as 'merely subjective' in Chapter 8.[56] Here, I examine Hegel's and Strauß' (lack of) engagement of Kant's notion of 'practical reason,' specifically, as subjective. Four themes require examination in order to understand Hegel's and Strauß' claim that Kant's is a 'subjective' philosophy. These themes are 1) that Kant is an epistemological relativist, 2) that Kant has an ontological gap between moral duty and ethical achievement, 3) Strauß' account of Kant's 'revolution of moral disposition' profoundly distorts Kant's 'new creature', and 4) Kant's notion of the 'moral improvement of the species is given a new meaning by Strauß.

I examine the four themes, as follows:

1) Kant is an epistemological relativist:

The claim by Strauß and his mentors that Kant is an epistemological relativist is grounded in their conviction that Kant fails to appreciate what they take to be the key to humanity, which is Absolute Spirit as 'pure, theoretical reason'. Absent Absolute Spirit, everything is relative. Furthermore, Kant's norms for practical reason's autonomous freedom are taken by Strauß and his mentors to be merely 'empty abstractions'.[57] Absent the the contemplation (θεωρία, theoria) (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) and understanding of Absolute Spirit as what unites all perceptible particularity

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56. See Chapter 8, section "Hegel's Reclined Plato and Kant as a 'Subjectivist'" 811 ff. and Chapter 9, section "Hegel on Beauty:" 868.

57. The charge that Kant's philosophy, generally, is a system of 'empty abstractions', by its failure to grasp the metaphysical unity of Absolute Spirit, has as its corollary that concepts and moral norms are subjectively, relative constructions. Given that Hegel views Kant as limited to what Plato calls 'understanding' in his Simile of the Line in the *Republic* 509c ff., Kant's epistemology *must be* constructivist because it ignores what Plato calls 'reason'. Furthermore, Hegel describes Kant's moral theory as subjectively ,constructivist precisely in this manner in the "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" (1803). See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten:" GW II: 459–461. However, in his *Phenomenology* (1807), he gives an account of morality in "The Moral View of the World" that is based on a heteronomous, divinely imposed *moral duty*. Given the limits placed on humanity by 'nature's freedom', humanity is incapable of ethical fulfilment of its moral duty. See Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 442 ff. (Baillie trans: 615 ff.). Strauß consistently reads Kant's notion of heteronomous, 'moral duty' through Hegel's narrative of "The Moral View of the World" although in the *LJ* as I point out momentarily, he describes Kant's moral principles as 'derived from the self' and 'the cultivation of an epoch'. In his post-*LJ* writings, especially when referring to Kant, Strauß stresses humanity's inability to live up to 'moral duty' just as Hegel describes in "The Moral View of the World." Moral principles, though, cannot be both a matter of subjective 'construction' and heteronomously, externally imposed 'moral duty'.

(*sinnliche Anschauung*), the world of sense perception is a meaningless aggregate of relative appearances.

Hegel and the early Strauß are concerned with Absolute Spirit, Absolute Knowledge, and Absolute Freedom as the ultimate, causal explanation of all 'that is'. For them, practical reason is only a 'relative' side-show to the center ring, 'pure, theoretical reason.' Their take on human agency, practical reason, involves two moments: 1) relative understanding in a sensuous world and 2) the (unsuccessful) achievement of ethical norms, which are subordinate to merely, self-interested, teleological goals, in the world of sense perception.

F.C. Baur, as well, claimed that Kant as a subjective constructivist, and, at least in the *LJ*, Strauß agrees with Hegel's and Baur's reading of Kant although all of Strauß' reflections on morality subsequent to the *LJ* take Kant's moral theory to be a matter of heteronomous 'moral duty' as in Hegel's "The Moral View of the World:"

> [...] [A]ll objective content disappears [in Kant], only what is established out of myself is valid, I alone am positive, real [*Reale*]. From this perspective, *the highest is not truth, not knowledge of God* but objective content [*Inhalt*] has disappeared into formal subjectivity. No religion is possible on the basis of this contentless [*inhaltslosen*] perspective because I am the affirmative. All content [*Inhalt*], agency, and life comes from me; *I have only a dead, empty God, a so-called highest essence, and this emptiness, this representation remains only subjective and never comes to true objectivity.*[58] (emphasis added)

The first moment of Kant's practical reason, for Hegel and the early Strauß, is that understanding in a sensuous world begins with the 'analytical' activity of the dividing, division, especially of a class into its constituent parts (diairesis, διαίρεσις). Therefore, without a 'higher' reason, understanding *must be* a 'bottom-up' reflection that generates itself the higher 'idea' as the unitary element (the 'synthesis') in common to a set of phenomena.[59] Hegel and the early Strauß take Kant's 'synthesis' of understanding to be a creation of finite consciousness. Strauß concurs in the *LJ* when he writes of Kant's moral principles that they are "[...] derived only from himself and the cultivation of his age."[60] *Understanding, particularly when it is concerned with the principles to guide agency, consists of relative, abstract constructions generated out of experience in the world by the individual subject.*

The second moment of Kant's practical reason, for them, is that, obviously, the activity that seeks the accomplishment of teleological goals can be pursued only in a world of sense perception, that is, they presuppose sensuousness shaped exclusively by self-interest, not as a 'given world of appearances' that require *a priori* synthetic elements for there to be experience, understanding, and responsible agency. For Hegel

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58. F.C. Baur, *Gnosis*: 666–667; see as well, 114, 118, 124.
59. See the discussion of morals laws as 'principles of arbitrariness' above, in Chapter 7: "Practical Reason Elevates Theoretical Reason" the section "Hegel on Practical Reason:" 728 ff.
60. Strauß, *LJ*: 52.

and Strauß, morality is a matter of achieving sovereignty over sensuous interests, and, because they measure that sovereignty by the consequences of the individual's actions, the limitations placed on the individual by the world make it impossible, ethically, for the individual to fulfil the expectations of moral duty.

The two moments of their understanding of practical reason indicate, then, when they are viewed from Kant's perspective, that *Hegel, and the early Strauß, for their part, presuppose without examination what Kant describes as the a priori synthetic capacities and elements of transcendental consciousness, which are required in order not only to experience a world but also to understand it – long before one establishes teleological aims for one's personal agency. Hegel and Strauß' account of morality and their reading of Kant on morality begins precisely where Kant's account of practical reason ends*: *with the universal conditions of possibility and capacities of transcendental consciousness that make it possible to act in a world, in the first place.* In the absence of a grasp of universal, *a priori* synthetic judgment, Hegel and Strauß relativize phenomenal experience generally and reduce it to a matter of indifference by shifting the focus to Absolute Spirit as the 'true' aim of consciousness. According to Hegel and the early Strauß, what is important for consciousness is not the relative, finite world of sensuousness (and failed ethical effort) but Absolute Knowledge of the ultimate, eminent cause of all 'that is.'

In dramatic contrast, though, for Kant, practical reason or the concern with what 'ought to be' is the central issue for a finite, transcendental consciousness in possession of autonomous freedom. Without the capacity of autonomous freedom, there is, and can be, no distinction between 'what is' (theoretical reason) and 'what ought to be' (practical reason). Other living things are not held responsible, morally or otherwise, for their agency because they do not possess autonomous freedom, the imperceptible, intentional, finite, eminent causality of transcendental consciousness. In short, other living things and non-living elements have no, or very limited, conscious awareness of 'imperatives' that govern their agency. Their imperatives are instinctual skills that they must follow to achieve their ends. They act, overwhelmingly and for the most part on the basis of 'blind' instinct. This ability to distinguish between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' is the core content of Kant's practical reason, and it is entirely overlooked (or ignored) by Hegel, and Strauß.

Not only do Hegel and Strauß fail to recognize (or to acknowledge) the universal, *a priori*, imperceptible capacities of transcendental consciousness, but they also have not recognized (or acknowledged) that *not all imperatives that govern intentional agency are moral imperatives. The determination of 'must be'* (in the sense of what one 'must' do to achieve a specific goal) *is itself ultimately subordinate to what 'ought to be.' In short, not all imperatives (what 'must' be done to successfully achieve a goal) are moral 'oughts.'* This distinction constitutes the difference between a 'hypothetical' imperative and a 'categorical' imperative. It is at the heart of Kant's distinguishing between the 'wide,' 'absolute' character of categorical imperatives and the 'narrow' aspect of

practical reason as well as the 'relative' character of the hypothetical imperatives of technical skills and what he calls the achievement of 'pragmatic' goals of self-interest.

'*Hypothetical*' *imperatives* are relative, social constructions. They are the 'rules' that govern what Kant calls 'technical' and 'pragmatic' agency. Technical, hypothetical imperatives are the required steps that are needed to accomplish a narrow, specific task (e.g., the building of a structure in conformity with a building code, rules for driving a car, mandatory vaccinations, that is, the rules constructed to govern behavior that is a society's civic, legal system)[61] whereas pragmatic, hypothetical imperatives govern the individual's 'well-being' (e.g., qualifying to practice a profession, obtaining an education degree, practicing a sport, etc.).[62] '*Categorical*' *imperatives*, in contrast, are wide, universal, moral principles/laws 'above' hypothetical imperatives. Hypothetical' imperatives establish the requirements for accomplishing a specific task; categorical imperatives govern the permission 'to do' or 'not do' a particular activity.[63] For example, I can know all the proper requirements for constructing a house and, yet, do a poor job of actually building the house, or I can follow all of the laws in effect at a certain time for governing the pollution of the environment and still know that my actions are destructive to the environment. In short, simply because something is 'appropriate' or 'legal' (hypothetically) doesn't mean that it is 'right' (categorically).

In short, there are two, very different, systems of imperatives, and it is only because transcendental consciousness is capable of intentionally subordinating one system (hypothetical imperatives) to the other (categorical imperatives) that it is even possible for there to be the self-expectation of responsibility for one's agency.

Granted that Kant's account of 'theoretical reason' (the understanding of 'what is') and 'practical reason' (the understanding of 'what ought to be') is an account of the individual's personal, transcendental consciousness, they are by no means 'subjective' as Hegel and Strauß claim. The philosophical task, according to Kant, is not to give an absolute, causal explanation of 'what is' because such an account, even if it were to

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61. Kant calls the system of socially constructed, hypothetical imperatives the 'doctrine of right' in the *Metaphysics of Morals*

62. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 414–421.

63. Aristotle, Hegel, and Strauß ignore the difference between cultural values and civic laws, which both depend upon the citizenry following a "higher" moral law for the values and laws to achieve virtue, compassion, and justice. Hegel and Strauß ignore that there are two parts to Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals*: the "Doctrine of Right" ("*Rechtslehre*") and the "Doctrine of Virtue" ("*Tugendlehre*"). The "Doctrine of Right" is concerned with a particular society's rules concerned with governing the affairs of the "external mine and yours," that is, the contract rules and laws necessary for public life. Its focus is with *hypothetical* imperatives that are governed by particular situations (for example, driving on the right- or left-hand lane, the rules for an apartment rental, the requirements for admission to a profession, etc.) The "Doctrine of Virtue" is concerned with the individual's internally giving oneself permission to exercise one's autonomous freedom in conformity with the hypothetical imperatives of one's teleological goal. The "Doctrine of Virtue," then, is concerned with *categorical* imperatives that are self-selected by the individual. Categorical imperatives are the wide, moral imperatives that govern one's exercising of agency according to the narrow, hypothetical imperatives of technical skills and self-interest.

somehow be 'correct,' constitutes a flight of fancy beyond the limits of finite, transcendental consciousness, whose certainty is beyond our capabilities. Furthermore, such an account, obvious in the case of Hegel and the early Strauß, diverts humanity's attention away from the world of experience, understanding, and agency to the point of reducing to meaningless indifference historical experience in the world.

Kant's philosophy is profoundly 'objective' in that its focus is not merely on those elements that we 'can do' but also on those elements that we 'ought to do' – and BOTH matter because without addressing both theoretical and practical reason, we cannot be the finite, eminent, causal open-ended agent *in the world* that we are. The *a priori* capacities and elements of transcendental consciousness are universally, that is, objectively shared, by all finite, transcendental consciousness. They are not the capricious or merely spontaneous constructions of 'subjectivity' as Hegel and Strauß maintain.

2) Kant has an ontological gap between moral duty and ethical achievement:'

The moral and ethical ontological gap for Hegel and Strauß is that between the inescapable evil that I am and the good that I wish to achieve. This ontological gap is the core claim of Hegel's "The Moral View of the World," as I presented above,[64] which takes Kant's practical reason to involve only an 'overwhelming obligation' that is incapable of achievement either in this or the next life.[65]

In other words, whereas Hegel in 1802 and Strauß in 1835 claim that Kant's moral principles are his own construction and the constructions of his 'age,' that is, they are relative constructions, his accusation that Kant's moral theory is ineffectively "subjective" is not based on the *epistemological gap* between content (*Inhalt*) and representations (*Form*) that eventually lead to Strauß' dismissal of Hegel's meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit's Double Negation. Rather, Kant's moral theory offers no solution,

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64. See in this chapter, "Hegel's Account of 'The Moral View of the World' is not Kant's Mor:" 727 ff.

65. By reading Kant through the lens of Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" and criticizing Kant for imposing an 'impossible obligation' on humanity that is incapable of fulfilment in this or the next life, the early Strauß is claiming that Kant denies salvation to humanity either according to divine 'Occasionalism'/'Voluntarism' (God's will precedes His thinking) or 'Intellectualism' (God cannot violate His eternal system of ideas).

While themselves scions of Scholastic Intellectualism,' Hegel's and the early Strauß' solution to the impossibility of fulfilling moral duty is to take the realm of sinfulness off the table because a) it is the necessary suffering that God (Absolute Spirit) must endure in order to become aware of Himself by the 'point of indifference' in finite consciousness and b) suffering and pain themselves, in the end, are a matter of indifference when it comes to the ultimate liberation of Absolute Spirit, Absolute Knowledge, and Absolute Freedom beyond sensualism.

The later Strauß never returned to this 'logic' of ontological gap in Kant's moral theory to grasp that Kant's moral theory is NOT consequentialist. There is no ontological gap.

according to Strauß, to the *ontological gap* between the evil that one is and the good that one strives to achieve.

Humanity is not incapable of fulfilling perfect, moral duty because it is limited by 'nature's freedom,' which is nature's historical contexts that limit human finitude, as in Hegel's "The Moral View of the World." Rather, Strauß writes, "[…] the ideal of the person well-pleasing to God (*Gottwohlgefälligkeit*), […] is "[…] *for us unachievable at any point* [either now or in the future] as a consequence of the *infinite separation between the evil from which we start and the good that we should achieve.*"[66] (emphasis added) Strauß' gap between the evil that we are and the good that we ought to be is profoundly different from Hegel's 'I should, but I can't because of the limitations of finite experience placed upon me by my historical context/circumstances. Strauß' 'I should, but I can't' is internally ontological whereas Hegel's 'I should, but I can't' in "The Moral View of the World" is imposed externally on the individual.

In light of this dogmatic, ontological gap between the evil that we are and the good that we 'ought to be,' according to the early Strauß, *Kant's 'practical reason' "[…] only admits an infinite approximation towards the idea' but also "[…] that which is only to be reached in an endless progression is in fact unattainable.*"[67]

In the *LJ* Strauß, then, dismisses Kant because instead of offering consolation for the evil that we are, Kant places an 'overwhelming obligation' to do good on humanity that can never be satisfied:

> [To merely substitute] for the certainty [of Traditional Personal Theism] that God once actually united himself with human nature, the admonition that man ought to obtain divine dispositions, offers a poor compensation for the peace which the redemption completed by Christ brings to the believer. [… The admonition that one ought to obtain a new moral disposition] is not equivalent to putting before the believer the duty of freeing himself from sin. By this [Kantian] system, man is thrust out of the reconciled world in which Christianity places him, into an unreconciled world, out of a world of happiness into a world of misery; for where reconciliation has yet to be effected, where happiness has yet to be attained, there is at present enmity and unhappiness. Additionally, in truth, the hope of entire deliverance from these conditions is, according to the principles of this system, which only admits an infinite approximation towards the idea, a deceptive one; for that which is only to be reached in an endless progression, is in fact unattainable.[68]

In the *Glaubenslehre* Strauß, once again, stresses the failure of Kant's 'practical reason' to achieve 'the highest good' (as if Kant claimed that achievement of moral perfection

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66. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 494. F.C. Baur writes of Schleiermacher: "Here [with Hegel] we are not merely talking about an ideal of God-pleasing humanity hovering in the dubious distance [Baur's take on Kant], not merely about an archetype that raises the human to the divine, or about a God-consciousness that has become the being of God [Baur's take on Schleiermacher]." *Gnosis*: 711.

67. Strauß, *LJ*: 776.

68. Strauß, *LJ*: 766.

was the aim) and criticizes as an illusion Kant's 'hope' for the next life as a requirement for achieving it.

If, according to his [Kant's] own confession, the absolute adequacy of the human will to the moral law can be attained by the individual only in endless progress, i.e., never really, then even in infinite continuation no more would come out than can already come out in this life [...][69]

However, for Kant, *evil and good are not the goal of morality. They are the always and already ineradicable condition for morality. This is the meaning of 'radical' evil AND 'radical' good in Kant. Evil and good are both 'radical' in that they are the condition of 'live option'* that allows autonomous freedom to give itself permission to act (either by self-selecting of an evil or a moral principle). *Without the 'radical,' live option of choice between an evil or a moral principle, there can be no moral responsibility* because transcendental consciousness would be ontologically determined either by an 'evil' (or 'good') sensuousness or an 'evil' (or 'good') reason.[70] Kant rejects both ontological options of evil determination and inability to achieve the good, which the individual wishes to achieve for understanding 'evil' and 'good:'

> *Sensuous nature [...] contains too little* to provide a ground of moral evil in humanity, for to the extent that it eliminates the incentives originating in freedom [by determinism], it makes of the human a purely animal being. [Likewise,] [a] reason exonerated from the moral law, *an evil reason* as it were (an absolutely evil will), *would [...] contain too much* because resistance to the law itself, thereby, would be elevated to incentive (because without any incentive, the power of choice cannot be determined), and so the subject would be made a diabolical being. However, neither of these two is applicable to humanity.[71]

3) Strauß' account of Kant's 'revolution of moral disposition' profoundly distorts Kant's 'new creature:'

In the *Glaubenslehre*, Strauß continues to refer to Strauß claims that, contrary to the way he reads Kant, it *must be possible at least in principle, if not in fact*, to overcome the gap between evil actions and perfection that is 'well-pleasing to God,' but here he points out that overcoming the gap cannot be accomplished by 'the old,' morally defective person. The conditions for achieving the status of being 'well-pleasing to God' require "a new creature," a new subject, who has undergone the revolution in her/his state-of-mind (*Gesinnung*) capable of achieving goodness and able to balance out the 'old,' evil state-of-mind (*Gesinnung*).

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69. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 720.
70. Kant's equating of 'radicality' to BOTH evil and good is clear by the title of the section of *Religion* that presents his thesis of 'radical evil'. See "Part One – Concerning the Indwelling of the Evil Principle Alongside the Good or Of the Radical Evil in Human Nature" in *Religion* AA VI: 19 ff.
71. Kant, *Religion*: AA VI: 35.

> [...] [M]oral action [is not only] required of us generally [according to Kant], but the *fulfilment of the highest good is demanded by our practical reason. It must therefore be possible to realize it* [NOTE: Strauß' emphasis is on moral achievement, not the moral capacity], and because we can do something directly only for one side of it [as a failure to achieve the highest good], the other [achievement of highest good] must be realized by another creature (*Wesen*), who is able to be sovereign (*bestimmen*) (now according to the new creature's own laws) over nature (in a future life) in conformity with the ethical law, and thus *to balance dignity and happiness with each other.*[72] (emphasis added) (parentheses from Strauß; square brackets from McG)

However, if God is the cause of humanity's 'revolution of moral disposition', that is, the individual's becoming 'well-pleasing' to God, by God's creating the 'new creature,' then Strauß, like F.C. Baur, is equating Schleiermacher and Kant as dependent upon a new act of ultimate, eminent causality in addition to their both being 'subjective.'[73] F.C. Baur, Strauß' professor in Blaubeuren and Tübingen, had written: "Kant and Schleiermacher represent the same *subjective* perspective [...]"[74]

> All that is different between Kant and Schleiermacher is only the difference between morality and religion. What for Kant is moral consciousness that comes from the victory of the good principle over the evil principle as *the moral capacity* of humanity, is for Schleiermacher God-consciousness, *the religious capacity.*[75]

Baur writes:

> [...] Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith* is nothing other than the perfect implementation of the opposition between the two principles that Kant calls radical evil and the individual's being well-pleasing to God [*Gottwohlgefälligkeit*]. Their difference consists only in the substitution of God-consciousness by Schleiermacher for Kant's moral consciousness. and Schleiermacher's artificial, as it is indefensible, [causal] connection that is supposed to unify the archetypal Christ with the historical.[76]

Baur stresses that, according to Kant, the 'idea' of humanity becoming morally well-pleasing to God is a "model already in our reason"[77] although Baur doesn't say, as does Strauß, that the moral transformation of the individual requires a 'new creature.'

However, Strauß' suggestion that Kant's 'revolution of moral disposition'[78] involves 'a new creature' to replace the 'old creature' is misleading. Strauß implies that, in order for this 'new creature' to balance dignity and happiness, *a divine creative act is required because the 'new creature' cannot be achieved merely as an effect of human effort*, which

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72. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 374.
73. See Baur, *Gnosis*: 667–668
74. Baur, *Gnosis*: 666.
75. Baur, *Gnosis*: 665.
76. Baur, *Gnosis*: 666.
77. Baur, *Gnosis*: 666., n. 25.
78. See Kant, *Religion*: AA VI: 47 ff.

would violate the Principle of Sufficient Reason (*Satz vom zureichenden Grund*). The Principle of Sufficient Reason requires that an effect must have as its cause something that has as much reality as the effect. Otherwise, something would come from nothing.

Strauß appears to be suggesting the same error in Kant for whom, according to Strauß, the imperfect effect that is the individual's failure to achieve being 'well-pleasing to God' (*Gottwohlgefälligkeit*) means that there is, was, and will be no 'new creature' capable of achieving that perfect goal *unless God creates the adequate conditions as a 'new creature.'*

However, Kant's '*revolution of the moral inclination*' (the 'new moral creature') involves no, literally 'new creature.' What is *'new' is the dominance of one's commitment to duty out of duty with no other incentive, such as, self-interest.*

> The restoration of the original capacity [*Anlage*] to good in us is not [...] the acquisition of a lost driving force [*Triebfeder*] for the good because *we were never able to lose the driving force that consists in respect for the moral law, and were we ever to lose it, we would also never be able to regain it.*[79] *The restoration is, therefore, only the recovery of the purity of the law, as the supreme ground of all our principles*, according to which the law itself is to be incorporated into the power of choice, not merely bound to other incentives, nor indeed subordinated to them (to inclinations) as conditions, but rather in its full purity, *as the self-sufficient incentive* of that power. *The original good is holiness of principles in the compliance of one's duty,*[80] *hence merely out of duty*, whereby a human being, who incorporates this purity into his principles, though on this account still not holy as such (for between maxim and deed *there still is a wide gap*), is *nonetheless upon the road of endless progress toward holiness. When the firm resolve to comply with one's duty has become a habit, it is called virtue* [...] Virtue here has the abiding maxim of lawful actions, *no matter whence one draws the incentives that the power of choice needs for such actions.* Virtue [...] is accordingly acquired little by little, and to some it means a long habituation [...] However, *not the slightest change of heart is necessary for this; only a change of mores. A human being* [...] *considers himself virtuous whenever he feels himself stable in his principles of observance to duty* [...] *However, that a human being should become not merely legally good, but morally good* (pleasing to God [*Gott wohlgefälliger*], that is, virtuous according to the intelligible character of virtue (*virtus noumenon*) and *thus in need of no other incentive to recognize a duty except the representation of duty itself* – that, so long as the foundation of the principles of the human being remains impure, cannot be effected through gradual reform but *must* rather *be effected through a revolution in the mindset* [moral disposition, *Gesinnung*] *of the individual* (*a transition to the maxim of holiness of mindset*).[81] (parentheses from Kant)(emphasis added)

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79. McG: Not even God could create it for us.

80. Similarly as with Plato for whom 'reason' must learn to control *but not eliminate or escape* the appetites (see the *Republic* Book IV: 435b-436b, 439d and Book IX 580d ff.), according to Kant 'natural inclinations' themselves are 'good;' we must learn, though, to curb them through prudence. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 58.

81. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 46–47. Only then can one speak symbolically of a 'new creature' as a change of heart.

In *The Conflict with the Faculties* of 1798, Kant writes with respect to the slow, moral improvement of humanity that it occurs: "[…] without the moral basis in the human race being increased in the least; because for that to occur a kind of new creation (supernatural influence) would be necessary."[82] (parenthetical comment from Kant) In short, Kant has already anticipated Schleiermacher's Christology and rejected it.[83]

4) Kant's notion of the 'moral improvement of the species is given a new meaning by Strauß.

Although in the *LJ* Strauß locates 'moral pollution' in the Individual, not the Species, in his second *Life of Jesus*, *The Life of Jesus Examined for the German People* (*LJEGP*) (1864), one encounters a shift with respect to the significance of the species. Whereas in 1835 the species is the location for the elevation of finite consciousness Absolute Spirit/Knowledge/Freedom, in 1864 the species' role is that of moral improvement,' which consists in the need in every age to discern new moral principles as the social, economic, political, and religious context changes.

When Strauß turns to his own theology in 1864 with the *LJEGP*, he had heard the call of his friends at the very beginning of the 1860s to 'Return to Kant.' However, he, unfortunately, didn't follow that challenge by diving into Kant's corpus himself. In fact, although Hegel's meta-narrative has long since lost its appeal, it apparently never occurred to him that the Hegelian reading of Kant was fiction. To be sure, in 1864, he stood firmly with his historically *inclusive*, understanding of 'Christology' as a reference not to a single individual at a particular point in time in the past whose achievement had never been matched and could never be superseded. However, now the species is no longer the location of the 'point of indifference' in order to grasp Absolute Spirit. Now, the species has a moral function.

Already in "On the Transient and Permanent in Christianity" of 1838, Strauß was entirely silent about the goal of 'blessedness' in the *LJ* of 1835 as liberation of the species from history. His new focus was on the role of the 'religious genius.' "[…] who strives for inner harmony, [… which] consists in nothing else than in the subordination of the lower forces to the higher ones, and all of them to the highest and hegemonic one, which is religious consciousness"[84] in conformity with the 'divine reason' that permeates all reality.[85] Yet, this divine reason involves no escape

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82. Kant, *Der Streit der Fakultäten* AA VII: 92.
83. On Schleiermacher's Christology of Perfect God-consciousness as a new act of creation (event of eminent causality), see Chapter 4: 277.
84. Strauß, "Über Vergängliches und Bleibendes im Christenthum." 116.
85. Strauß writes: "[…] not just theoretical virtuosity, but, in so far as reason is the instinct and the faculty of the finite subject to relate itself and all that is given to a higher and highest one, to make this relationship as intimate and legendary as possible, and from it to determine harmoniously all its feeling,

from history. Speaking of his current age, Strauß writes: ""No sooner had the poet complained about nature being de-deified; others found it necessary to complain about its deification [...], and the most recent philosophy has learned to see the world of the Spirit in art, state, and history as the self-revelation of the divine being."[86] The title 'religious genius' applies to one who offered new and deeper insight into the moral principles that govern practical reason in life. "To [... the] historically personal Christ belongs only that from his life in which his religious completion was represented: his speeches, his moral acting and toleration."[87] Nonetheless, his moral teaching is not unsurpassable: "It is possible that another, higher form of the religious founder will occur in the future."[88] *Whereas Jesus is unsurpassable with respect to his inward religiosity, there are two respects in which his teaching can be improved over* what was preserved in the early Church. The first is: "[...] the extent that a subsequent religious leader 'purifies' Christianity by removing spiritual beings and the miraculous [...]"[89] The second is the consequence of subsequent individuals having the advantage of the teaching of previous religious leaders. In terms of inward religiosity, Strauß asks, cannot a later religious leader, if not superiorly, at least be next to Jesus? "As in the field of morality and, to a certain extent, also in the fine arts, no one can do anything for the other, rather the second, third, tenth, who has pious consciousness in himself – understands, not only imagines, but in living, therefore, is not inferior to the one who had succeeded at it first."[90] (emphasis added)

> In every genius and her/his achievements, two components are to be distinguished: a personal and a historical one; every genius stands for her-/himself as much as s/he stands on the shoulders of the past. In the latter respect, however, *the earlier ones, even with the same degree of personal endowment, are at a disadvantage compared to the later ones, who are richer heirs of a spiritual achievement of mankind in general, which has become greater in the meantime, and in particular of the masters of their subject.*[91] (emphasis added)

Whereas in 1838, religiosity already was taken to be the combination of the degree of internal unity of the individual with divine reason and the moral conduct of one's life embedded in history, in *LJEGP* of 1864, blessedness is formulated explicitly in terms of the historical odyssey of humanity's 'moral development.'

Retaining his conviction from the *LJ* that moral 'pollution' applies to the individual, not the species, new in 1864 is his emphasis on *moral improvement itself as applying to the species, not the individual. This does not mean that collectively, the*

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thinking, and willing; in this respect, reason is nothing other than religion [...]" "Über Vergängliches und Bleibendes im Christenthum:" 108.

86. Strauß, "Über Vergängliches und Bleibendes im Christenthum:" 99.
87. Strauß, "Über Vergängliches und Bleibendes im Christenthum:" 131.
88. Strauß, "Über Vergängliches und Bleibendes im Christenthum:" 119.
89. Strauß, "Über Vergängliches und Bleibendes im Christenthum:" 128.
90. Strauß, "Über Vergängliches und Bleibendes im Christenthum:" 129–130.
91. Strauß, "Über Vergängliches und Bleibendes im Christenthum:" 124.

human species is improving morally. Rather, moral 'improvement' consists in insight into the 'divine wisdom' in all things with the promotion of moral well-being before God (Gottwohlgefälligkeit) requires the species generating the new moral principles required by its ever-changing historical (especially, cultural) circumstance. Although Jesus is no exclusive exception as a moral teacher, he is paradigmatic both of the profundity of his insight into moral principles ('divine wisdom') and of the need for the 'development' of Jesus' contribution by subsequent generations as they wrestle with new social and technological contexts.[92]

However, Strauß overlooks Kant's emphasis on the individual's efforts at moral improvement on the basis of internal, universal, moral principles, which by means of individual moral effort results in the gradual moral elevation of the species, rather than on the social construction of new, relative, moral principles given the change in historical and social contexts.

Humanity, according to Kant, possesses universal, *a priori* conditions and capacities that make it the one location of open-endedness in the causal nexus of nature, which gives transcendental consciousness the capacity for assuming moral responsibility based on internal, categorical and not merely external hypothetical imperatives. Humanity, according to Kant, is neither portrayed as trapped in Strauß' 'ontological gap,' seduced by sensualism, nor driven by socially constructed principles.

Hegel and Strauß are in agreement with Kant that moral improvement is neither a call to 'overcome sin' nor dependent upon divine grace. However, Kant emphatically rejects the notion that the 'solution' to ethical failure is the acquisition of a 'gnosis' of Absolute Knowledge that releases the individual from 'sensuousness.' Kant's dismissal of 'gnostic' release from sensuousness is not only because such 'gnosis' is analogous to a dreaming dove that thought it would be easier to fly in a vacuum but also because moral improvement is not a call to ethical perfection and, most certainly, not a struggle to overcome the 'evil pollution' of the individual's surrender to sensuousness Furthermore, moral improvement, for Kant, is also not limited to the individual although without individual effort it cannot occur.

Nonetheless, as a species project it is not the 'moral improvement' that comes with the construction of ever new, relative, moral principles as its social context changes, as the later Strauß claimed in 1872. Rather, it is a species project made possible by nature itself establishing the material conditions, which include, for example, a 'round earth' that drags even the reluctant to 'communality' by means of an 'unsocial sociality' to fulfil nature's goal of the species 'becoming better human beings.'

Finally, 'becoming better human beings' is not measured by the consequences of actions but by what nature does with us when we freely (!) rigorously commit to our internal moral duty rather than instinct and/or merely self-interest. In short, 'focus on the pennies, and the dollars will take care of themselves.'

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92. See, especially, Section 100 in the "Conclusion" of Strauß, *LJEGP* (1864): 624–627.

Kant's formulation of 'moral improvement' is concerned with transcendental consciousness' capacity to cultivate an internal, imperceptible 'culture of the will' or 'moral culture' distinct from Rousseau's 'Second Nature,' which measures 'culture' in terms of the products of 'technical skill' on top of First Nature. Speaking of transcendental consciousness as the 'ultimate end of nature' because in the midst of nature's determinism it is an open-endedness, which makes it possible for (but does not require) transcendental consciousness to take responsibility for its creative agency, Kant identifies two forms of culture: one focused on 'technical skills;' the other on moral training that protects finite, eminent causality mere mechanical determinism, NOT to suppress sensuousness.

> [...] [N]ot every kind of culture is adequate for this ultimate end of nature. The *culture of skill*[93] [Rousseau's 'Second Nature'] is certainly the foremost subjective condition of aptitude for the promotion of ends in general. However, it is still not sufficient for promoting the will in the determination and choice of its ends, which [...] is essential for an aptitude for ends. The latter condition of aptitude, which could be named *the culture of training* (*Zucht*[94]), is negative, and consists in the liberation of the will from the despotism *of desires, by which we are made [...] incapable of choosing for ourselves*, while we turn the drives that nature has given us merely for guidance into chains (*Fesseln*) in order not to neglect or even injure the determination of the animality in us although we are free enough to tighten or loosen the drives of nature, to lengthen or shorten them, as the ends of reason require.[95] (emphasis added)

Kant writes in *Opus Postumum*:

> From this [distinction between the 'culture of skills' and the 'culture training' that promotes the will'], one can also judge the absolute value of mathematics in comparison with practical philosophy [practical reason/ *praktische Vernunft*]. The former [mathematical] is that of technical/practical reason (skill in inventing means for some purpose), the latter is that of *moral/practical reason* and *is directed toward humanity's ultimate purpose, which is absolutely (categorically) imperative, namely, to create better human beings*.[96] (emphasis added)

As I pointed out above, the key to Moral Development is not what we do but our moral mindset (*Gesinnung*).[97] Nonetheless, for Kant, when it comes to moral improvement, *the focus is not simply on the moral mindset of the individual. Rather the focus is on the species* out of recognition that humanity is on a trajectory from cultural

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93. On the 'culture of skill,' see as well, Kant's "First Introduction" to the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA XX: 200.

94. In the *Opus Postumum*, Kant labels it the 'culture of training'. See *Opus Postumum* AA XXI: 555** (actually, 556–557).

95. Kant, The *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 431–432.

96. Kant, *Opus Postumum* AA XXII: 544*.

97. On Kant's concern with moral intention, not consequences, see above: 744.

crudeness over, and by means of, a 'culture of skills' (*Kultur der Geschichtlichkeit*), to attain the ultimate aim of 'creating better human beings,'[98] that is, to achieve a moral culture.

By no means is he claiming that culture is the social formation of the individual into subservience to the state. Furthermore, Kant is not claiming that one must adopt 'European' civility in order to cultivate morality. European civility is, in fact, a form of barbarism, and, ironically, the knee jerk assumption that Kant means 'European civilization' when he speaks of civilizing is an example of reverse imperialism.

Kant writes of civilizing as follows: Civilizing is a matter of the cultivation of taste (*Geschmack*). Yet, taste is neither merely personal nor even socially relative but is concerned with the cultivation of 'common sense' (*sensus communis*). *Sensus communis*, though, is not a matter of technical talent and felicity. Rather, *sensus communis* is *the cultivation of 'shared understanding' of universal principles.* Hence, "

> *Sensus communis* is distinguished from the *sensu proprio*, where no care is taken for the judgment of others; the disturbed person judges everything by the *sensu proprio* and can consider nothing from the standpoint of the *sensus communis*; s/he always consults only her/his private sense for other objects.[99]

The maxims of *sensus communis* are 1) think for oneself; 2) think from the perspective of the other; and 3) be consistent with your highest capacities and principles.[100] This, obviously, is far from what popular 'common sense' thinks about civilization!

However, Kant's notion of taste (*Geschmack*) is subject to anachronistic projections. It does not mean for Kant any of the following:[101] mere 'enjoyment' (*Genrießen*), fashion (which for Kant is barbarous), a proclivity to savoring (*Geschmacksneigung*) (which for Kant is a weakness), or a proclivity to sensuous 'goodness'. Rather, *Geschmack* is a matter of reason. It is the ability to be sociable; "*Taste promotes* ideal *pleasures* [as opposed to merely *sensuous*, animal pleasures] and makes us capable of pleasures that we could not have through the enjoyment of the senses."[102]

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98. See Kant, *Opus Postumum* AA XXII: 545. On Kant's carefully defined (not to be read anachronistically) notions of cultivation, civilization, and moralization, see his *Anweisung*: ""The person who is educated is cultivated (*cultivirt*) through school knowledge [*Schulwissenschaft*, civilized (*civilisirt*) through interaction with others, and moralized (*moralisirt*) by union of the two." *Anweisung* Olms ed.: 2 On the relationship between moral culture, beauty, and the sublime, see Chapter 9: 907. For Kant's definitions of cultivation and civilizing, see *Anweisung* Olms ed.: 2.

99. Kant, *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1013–1014: Olms ed.: 184–185.

100. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 294 and *Anweisung* Olms ed.: 25–26.

101. For the citations in Kant of the items on this list, see the discussion of Kant's notion of 'taste' in Vol. II Introduction: 545. Pleasure and displeasure motivate human agency. According to Kant, the ultimate aim of such agency is morality, which means to act on the basis of a universal moral principle, not narrow self-interest. Kant defines 'taste' as 'judgment about what pleases universally'.]

102. Kant, *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1102; Olms ed.: 288.

"The gradual education of humanity, which it reaches civilization and the propagation of taste, is *the preparation for the improvement of humanity*."[103] but civilization *per se* is not equated with morals. Kant is here in the *Menschenkunde* distinguishing between social propriety (*Sitte*), which is grounded in relative, social norms, and morality (*Moral*), which is grounded in universal, moral principles.

> The more civilized people are, the more […] they assume the appearance of affection, respect, modesty, and unselfishness from others, without deceiving anyone, because everyone knows that it is not meant sincerely, and it is very good that the world is run this way. Because by people playing this role, the virtues whose appearance they have only feigned for quite some time are ultimately awakened little by little, and they become part of their character. However, the deceiver in ourselves (that is, the inclination to deceive) is [with civilizing] a return to obedience under the law of virtue, and [civilizing is] not deception but guiltless deception of ourselves.
> Nothing can be achieved by force against sensuality in our inclinations; we must outwit them, and, as Swift says, throw a ton to the whale to play with in order to save the ship.
> [...] Good, honorable decency is a pretense that commands the respect of others (without making itself despicable).[104]

Far from an indoctrination into civic 'duty,' for Kant civilizing is an open-ended process that is the preparation for morality (practical reason) on the way to a 'republican' form of government (in which the administrative, legislative, and judicial powers are separated) to cosmopolitanism.

Already in his *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie* (1775), Kant acknowledges that our moral situation is difficult "because sensuousness is in conflict with understanding."[105] However, this conflict is no ontological dualism between internally, 'good' intentions and externally, 'evil' actions. Distinguishing between the 'moral law' and 'moral feeling,' Kant writes of *moral feeling not* as a *struggle of the 'moral law' with 'sensuousness'* but of *the cultivation of the unity of sensuousness with understanding*. Moral improvement, then, does not consist in merely fulfilling the 'legal' requirement of a law but in the cultivation of moral feeling[106] or celebrating the imperceptible lawfulness in perception and agency that 'unites' intellect with the sensible. One can fulfil the law, legally, out of the wrong moral mindset. Achieving an agreement between sensuousness and intellect takes 'long' practice in holding oneself accountable before one's 'inner judge:'

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103. Kant, *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1102; Olms ed.: 288.
104. Kant, *Anweisung* Olms ed.: 81–82.
105. Kant, *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie* (*Lecture on Moral Philosophy*) (1774/1775), Werner Stark and Manfred Kühn, eds. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004): 204.
106. Moral feeling here is not to be confused for the notion of feeling as sympathy and/or feeling for the good in Hutcheson and the Scottish Moralists.

Ruling over ourselves is [...] difficult, because the moral law can command but it has no driving force. It lacks the power of execution, which is moral feeling. This *moral feeling is not a distinction of good and evil* [that is established by the moral law]*, but a driving force where our sensuousness coincides with the intellect.* People can have good moral judgment but no feeling; they can see that an act is not good and worthy of punishment, but they still commit it. Now *rule over oneself is based on the strength of moral feeling.* However, we can rule well over ourselves if we weaken the resisting power [the power that divides sensuousness and intellect], but this we do if we share in the resisting power [not separate ourselves from it]. Accordingly, *we must first discipline ourselves, that is, in regard to ourselves, by repeated actions, eradicate the inclination that arises from the sensual impulse. He who wants to discipline himself morally must take great care of himself, must often give account of his actions before the inner judge, through long practice he will give strength to the moral motive force and through culture he will get into the habit of showing pleasure or displeasure in regard to moral good or evil.* In this way, moral feeling will be cultivated because, if morality possesses the strength of motive force,[107] he will weaken sensuality and overcome it [not suppress and/or escape it] [...]. Where [...] there is no dominion over oneself, there is anarchy [at least, in part], but even if there is moral anarchy in man, cleverness takes the place of morality and rules instead of it, so that there would not be complete anarchy. [In other words,] the rule over oneself according to the rule of cleverness is an analogue of the moral rule over oneself.[108]

‚Culture' as ‚cultivation,' though, involves more than just the individual's 'training.' It involves all those who have an awareness of the significance of the 'inner judge' of moral feeling anchored in the imperceptible, lawful 'commonweal of ends' (*Reich der Zwecke*) that guides the unifying of sensuousness and (moral) understanding. Kant's 'commonweal of ends' is a 'realized eschatology' of capacities that are, nonetheless, 'infinitely removed from us'[109] precisely because it is an activity, not an accomplishment:

[...] [D]ominion of the good principle is not otherwise attainable, so far as human beings can work toward it, than through the setting up and the diffusion of a society in accordance with, and for the sake of, the laws of virtue – *a society which reason makes it a task and a duty of the entire human race to establish in its full scope* [...] In addition to prescribing laws to each individual [...], morally legislative reason also unfurls a banner of virtue as rallying point for all [...] that they may congregate under it and thus at the very start gain the upper hand over evil [...]
[...] [The ethical community] has a special and peculiar unification principle (virtue) and therefore also a form and constitution that is essentially different from that of the [political community]. Nevertheless, there is a certain analogy between the two, considered as two common beings in general, in regard to which the former [ethical community] can also be

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107. Kant explicitly rejects the notion that moral feeling is sufficient for morality. In the *Anweisung*, Kant writes: "The more people privilege [*vorgeben*] feeling, the less they think. The more feelings, the fewer concepts. Moral feeling can never take the place of moral concepts!" Kant, *Answeigung* Olms ed.: 24.

108. Kant, *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie*: 204–205. There is no complete anarchy because both the rule of cleverness and moral feeling are governed, ultimately, by lawfulness (theoretical and practical, respectively).

109. See Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 122.

called an ethical state, i.e. a realm of virtue (of the good principle), of which the idea has its quite well-founded objective reality in human reason (as the duty to unite for such a state), even if it could never be hoped subjectively from the good will of men that they would decide to work toward this end with unanimity.[110]

Speaking of culture as what constitutes the social value of humanity because only transcendental consciousness can be aware of an internal 'commonweal of ends,' Kant writes that

[T]here are human beings, i.e. evil-minded, but nevertheless rational beings endowed with [technical] inventiveness and at the same time with a moral capacity [*Anlage*], who feel the evils they selfishly do to one another only more and more strongly with the increase of culture and, seeing no other remedy against it before them than the private sense (of individuals) united with the common sense (of all), to *a discipline* (of civil coercion), *to which they submit only according to laws given by themselves*, *they feel ennobled by this consciousness, namely, that they belong to a species that is appropriate to the destiny of man as reason presents it to him in the ideal.*[111] (emphasis added)

Furthermore and especially to be emphasized, the 'moral improvement' of humanity that comes with the development of culture is not in competition with nature as an alien sensuous realm over against a 'moral duty' of perfection. Rather, perpetual progress includes *what nature does with us, not simply what we do through our autonomous freedom*. Kant writes:

If we now ask by what means this perpetual progress for the better may be maintained and also accelerated, we soon see that *this immeasurably distant success will not depend on what we do* (e.g., on the education we give to the younger world) and on the method we should use to bring it about; *but on what human nature will do in and with us* to coerce us into a course into which we would not easily submit of our own accord.[112] (emphasis added)

In this vein, Kant speaks of nature 'wants' the cultivation of transcendental consciousness' moral capacity (*Anlage*). Writing of the notion of 'nature wants' employing a non-literal, 'symbolic anthropomorphism,'[113] Kant writes:

When I say of nature that she wants this or that to happen, this does not mean as much as: she imposes a duty on us to do it (for only practical reason, free of compulsion, can do that),

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110. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 94–95.

111. Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*: AA VII: 329–330.

112. Kant, *On the Common Saying: ,That may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice* AA VIII: 310.

113. On Kant's distinction between a 'literal' and a 'symbolic' anthropomorphism, see Kant, *Prolegomena* AA IV: 356. See as well, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 724–725; B 728 and *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 353.

but she does it herself, we may want or not (fata volentum ducunt, nolentem trahunt ["the fates lead the willing and drag the unwilling"].[114]

Nature 'has given' humanity reason and freedom as an indication of her 'intention' that humanity exercise the finite, eminent causality as that location where creativity extends beyond natural instinct through transcendental consciousness' 'lawful' reason.

> *Nature intended that humanity should bring everything that goes beyond the mechanical order of his animal existence entirely out of itself and should partake of no other bliss or perfection than that which it has procured for itself, free from instinct, by its own reason.* Nature does nothing superfluously and is not wasteful in the use of means for her ends. Because she gave humanity reason and the freedom of will based on it, this was already a clear indication of her intention with regard to its capacities. For humanity was not to be guided by instinct, or to be supplied and instructed by created knowledge; but, rather, was to bring everything out of itself.[115]

The way that nature manifests her 'intention' in a manner that drags the unwilling to exercise their transcendental capacities is through what Kant calls 'unsocial sociality:'

> The means that nature uses to bring about the development of all its capacities is their *antagonism in society*, insofar as this ultimately *becomes the cause of a lawful order* for them. I understand by antagonism *the unsociable sociality*[116] of persons, i.e., their inclination to enter into society, which is nevertheless connected with a continuous resistance that constantly threatens to separate this society. The predisposition for this obviously lies in human nature. Humanity has a tendency to socialize, because in such a state it feels more human (i.e. the development of its natural capacities [*Naturanlagen*]). However, humanity also has a great tendency to isolate itself: because the individual finds in her-/himself at the same time the unsociable quality of wanting to direct everything only according to her/his own sense, and therefore expects resistance from all sides, just as s/he knows from her-/himself that s/he in turn is inclined to resistance against others. It is this resistance that awakens all of humanity's powers, leads one to overcome one's tendency to laziness and, driven by ambition, lust for power or greed, to gain status and prestige in the eyes of others whom one does not well suffer but from whom one also cannot let go. There, the first true steps are taken from crudeness to culture, which actually consists in the social value of the human. There, all talents are gradually developed, taste[117] is formed, and through continued enlightenment the beginning is made for the founding of a way of thinking that in the course of time can transform its crude natural capacities [*Naturanlagen*] into moral definite practical principles and thus be transformed from a pathologically depressed lone individual into a society, and, finally, into a moral totality. Without those qualities of unsociality, which are not in themselves amiable and from which arises the resistance that everyone must necessarily encounter in his selfish presumptions, all talents would

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114. Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project* AA VIII: 365

115. Kant, "Third Proposition" in *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* AA VIII: 19.

116. 'Unsocial sociality' is not Hegel's 'cunning of reason'. The former leads to the moral improvement of the individual and species *in the world*. The latter calls consciousness *out of the world*.

117. Kant distinguishes between the ‚sense of taste' and 'taste' as a 'social sense'. See Kant, *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 916–917; Olms ed.: 72–73.

remain eternally hidden in their germs in an Arcadian shepherd's life of perfect harmony, frugality, and alternating love. Humans [would be] benign as the sheep they feed, would hardly give their existence a greater value than that of their domestic cattle; they would not fill the void of creation with regard to their purpose, as a rational being. *Thanks be to nature, then, for the indiscriminateness, for the begrudgingly competing vanity, for the unsatisfiable desire to have or also to rule! Without it, all the excellent natural endowments in mankind would slumber eternally undeveloped.* Humanity wants harmony; but nature knows better what is good for this species: *nature wants discord. Humanity wants to live leisurely and pleasurably. Nature, however, wants him to throw himself out of nonchalance and idle frugality into work and toil, in order to find means to pull himself by wisdom out of the latter.*[118]

Again, employing a symbolic anthropomorphism, Kant concludes that nature possesses a 'wisdom' that does not allow it to 'tamper' with its 'glorious institution.' Nonetheless, it is able to achieve its 'intended' ends by 'using' transcendental consciousness:

> The natural impulses for this, the sources of unsociality and of constant resistance, from which so many evils but which, nevertheless, also drive to a new exertion of forces, and thus to a greater development of the natural dispositions, thus betray the order of a wise Creator; and not, for instance, the hand of a malicious Spirit, which has tampered with His glorious institution or has enviously corrupted it.[119] (emphasis added)

II) Kant's 'Empty Ideas:'

In the *Life of Jesus* of 1835 and in conformity with Hegel's "The Moral View of the World," Strauß stresses that morality (*Moralität*) without ethics (*Sittlichkeit*) is merely "an empty obligation and ideal."[120] "I should (act in accordance with pure, moral duty), but I can't (because of the limitations placed upon me by my historical circumstance/situation)." That fulfilment can only come from God in the form of grace, according to "The Moral View of the World." Nonetheless, for Hegel perfect fulfilment of moral principles is not the goal of religion! Rather, for Hegel and the Strauß of 1835, *religion is the attainment of 'knowledge'* (gnosis) *of Absolute Spirit, not the overcoming of sin.*

In the *LJ* Strauß writes of this 'gnostic' form of religion whose goal is to attain the 'Hegelian' knowledge of Absolute Spirit, not overcome personal 'sin':

> [...] recognition of God as spirit implies that God does not remain as a fixed and immutable Infinite encompassing the Finite, but enters into it, produces the Finite, Nature,

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118. Kant, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* AA VIII: 20–21.
119. Kant, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* AA VIII: 21–22.
120. I've addressed this theme frequently. See, for example, above, footnote 8: 173; Chapter 2, footnote 19: 79; Chapter 6, footnote 4: 96; and below in Chapter 8, "Religion is Morality Grounded only in 'Empty Ideas'": 225 ff.

and the human mind, merely as a limited manifestation of himself from which he eternally returns into unity. As man, considered as a finite spirit, limited to his finite nature, has not truth; so God, considered exclusively as an infinite spirit, shut up in his infinitude, has not reality. *Infinite spirit is real only when it discloses itself in finite spirits because finite spirit is true only when it merges itself in the infinite.* The true and real existence of spirit, therefore, is neither in God by himself, nor in man by Himself, but in the God/Man, neither in the infinite alone, nor in the finite alone, but in the interchange of impartation and withdrawal between the two, which on the part of God is revelation, on the part of man religion.[121]

Speaking of the Christ as a symbolic representation of the union of Infinite and Finite Spirit, Strauß in conformity with Hegel says nothing about the 'forgiveness of sins' but writes of the 'cessation of alienation from the infinite and return to God": "*Inasmuch as the death of the God/Man is merely the cessation of his state of alienation from the Infinite, it is in fact an exaltation and return to God* [...]*[122]*" (emphasis added)

For Strauß in 1835, humanity is neither defined in terms of Kant's 'theoretical reason,' nor in terms of either the Hegelian or Kantian senses of 'practical reason.' Rather, humanity is defined in terms of the Hegelian (Platonic) 'pure consciousness' or 'pure reason'[123] of contemplation (*Republic* 511c; θεωρία/θεωρούμενος), that is, as 'contemplation' of the Infinite (the 'highest Good')[124] *above* both Kant's 'theoretical reason' and 'practical reason.' In conformity with Hegel's 'pure reason' of contemplation, Strauß stresses the *suppression of sensible existence* (precisely, the realm to which Hegel claims that Kant restricts 'practical reason'):

> The believer, finding himself (*sic.*) environed with the conditions of nature, must, like Christ, die to nature—but only inwardly, as Christ did outwardly, – must spiritually crucify himself and be buried with Christ, that *by the virtual suppression of his own sensible existence, he may become, in so far as he is a spirit, identical with himself, and participate in the bliss and glory of Christ.*[125] (emphasis added)

The crucial insight here, easily overlooked, is what distinguishes Strauß' Christology from other Hegelians. In order to preserve history, Strauß takes the turning 'point of indifference' to be internal to finite consciousness, not God's Absolute return to Himself. It is also the insight that the early Strauß believes protects his Christology from being

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121. Strauß, *LJ*: 777. Where Strauß differs with Hegel and the Hegelians is not about what the God/Man *is* but with respect to the issue of the *exclusiveness* (as only occurring in one individual or as occurring in the elite philosophers who grasp the gnosis) beyond history or *universal inclusiveness* (as applying to all finite, consciousness) in history of the God/Man event.

122. Strauß, *LJ*: 778.

123. According to Hegel, ‚pure consciousness' or 'pure reason' is Absolute Spirit Itself. See Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 391–398.

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

125. Strauß, *LJ*: 778.

merely an 'empty idea' precisely because it insists upon an historical anchor for Christology. Contrasting his Christology with other Hegelians, Strauß writes:

> [...] one can never deduce the bodily resurrection of an individual from the truth that the suppression of natural existence constitutes the resurrection of the spirit.
> [... To do so] would have us falling back again to Kant's point of view, which we have ourselves found unsatisfactory: for if the idea have no corresponding reality, *it is an empty obligation and ideal.*[126] (emphasis added)

Strauß' criticism of Kant as a proponent of merely 'empty ideas' is at the heart of Strauß' *inclusive* Christological formulation of the *LJ*. The key to the whole of Christology is:

> If reality is ascribed to the idea of the unity of the divine and human natures, is this equivalent to the admission that this unity must actually have been once manifested, as it never had been, and never more will be, in one individual? This is indeed not the mode in which Idea realizes itself; it is not wont to lavish all its fulness on one exemplar and stingy towards all others—to express Itself perfectly in that one individual, and imperfectly in all the rest. It, rather, loves to distribute its riches among a multiplicity of exemplars which reciprocally complete each other—in the alternate appearance and suppression of a series of individuals. Furthermore, is this no true actualization [*wahre Wirklichkeit*] of the Idea [the 'true' content][127]? *Is it not to take the Idea of the unity of the divine and human natures to be real [Reale] in a far higher sense, when I regard the whole race of mankind as Its actualization [Verwirklichung], than when I single out one man as such an actualization? Is not an incarnation of God from eternity, a truer [wahere] one than an incarnation limited to a particular point of time?*[128]
> This is the key to the whole of Christology, that, as subject of the predicate which the church assigns to Christ, we place instead of an individual, an idea; but an idea which has an existence in reality [*eine reale*], not unactual [as a consequence of the ontological gap between the evil that one is and the good that one seeks to achieve], *like that with Kant.*"[129] (emphasis added)

In the *Glaubenslehre* of 1841, Strauß to follows Hegel's 'Moral View of the World' of the *Phänomenologie* with its dualistic distinction between morality (*Moralität*) and ethics

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126. Strauß, *LJ*: 779.

127. The rhetorical question here is formulated in terms of the Hegelian distinction between 'true' content (*Inhalt*, *das Ideelle*) and 'actual' representations (*Form*, *das Reelle*). An idea is merely 'empty' without its manifestation in 'actual' representations.

128. Again, the rhetorical question hinges on the different between 'eternal truth' (*Inhalt*) and transient, 'actual particulars' (*Form* as actual representations).

129. Strauß, *LJ*: 780. The dismissal of Kant's 'empty idea' is formulated in terms of the Hegelian distinction between true content (*Inhalt*) and particular representations (*Form*). Strauß takes Kant's Christology to be an 'empty idea' as the prototype of perfect, moral duty. Strauß dismisses Kant for not addressing whether and how this 'empty idea' can be actualized in history because of the restraints placed on human agency by nature and social context. In other words, as I will point out presently, Strauß' focus on actualization prohibits his grasping of the significance of Kant's notion of moral 'state of mind' (*Gesinnung*) for guiding agency.

(*Sittlichkeit*) and claims that the dualistic dimensions of experience place in tension 'higher,' essential consciousness (*Moralität*) and 'lower,' passion driven consciousness (*Sittlichkeit*). In short, moral theory depends upon a dualism between the 'essential consciousness' (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) of moral duty and the inescapable ethical failure because the individual is in a world of sense perception (*sinnliche Anschauung*). It is not insignificant that it is Hegel, not Kant, who wrote in "The Moral View of the World:" "On account of the individual's 'unworthiness,' [...] it cannot look on happiness as something necessary, but as something contingent, *and can only expect happiness as the result of 'grace.'*"[130] (emphasis added)

In the *Glaubenslehre*, as well, Strauß squeezes Kant's practical reason into the framework of Hegel's 'Moral View of the World'. Strauß acknowledges that Kant's practical reason knows that the mental attitude of morality and human worthiness of happiness depends upon humanity's free self-selection, but Strauß claims that Kant is a moral consequentialist by his recognition that humanity has very limited power over nature upon which its happiness depends.

> [...], according to Kant, the moral law [*Moralität*] obligates us to make it exclusively the formal, rational condition for the use of our freedom *independent of all material conditions*. However, the moral law simultaneously establishes as mandatory *a priori* the pursuit of a final goal, which consists in the achievement of the highest good in the world possible by freedom. This is to say, the ethics [*Sittlichkeit*] of all rational beings, on the one hand, includes their worthiness to be happy but with *the actual possession of happiness being proportionate to their achieved 'worthiness.'* [McG: Consequentialism] Now, *as certainly as the former of these two constituent parts of the highest good, namely, the suitability of attitude and conduct to the moral law, or worthiness, depends on man's free self-determination: so little is he able by [...] [ethics] to procure for himself at any time the required complement to it, the corresponding happiness because this depends on nature, over which man has only a very limited power.*[131] (emphasis added)

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130. See Hegel, "The Moral View of the World:" III: 449–450 (Baillie trans.: 623). Again, with his shift from humanity's problem as a matter of 'sin' to a matter of 'knowledge', Hegel substitutes the 'cunning of reason' for 'grace'.

Although Kant does speak of grace as *possibly* complementing human moral effort, he rejects the notion because it undermines individual, moral effort by turning moral responsibility into a groveling exercise of personal interest at the feet of God. Furthermore, *if there is any goal inappropriate for morality, it is happiness*. Happiness is a matter of merely capricious self-interest. The goal is not happiness but the 'worthiness of happiness' in the Stoic sense of internal satisfaction over one's effort. See Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 130.

131. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 373–374. Nonetheless, Strauß recognized that Kant did not invoke *grace* in order for humanity to achieve happiness: "The fact that the connection of some emotions, which are prominent in us, with the rest of our spiritual life is beyond our observation, does not justify the conclusion that such a connection does not exist. However, *wishing to perceive and feel really heavenly influences that they are effects of grace and not only natural Kant explained as a kind of madness (of the theoretical understanding) and a dangerous self-deception for a truly moral religion (of practical reason) to the extent that the individual claims s/he is able to accomplish the ethically good not by her-/himself but expects it to be a gift of an other Being, consequently to become ethical without doing anything.*" (emphasis added) Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 457. Strauß footnotes to "§2 The Moral

Here in the *Glaubenslehre*, the contrast between 'moral obligation' and (failed) ethical fulfilment is formulated by means of the epistemological structure of 'true' content (*Inhalt*) and 'actual representations' (*Form*) as idea and reality. Truth is content (*Inhalt*) whereas representations are actuality/reality. "Divine holiness is revealed by the undeniable power with which the ethical law is asserted in human life. This undeniable power in life is the actuality [*Sittlichkeit*] of the moral law [*Moralität*] just as the moral law is the truth of its actuality in life; or both are related to one another as Idea and actuality [*Realität*]."[132] In the case of the undeniable power (actuality) of the moral law, we indirectly encounter the moral law in consequentialist representations (*Form*), which is what anchors the idea (*Inhalt*) in actuality and confirms that the idea is no mere abstraction. Divine, moral power and ethical actuality are related to one another as idea (God's holiness) is related to the form/representations that are ethical actuality.[133]

Kant: Ought comes not from 'Holiness of the Law' but Autonomous Freedom

However, Kant points out that it is not the 'holiness of the law', which confronts humanity with an 'ought'. Rather, humanity alone of all species we have encountered encounters an 'ought' because of the degree to which it exercises autonomy 'above nature.' Only 'if' transcendental consciousness is inseparable from a world in which it can intentionally initiate sequences of events that nature on its own could never accomplish is there anything like an ought. *In short, it is not the 'holiness' of a heteronomous, divine law that establishes morality.* Morality is a necessary complement to the extra-ordinary causality exercised by transcendental consciousness. *The concrete application of autonomous freedom demands attention to the lawful order that internally governs its causal system complementary to, but is never reducible to, the causal system of nature with its physical laws.*

Principle of Religion Opposed to the Delusion of Religion" in Part Four of Kant, *Religion*: AA VI: 174. One should also look at Kant's concluding "General Remark".

132. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 596. Finite actuality (*Realität/Reelle/Reale*) is distinguished by Hegel from infinite ideas (the *Ideelle*). The empirical is *Reelle* in contrast to the reality that is the idea (*Ideelle*), which is the true content *Inhalt*) of knowledge in contrast to representations in perception, which is the *Form* that is actuality as *Wirklichkeit*. In his *Logik*, Hegel writes: "In relation to reality [*Realität*] and ideality [*Idealität*] (...), the opposition of the finite and the infinite is conceived in such a way that the finite applies to the real [*Reale*], the infinite applies to the ideal [*Ideelle*], just as furthermore the concept is regarded as an ideal [*Ideelles*] and indeed as an only ideal [*Ideelles*], concrete existence in general, however, as the real [*Reale*]. GW V: 165–166.

133. This relationship between the content (*Inhalt*) or truth of the moral law and the actuality (*Form*) of the moral law is a claim that *the undeniable power* of moral law (its consequentialist actuality) is taken by Strauß to be the *ratio cognoscendi of morality and the ration essendi of morality is the idea* of the moral law (its truth) as *ratio essendi*. This is a dramatic reformulation of Kant's notions of the *ratio cognoscendi is the moral law* and *ratio essendi is autonomous, creative freedom*. See Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 4*.

III) Freedom is only Freedom-from for Strauß:

When it comes to philosophies of immanentism, the freedom of the will is ambiguous, at best. In fact, Spinoza denied human freedom. Only God is free because God is not subject to compulsion.[134] Strauß summarizes Spinoza as follows:

> [...] If *constraint* consists in the determination of a being from without and *capriciousness* [*Willkür*] in determination of a being itself with respect to internal and external indeterminacy, the determination by one's internal nature stands in the middle, which can be called alike necessary determination (but not compulsion) as well as free self-determination (admittedly, not capriciousness [*Willkür*]).[135]

For Spinoza, then, by His internal nature only God is determined by His laws (but not driven by external compulsion) and self-determining (but not capriciously out of indeterminacy).

Whereas Spinoza denied the freedom of the human will,[136] *the early Strauß and Hegel attempt to defend the freedom of the human will by invoking the logic of 'negation'*. Finite freedom is the individual's distinguishing her-/himself from all other particulars. God is the 'Totality of Spirit' and as such in the beginning is 'not yet true.'[137] God's 'truth' is the 'totality' that can only include its beginning and end as His eternal process[138] This 'eternal process' between the beginning and the end of Totality is driven by 'negation': the One negating itself into the many followed by the open-endedness of distinction and differentiation achieved by the separation of the many within itself in a process of finite negation. This separation is an activity of negation that distinguishes 'this' from 'that,' that is, 'this' is NOT 'that.'

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134. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 588; Spinoza writes in his *Ethic.* I, Defin. 7; see Epist. LXII. POS. 2: "I say that a thing is free, which exists and acts solely by the necessity of its own nature. Thus also God understands Himself and all things freely, because it follows solely from the necessity of His nature, that He should understand all things. You see I do not place freedom in free decision, but in free necessity.

[http://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary_zabel/Courses/Spinoza/Texts/Spinoza/let6258.htm#TOP (22 August 2020)], see Ep. XXIII: "God I in no wise subject to fate: I conceive that all things follow with inevitable necessity from the nature of God, in the same way as everyone conceives that it follows from God's nature that God understands Himself. This latter consequence all admit to follow necessarily from the divine nature, yet no one conceives that God is under the compulsion of any fate, but that He understands Himself quite freely, though necessarily." [http://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary_zabel/Courses/Spinoza/Texts/Spinoza/let2375.htm#TOP (22 August 2020)]. See, as well, Spinoza's Letter to G.H. Schaller (October, 1674) Letter 62 (58).

135. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 587–588.

136. See Spinoza's Letter to G.H. Schaller (October, 1674) Letter 62 (58). Strauß does not acknowledge Spinoza's rejection of humanity's free will in this discussion of God's freedom in *Glaubenslehre* I, but he does in *Glaubenslehre* II: 364.

137. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 488.

138. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 488–489.

> [For] [...] common understanding, the world is an aggregate of particular, randomly accidental things under laws.[139] Comprehending knowing, though, negates these things as existing particulars and ascends to the universal. This universal itself has negated itself as it here returns to itself (that is, it is related to individual existing things as substance is related to its accidents).[140]

Hegel distinguishes between two notions of freedom: Absolute Freedom[141] and freedom in the nation state.[142] Spirit is Absolute Freedom and the ultimate aim of Spirit is the Second Negation of finite phenomena that restrains freedom in negativity but is necessary for Spirit to be conscious of Itself as Absolute Freedom.[143] However, finite consciousness has to win its freedom.[144] Hegel stresses that finite consciousness is not 'free by nature'. The state of nature is a status of injustice and violence. Hence, the state doesn't limit freedom but limits merely brute emotions and rude instincts as well as caprice and passion.[145] By placing limitation on humanity's brute nature, the state and society are the conditions in which freedom is realized.[146] Hegel claims that it is the state that confers 'worth' on the individual[147] by providing the framework for humanity achieving its '*second nature*'[148] through the discipline and performance of duties for the state and society.[149] *Humanity doesn't 'possess' freedom, innately*, according to Hegel. He acknowledges, nonetheless, the ambiguous status of freedom in the state because the state must impose restrictions on freedom. However, the aim

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139. Notice here how for Strauß an 'aggregate' is defined as a random collection of 'accidental things under laws'. *For Kant, a collection of things under laws is the condition of an architectonic, just the opposite of an aggregate*! Once again, the Second Negation 'back' to Absolute Spirit, the universal, is a negation of meaning to history in contrast to Kant's embracing of history as the realm of human creativity.

140. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 383.

141. See Hegel's "Introduction" to his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: XII: 30 (Sibree, trans.: 18).

142. .See Hegel's "Introduction" to his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: XII: 56 (Sibree, trans.: 40).

143. See Hegel's "Introduction" to his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: XII: 77–78 (Sibree, trans.: 58–59).

144. .See Hegel's "Introduction" to his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: XII: 58 (Sibree, trans.: 42).

145. See Hegel's "Introduction" to his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: XII: 58 (Sibree, trans.: 42).

146. See Hegel's "Introduction" to his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: XII: 59 (Sibree, trans.: 43).

147. See Hegel's "Introduction" to his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: XII: 56 (Sibree, trans.: 40–41). This is a dramatic contrast to Kant, who anchors the individual's absolute worth (dignity) in autonomous freedom. On Kant's notion of dignity, see: 535, n. 20 and 699, n. 176.

148. See Hegel's "Introduction" to his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: XII: 57 (Sibree, trans.: 41). NOTE: Hegel here is employing Rousseau's label for culture. This is Kant's 'culture of skills,' but it has nothing to do with Kant's 'culture' that promotes the moral will.

149. See Hegel's "Introduction" to his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: XII: 56–57 (Sibree, trans.: 41).

of the state's constitution, laws, and institutions is that the restrictions on personal freedom be as few as possible.[150] (emphasis added)

In a nutshell: *only Absolute Spirit is free as 'self-contained existence'*, and individual consciousness is truly free only when it is self-conscious of its union with Absolute Spirit.[151] *Individual consciousness, then, is free when it liberates itself from its animality, passions, and self-interest.*[152] In its natural state of individual consciousness, the self is dependent upon the power of the state and society to restrain its animality. *Freedom, then, is predominantly defined 'negatively' as freedom-from: freedom-from animality, freedom-from state restrictions that impose duty, and, ultimately, freedom-from finite phenomena through achievement of unity with Absolute Spirit in the Second Negation. There is a positive, freedom-for only when it comes to conscious 'thinking' of the Absolute Idea of Spirit.*

Although having rejected Hegel's cyclical meta-narrative of Double Negation that annuls history, Strauß, nevertheless, defines the individual's freedom by the logic of negation. Finite 'freedom' is the individual's eternal distinctiveness negatively, *over against* all other things, a distinctiveness that only the conscious individual can experience for itself.

> When Spinoza asserts that the particular thing, including the particular individual, is not free because to a particular thing remains as it were only those determinations of its essence and effects that all other things leave to it, it is obvious enough, conversely, that to all other things there remains only what this one (particular) leaves over to them. To speak with Hegel, the particular's determination, which is its negation, behaves as if it were also reality. [Strauß footnotes to *Encyclop.*: § 91 f. 365, n. 33] Or to speak with Schelling, that which the individual does in time, [s/]he has [her-/]himself embraced for all eternity. *This is definitely neither a freedom of choice; nor a coercion; but the determination of the individual externally is only the other side of the determination of it by means of its own nature* (*truly, freedom is relative whereas with the absolute it consists in the identity of both sides*).[153]

As the case with Hegel, this understanding of freedom established by 'negation' over against all other finite beings is, also, only a '*freedom-from*' *that establishes that 'this' particular is not 'that' particular.*

Hegel and Strauß, then, take moral agency to be defined in terms of an 'opposition' between two regions of freedom: consciousness and nature. The freedom of finite consciousness is defined by the Hegelians as 'freedom-from': freedom-from animali-

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150. See Hegel's "Introduction" to his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: XII: 62 (Sibree, trans.: 46).

151. See Hegel's "Introduction" to his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: XII: 30 (Sibree, trans.: 18).

152. See Hegel's "Introduction" to his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: XII: 33–34, 38 (Sibree, trans.: 21, 25).

153. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 364–365.

ty, freedom-from state restrictions that impose duty, and, ultimately, freedom-from finite phenomena through achievement of unity with Absolute Spirit in the Second Negation. Yet, Hegel also speaks of freedom of moral consciousness over against nature as the conflict between reason (pure thought, *reines Denken*) and sensuousness (*Sinnlichkeit*). Moral consciousness is the "freedom" of free thought (*freies Denken* – as the freedom of Being contained in consciousness) over against nature's 'freedom.,'[154] which in turn resists 'pure thought' and contributes to ethical failure.

1) Kant on Freedom

Kant's practical reason is anchored in individual, *autonomous freedom* to initiate events that nature is incapable of accomplishing on its own, not the determination of 'the' objective truth (κατ' ἀλήθειαν) of a set of speculative, metaphysical claims based on an *a posteriori* descriptive logic.

Hegel's and Strauß' understanding of practical reason is that the individual is incapable of fulling moral duty because consciousness is limited by 'nature's freedom' whereas Strauß in the *Glaubenslehre* was influenced by Böhme claim that 'life' as requires 'evil' for it to thrive.

Kant describes the capacity of 'reflecting judgment' to be what overcomes the gap (*Kluft*) between freedom (the supersensible) and nature (sensible representations/appearances),[155] Hegel takes Kant to mean that freedom and nature consist of a dualistic division between the supersensible and the sensible, which for Hegel are governed by two kinds of freedom (one of Absolute Spirit and the other of nature);[156] reason and understanding. Hegel claims that Absolute Spirit is what bridges the gap between freedom (the supersensible) and nature (the sensible), whereas Kant employs 'reflecting judgment,' not 'reason' to think this higher identity.[157] Hegel ridicules Kant's neglect of reason by limiting absolute identity (Absolute Spirit) to a merely, indeterminate idea of reflecting judgment:

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

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154. Hegel, "The Moral View of the World:" GW II: 451 (Baillie trans.: 625): Consciousness' "[...] freedom is that of pure thought, in opposition to which [...] nature has likewise arisen as something equally free.".

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

156. In "*Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten*," Hegel distinguishes between Absolute Freedom and nature's freedom. See GW II: 457–458.

157. See Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen" GW II: 322.

the same in the identity of the concept of nature and freedom [by means *of reflecting judgment*].[158] (emphasis added)

By ignoring the significance of Kant's notion of *reflecting* judgment, Hegel and Strauß assume an idealist metaphysics without examining the mental conditions of possibility and capacities that are required for such a metaphysics. Their 'Idealism' is a dictum (*Machtspruch*), which ultimately is grounded in a literal, anthropomorphic analogy, not a description of the (granted, limited) capacities and the functioning of reason.

Yet, Kant's acknowledgment of the 'limits' to reason is no narrowing of transcendental consciousness. Without the 'limit' that is appearances, transcendental consciousness could not discover it's a *priori* synthetic capacities and structures, much less its autonomous freedom that makes it possible for a finite agent to understand and act responsibly in a finite world. In other words, the 'limits' to reason do require acknowledgement of a closed horizon to reason, but they empower the exercise of reason to understand its experience, to exercise agency as *the location for an openness in nature's deterministic causality*, and to self-select what ought to be in a finite world.[159]

According to Kant, then, *reflecting judgment* is at the heart of 'theoretical reason,' 'practical reason,' and aesthetic judgment. The Hegelian 'content'/'representations' structure is anchored solely in what Kant calls '*re-producing* judgment' (*bestimmende Urteilskraft*) that are taken to be Absolute. Consequently, from the Kantian perspective, ignoring in the midst of nature's determinism the creative freedom that is '*reflecting judgment*', which deduces 'order' out of the relationalities of appearances, Hegelian epistemology is no more grounded in 'the' Absolute Idea than it is grounded in Absolute Knowledge. It is only a system of 'empty', logical assumptions.

2) Kant on the Unity of Theoretical and Practical Reason

Not only does Kant distinguish between *theoretical reason* (understanding 'what is') and *practical reason* (understanding 'what ought to be') as both internal capacities of transcendental consciousness that are required to experience and act in the world, but Kant also takes into consideration *the process of understanding itself that unites them*. That is, his concern is not merely broader than Hegel's because he examines these two capacities of transcendental consciousness in terms of their differences in content, but

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158. Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen" GW II: 323.
159. In Chapter 9, "Missing Aesthetic Judgment," I demonstrate that reflecting judgment is at the core of aesthetic judgment, which, in turn, is no mere 'frosting on the cake' to the 'factual world'. Rather, especially the moral significance of the judgments of beauty and the sublime indicate that transcendental consciousness has a mental capacity (beauty) and a grasp of infinity and power (sublime) that, in principle, gives it the power to destroy nature. See in Chapter 9: "Missing Aesthetic Judgment" the section "General Remarks on Kant's Beauty and the Sublime" 872 ff.

he also is concerned to understand how the capacities themselves function to enable reason's extraordinary role in the natural world's order. In fact, *that which unites them is a single intellectual function: reflecting judgment or the search for concepts that are not (and cannot be) given directly in the phenomena.*

Kant identifies two domains of lawfulness:[160] the domain of theoretical reason (nature) and the domain of practical reason (responsible, moral agency grounded in autonomous freedom). Although Kant refers to a 'gap' (*Kluft*) between these two domains (theoretical and practical reason), they are not separated domains. *Theoretical and practical reason are two, inseparably complementary, activities of finite, transcendental consciousness. They are two domains of lawfulness, not simply reducible to two substances, experienced indirectly by means of appearances in transcendental consciousness. The 'gap' between and among these appearances is bridged neither by an Absolute Idea nor by a common substance but by a function of transcendental consciousness: reflecting judgment.*

Starting with appearances, transcendental consciousness is confronted with a ceaseless flow of phenomena. In the *Anweisung*, Kant distinguishes 'wit' (*Witz*) from the 'capacity judgment' (*Urteilskraft*) by defining 'wit' as an 'expanding' capacity of the imagination that sees similarity everywhere in the imagination. The capacity of ' judgment' 'narrows' the understanding by sorting out the similarities in the imagination by means of the concepts appropriate to the phenomena.[161] This latter function of the 'capacity of judgment' Kant calls in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* the capacity of reflecting judgment. It is able to 'sort out' the elements of those appearances by seeking the appropriate imperceptible concepts (and schema of concepts) for various sets of phenomena. In order to accomplish this 'sorting out,' transcendental consciousness must assume that the phenomena are governed by two lawful orders: the imperceptible, mechanical, lawful order of nature and the imperceptible lawful order of its own autonomous freedom, The latter, lawful order of autonomous freedom occurs only under the conditions of the former, the lawful order of mechanical nature. Only transcendental consciousness is capable of identifying the imperceptible, lawful orders of the two domains. The capacity that it employs to do so, Kant calls *reflecting judgment* or "the capacity for thinking of the particular as contained under the universal."[162]

Reflecting judgment is the quintessential capacity of thought that processes perceptible *particulars* by means of the system of imperceptible *universals*. Universals are not directly given in the particulars, but are deducible as imperceptible *functions* of

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160. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 174.
161. Kant, *Anweisung* Olms ed.: 123 (see 13). See 20, n. 3.: the discussion of 'wit' and the 'capacity of judgment'.
162. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 179.

the appearances.[163] 'Freedom' for Kant means the individual's *autonomous freedom* as both a freedom-from nature and a freedom-for[164] in the sense of the freedom to initiate events that nature is incapable of accomplishing on its own. In short, *the unification of freedom and nature according to Kant is an intellectual function, not an ultimate causality or substance.* It is the function that is able to seek out the imperceptible concept (and the schema of concepts) that make understanding of phenomena and responsible agency in the world possible.

    In addition to 'freedom-from' that is so central to Hegel's/Strauß' definition of 'freedom', Kant calls *autonomous* freedom[165] a *'freedom-for'* intentionally accomplishing things that nature on its own could never accomplish.[166] The term autonomy comes from the Greek, αὐτόνομος, and literally means 'living by one's own laws.' Kant writes in the *Groundwork* that "[…] *the will is not merely subject to the law but so subject to the law in that the will is also self-selecting* [*selbstgesetzgebend*] *of the law*, and for that reason the will is subject to the law (for which the will can take itself to be the initiator [*Urheber*]) in the first place."[167] (emphasis added) This formulation is ambiguous. However, in the *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant is explicit: There is a difference between establishing 'obligation' and being the actual 'creator' of the law.

    Kant writes in the *Metaphysics of Morals* that "[…] the *legislator* (*Gesetzgeber*) is the author of […] obligation, but not always the creator of the law."[168] In other words, Kant distinguishes between *categorical* and *hypothetical* obligation. A categorical imperative is a moral 'obligation.' Hypothetical imperatives are heteronomous rules and norms. The former are universal, the latter are concerned with particular (self-interested) goals. Were the individual the 'author of the law' and not merely the 'author of obligation', the law would be arbitrary [NOTE: This is Hegel's ground for dismissing Kant's moral teaching. Hegel, obviously, didn't read the *Metaphysics of Morals*]. Furthermore, Kant says that the 'ultimate' author of the law '(God) only has rights [commandments] and no duties' [obligations]. The 'ultimate' author of the law is no heteronomous author of the individual's self-selected obligation. Kant writes:

> A law (a morally practical one) is a proposition containing a categorical imperative ([universal] commandment [unlike a hypothetical imperative, which is concerned with particular goals]). The commander (imperans) [not the creator!] of a law is the legislator (*Gesetzgeber/legislator*). He [*the legislator/Gesetzgeber*] *is the author* (*Autor*) *of the obligation* according to the law, *but not always the author of the law. In the latter case, the law*

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163. On Kant's notion of concepts as functional relationalities, see the "Foreword:" 20, n. 3; Chapter 5: "Traces of an Intellectual Crisis:" 575, n. 54; and Chapter 6: "Grand Narratives of Theoretical Reason:" 709, n. 204.

164. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 581.

165. See above: "III) Freedom is only Freedom-from for Strauß 186:" 759 ff.

166. See *Critique of Pure Reason* B 580.

167. Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 431.

168. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 227.

would be positive (coincidental) and arbitrary. The law that a priori and unconditionally binds us through our own reason *can also be expressed as arising from the will of a supreme lawgiver*, that is, one who has only rights and no duties (hence the divine will), *which*, however, *only means the idea of a moral being whose will is law for all without thinking of him as the author of that law.*[169] (emphasis added)

In contrast to Hegel, according to Kant, nature is not 'free' but is governed by the necessity of 'hypothetical,' mechanical laws.[170] However, even when it comes to understanding of 'freedom-from,' Kant's *autonomous freedom* is a *finite, eminent, intentional* causal agency of 'freedom-for' that involves more than Strauß'/Hegel's definition of freedom, which they define in terms of what is an (empty) logic of 'negation' that establishes individuation among things and over against human institutions, which, ultimately, is all derived from the *infinite*, eminent, even if not intentional, causality of Absolute Spirit driven by logical 'negation'. For his part, *Kant acknowledges the creative role of God as Noumenon, but radically reins in its predicates not because he knows what the divine Noumen can and cannot do but because of the limits to reason. Ignoring those limits attributes anthropomorphic predicates literally to God. However, when it comes to humanity's freedom, he takes the far broader perspective not merely of freedom-from but also of freedom-for that constitutes 'autonomous' freedom's freedom-to intentionally initiate sequences of events that mechanical nature left on its own could never accomplish.*[171] Kant's freedom-for is the (one?) place in the natural order that is not determined by the 'blind', 'mechanical' causality of nature on its own. *Kant's autonomous freedom, then, is 'above' nature (as freedom-from) but (as freedom-for) never separable from nature's mechanical causality.*[172] Praxis consists of autonomous freedom combined with empirical laws.[173]

Kant's autonomous freedom is neither won by conquering animal instincts and human passions and self-interest nor concerned with the self's independence from state and cultural institutions. As the capacity *intentionally* to initiate sequences of events that nature cannot accomplish on its own, it is an indelible and inalienable

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169. *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 227 (in the CUP translation as AA VI: [222–223] & inserted after AA VI: 214)

170. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 280.

171. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 713: "When [...] reason is itself regarded as the determining cause (in freedom), [...] we have to proceed as if we had before us an object, not of the senses, but of the pure understanding. In this practical sphere the conditions are no longer in the series of appearances; they can be posited outside the series, and the series of states can therefore be regarded as if it had an absolute beginning, through an intelligible cause."

172. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 827: "[...] it is a necessary rule of the speculative employment of reason [that we] not pass over natural causes, and abandoning that in regard to which we can be instructed by experience, to deduce something which we know from something which entirely transcends all our [possible] knowledge."

173. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 828.

capacity (a 'right'[174]) that establishes the 'dignity'[175] and 'absolute worth'[176] of the individual regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, clan/tribe/national identity, religious (or non-religious) affiliation, age, etc. Autonomous freedom, in short, cannot be 'won;' it is possessed as a species marker, which humanity holds to a degree unlike any other species we have ever encountered.

It is difficult to believe that a Hegel or Strauß could have seriously engaged Kant and failed to encounter this central theme of autonomous *'freedom-for' intentional agency in contrast to their own 'freedom-from'* 'sensuous things' established by a 'logic of negation' or achieved by the annulment of the phenomenal world by the Second Negation."

The theme of freedom is no insignificant element in Kant's work. Already acknowledged as the key ingredient in his earliest writings,[177] one finds the distinction between a negative freedom-from and a positive freedom-for in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 581). Kant speaks of two kinds of causality: nature and creative freedom (B 560). The causality of nature is conditional whereas the causality of freedom is unconditional (B 446–447).[178] Section III of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* can be read as Kant's 'ode to freedom.' The *Critique of Practical Reason* is concerned with freedom as the ground of morality precisely because it is an unconditional causality for which the individual must self-select (but not create) the moral laws to govern its application.[179] Furthermore, the third, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* establishes *reflecting judgment* (the search for an organizing universal to an otherwise

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174. Otfried Höffe calls it the key to the 'one right by birth." See Otfried Höffe, "14. Das eine angeborene Recht" in *Kants Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*: 236–251.

175. See Kant, *Groundwork*: AA IV: 434–435.

176. See Kant, *Groundwork*: AA IV: 449–450.

177. See for example, Kant, "A New Exposition of the First Principles of Metaphysical Knowledge" AA I: 399–405.

178. This is a crucial difference that establishes the distinction between 'hypothetical' imperatives of technical skills and the pursuit of pragmatic self-interest (e.g., training for a profession) and 'categorical' imperatives of practical reason. On the distinction between hypothetical imperatives (technical and pragmatic) and categorical imperatives, see *Groundwork* AA IV: 414–421. See as well, Section "VII [Internal] Ethical Duties are of Wide Obligation, whereas [External] Duties of Right are of Narrow Obligation" in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, AA VI: 390–391. Kant distinguished between "narrower" (unrelenting, *unnachlasslichen)* and "broader" (meritorious, *verdienstlichen*) duty already in the *Groundwork* AA IV: 424.

179. In this second *Critique*, Kant establishes already in the "Preface" the centrality of creative, autonomous freedom-from nature as the reason for (the *ratio essendi*) moral principles. See *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 4* and especially the distinction between freedom as the *ratio essendi* of the moral law whereas the moral law is the basis for knowing (*ratio cognoscendi*) of autonomous freedom (AA V: 4*). Kant is clear that moral principles as the *ratio cognoscendi* of autonomous freedom do not constitute a proof of autonomous freedom. As a cause, finite, eminent, autonomous freedom is an *a priori* synthetic judgment that, as with the case of the Noumenon as a infinite, eminent freedom, is incapable of proof or disproof. What transcendental consciousness can do is provide a 'defense' of autonomous freedom on the basis of what is required not to *explain* reality but to *understand* and exercise responsible agency in a world of phenomena. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 459.

chaotic set of phenomena) as the 'bridge' that connects *the two systems of causal understanding* (not a bridging of a Hegelian, dualistic subjective-object structured abstract truth/concrete actuality).[180]

More is at stake here with Kant's notion of *autonomous freedom* than Hegel and Strauß have begun to imagine. Kant's perspective is broader because it includes transcendental consciousness' *non-zero sum, open-endedness of creativity in the midst of nature's mechanical causality* that acknowledges the unique *importance of virtue in history*.

Strauß' and Hegel's view of history from the perspective of Absolute Spirit is a perspective of indifference toward the particularities of history. Their response to the injustices of persecution, oppression, and exploitation and non-virtuous behavior is that they are annulled (*Aufgehoben*) by Absolute Spirit – in effect, they never *truly* happened. '*Truth*' for Hegel and the early Strauß consists in the emanation and influx of Absolute Spirit, not the mere representations/appearances that are the particularities of history.

IV) Evil as a Causality:

According to Hegel, 'evil' is an issue of sense perception (*sinnliche Anschauung*, sensuousness) with the realm in which moral duty is to be fulfilled limiting finite consciousness. Evil is overcome only through 'the point of indifference' that is the final negation of sensuousness and elevation to Absolute Spirit and Absolute Freedom beyond sensuousness:

> The pure concept [Absolute Spirit] […] or infinity as the abyss of nothingness in which all being sinks, has to replace the infinite pain, which before had only a historical form as the feeling upon which the religion of our day is based – *the feeling: God himself is dead* (that which was, as it were, only empirically expressed with Pascal's expressions: "la nature est telle qu'elle marque partout un Dieu perdu et dans l'homme et hors de l'homme"[" Nature is such that everywhere, both in man and outside of man, points to a lost God (and to the corruption of nature)"], *purely as a moment, but also not as more than a moment of the highest Idea*, and thus giving a philosophical existence to what was also, for instance, either moral prescription of a sacrifice of the empirical being or the concept of formal abstraction, and *thus giving philosophy the idea of Absolute Freedom and thus giving, as well, absolute suffering or speculative Good Friday, which was otherwise historical, and restore it Itself in all the truth and harshness of its godlessness, out of which […] the highest totality can and must arise in all its seriousness and from its deepest depths, at the same time all-embracing and in the most cheerful freedom of its form*.[181] (emphasis added)

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180. See "IV. On Judgment as an *a priori* Legislative Faculty" in *the* "Introduction" to the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 179–181.

181. Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen:" GW II: 432–433.

Already in "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity" of 1838, Strauß no longer employs the Hegelian 'gnostic' teaching of circularity (emanation and influx)[182] as the ultimate goal of history which treats history with the disdain of Indifferentism. Consequently, Strauß wrestled with the problem of evil in the *Glaubenslehre*. If the Christian faith is not the overcoming of evil (either by means of the 'sacrifice' of God's son to achieve the forgiveness of sin or by elevation of finite spirit to infinity beyond the evil of the world), one is confronted with evil as an inescapable aspect of historical experience.

In the second volume of the *Glaubenslehre* of 1841, Strauß turns to Jakob Böhme for a theodicy that views 'evil' as itself a necessary negation that drives life and moral progress as an open-ended historical process of the human species. Humanity is a creature in and of history, and the successes, failures, and suffering of history are essential (not merely accidental) to humanity. *Individual human consciousness is the 'place' of self-awareness, no longer the location of Hegel's 'Idea of the Race' where the infinite is recognized in the finite.*

Having since 1835 come to agree with Baur that Hegel's circular metaphysics is Gnostic,[183] Strauß draws on Böhme in the second volume of the *Glaubenslehre* to articulate what Strauß now takes to be an account of theodicy independent of Hegel's meta-narrative of Double Negation (the 'cunning of reason'). Although Böhme speaks of the goal of historical life to be an absorption again in the eternal peace of the one divine will out of which all things[184] have come, Strauß already as the conclusion of the *Glaubenslehre* spoke of this 'eternal peace' as the grasp if the infinite in every moment.[185] This can be read as a hint that the emphasis is on 'every *historical* moment as a indissoluble link in the eternality of history.

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182. On Hegel's 'Gnostic emanation and influx,' see, Chapter 7: "Practical Reason Elevates Theoretical Reason:" n. 48.

183. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 500–501.

184. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 379–380.

185. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 738–739. Here he cites Schleiermacher's *On Religion* as the source of this aphorism. Thirty years later, in *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, this ‚infinity' is taken in the sense of the 'totality' of nature, not as with Schleiermacher a 'feeling of absolute dependence' much less Hegel's Absolute Spirit. Schleiermacher wrote in *On Religion*: 101: "It is not the immortality that is outside of time, behind it, or rather after it, and which still is in time. It is the immortality which we can now have in this temporal life; it is the problem in the solution of which we are for ever to be engaged. In the midst of finitude to be one with the Infinite and in every moment to be eternal is the immortality of religion." However, in *Der alte und der neue Glaube* the issue is not immortality but 'perfection'. See *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 223: "If we know that every collection of elements in the universe, such as the life of our earth, achieves its purpose in higher and higher manifestations, but its purpose is present in itself in every moment, then the latter applies exclusively to the universe as an infinite whole. *The universe is neither more perfect in any following moment than in the preceding one, nor vice versa.* There is in it no such difference at all between earlier and later, because in it all stages and phases of development and re-development, of ascending and descending, becoming and passing away exist next to each other and complement each other infinitely." (emphasis added)

In the *Glaubenslehre*, Strauß came to Böhme over Spinoza. The problem that Böhme aided Strauß in resolving was that raised by Spinoza's having taken 'substance' to be a 'rigid death'[186] with no genuine development. However, Strauß found in Böhme a logic of negation that drives linear history (not Hegel's Gnostic circularity of emanation/influx on the part of Absolute Spirit). Furthermore, in Schleiermacher he found a logic that avoided the contradiction of Spinoza's claim that, on the one hand, all actuality comes from God whereas, on the other hand, God is not the origin of evil. What is attributable to God, according to Schleiermacher, is free-acting sensual power and God-consciousness, not sin. Sin arises because of 'the weakness' of God-consciousness, and, although certainly arranged by God, this weakness is neither sin itself nor evil, but a driving force 'forward' to the good.[187]

Strauß finds in Böhme, long before Hegel's circular logic of negation of the meta-narrative that is Absolute Spirit, the logic of negation that he takes to constitute linear-historical creation. Böhme provides Strauß with an account of linear creation that *affirms the open-endedness and significance/meaning of history* in contrast to Hegel's Indifferentism as the arena in which the cunning of reason governs the significance and meaning of history. Strauß quotes from Böhme:

> It is a highest requirement of a person – J. Böhme says – that he [*sic.*] learns to understand, how he is constituted such that good and evil drives come from him; as well, how or in what way *evil is found* in the devil, humans, and all creatures because such aversion is found *in all things in that everything bites, beats, pushes, crushes, and creates enemies and there is a repugnancy in all creatures. Every such body is in conflict with itself, which is not only the case in living things* but also in stars, elements, earth, stones, metal, foliage, grass, and wood. There is poison and malice in everything. He must also discover *that it must be so. Otherwise, there would be neither life nor movement, neither stain nor virtue, thick or thin, or any kind of perception, but everything would be a Nothing.* One finds by means of this elevated reflection that this all comes from God, that it is His own essence, which He Himself is, and that He created it Himself out of Himself: *evil belongs to development and movement, and good to love, and harshness and stubbornness to joy.*[188] (emphasis added)

Strauß continues quoting from Böhme regarding evil:

> A thing that is good in itself has no torment, desires nothing because it doesn't know anything better in or for itself, which it could desire. [...] [W]e [can] say of a good divine will [...], that He is incapable of desiring internally because He has nothing in or for Itself that could give Him something and could lead Him out of Himself in differentiation [...] by which an offensiveness could occur in what was emanated through which the good would be perceived, effective, and desired in evil. Therefore, conflict and fear, caused entirely by the mind as reflection and personal desire of reflection [...] shatter into pieces,

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186. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 383.
187. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 383.
188. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 379. Strauß footnotes to Böhme, *Von drei Principien*, Vorr. 13 f. McG: This is called making a virtue out of vice.

and out of the torment of disgust and conflict, arising out of fear, wants to be absorbed again in the eternal peace of the one divine will out of which they have come.[189]

Strauß comments:

In this respect Böhme [although he died eight years before Spinoza's birth] has already progressed beyond Spinoza. As a start, most offensive with respect to Spinozianism […] is that evil and good remain unchallenged as peacefully lying side by side with each having its rightful place: What, above all, is required is the animating of this dead mass as a process in which the unequal worth of evil is placed over against good and in which evil in a real sense is condemned. Over against Spinoza's rigid tranquility, in J. Böhme we find not only generally everything in fermenting movement but also here especially a process of real negation of evil initiated. *Evil exists solely for the purpose of driving itself out, of abolishing itself. The one, absolute life must manifest itself in particular centers in order to return to itself*; but it can return to itself only insofar as it is driven back into itself out of these particularities that are initially its going outside of itself.[190]

Strauß claims that this is what one finds, when properly understood, in Hegel:

Hegelian philosophy articulates the same thing. As certain as it is that the absolute identity of the Idea is mediated as self-affirmation by means of the negation of its negation of an absolute distinction over against Itself, hence an absolute negativity: it is just as certain and necessary that *evil is established by means of the good*. However, *insofar as the first negation must lead to the second in order that the self-identity of the Idea as an absolute affirmation be achieved, evil is both necessary and simultaneously determined to be that which should not be: not that the rupture (Entzweiung) not occur but that it should be subsequently annulled (aufgehoben)*.[191] [This annulment, I showed above, occurs as the 'cunning of reason' regardless of, or despite, conscious awareness.[192]]

Strauß comments:

Here, the reality of evil [as an idea] is no longer separated from its possibility because *good and the desire for actuality depend upon precisely the actual feeling and consciousness of evil as well as physical suffering*. This stands in contrast to the earlier perspective [of "The Moral View of the World"?!] in which evil was admitted out of consideration for [sensuous/*sinnliche*] freedom and humanity's moral nature [above sensuousness/*Sinnlichkeit*]

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189. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II, 379–380. Strauß footnotes to Böhme, *Von göttlicher Beschaulichkeit*, 1, 13 ff.

190. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 380–381.

191. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 381. Strauß footnotes to Hegel, "*Rechtsphilos*., pp. 185 ff."

192. Hegel's account in "The Moral View of the World" maintains that only grace can conquer evil (the imperfect consequences of ethics). Having rejected the notion of a Personal God outside of history who dispenses grace to overcome human sin, Hegel's own cunning of reason, anchored in a circular, logic of negation as a meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit, reduces the pain and suffering of history to indifference.

and the demand that, with the maintenance of humanity's moral nature, God ought to prevent evil.[193]

For Böhme evil necessarily governs linear history even as he acknowledges the goal of being "absorbed again in the eternal peace of the one divine will out of which they have come." Strauß took Böhme's account of history to be superior over-against Spinoza's substance (and one may add Hegel's Absolute Spirit) of 'rigid death.' *There is a general necessity that life requires defect in order to be life, and the good requires evil in order for there to be an awareness of good.* History is not a matter of indifference but the necessary condition for the achievement of good. History is required for humanity to be human. In contrast to Hegel, the goal of life is to be human, not to become God.

> *Sovereignty over the world* itself […] is […] not the determination of world events by means of an understanding outside of the world but *is to be taken as the sovereignty over cosmic forces and their relationships to one another by an immanent reason.* That humanity's skill possessed by peoples and individuals is subordinate to the guidance of providence can only mean that, given the general overlapping of spirit and nature, the development of humanity occurs for the most part under spirit's concepts, and *the accidentalness of individual acts and natural events always is balanced out by general necessity.*[194] However**,** *the individual can never be put in a situation in which her/his internal spirit is not in control and incapable of processing the circumstance in a unique configuration worthy of her/him.*[195] (emphasis added)

Neither Autonomous Freedom nor Evil in Themselves are Determining Causes in Kant

Whereas Böhme, Schleiermacher, and Hegel take evil to be ultimately positive because it is a causal force that drives the physical universe and the individual onward to the 'good,' this logic of negation that leads to good has nothing to do with Kant's notion of 'radical evil' in *Religion*. F.C. Baur and Daub take the 'principle of evil' in Kant to be ineradicably and inescapably determining of even Kant's notion of autonomous

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193. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 381.

194. Note: Necessity here is taken in the sense of the "Principle of Sufficient Reason" (*Satz vom zureichenden Grund*) κατ' ἀλήθειαν (according to truth). Necessity, when it comes to the Principle of Sufficient Reason, is what 'must be the case' in order to cause something to occur; otherwise, something could come from nothing! The term 'necessity' here is not Kant's notion of necessity as a 'wager of faith' in the conditions of possibility for humanity to be a creating, responsible agent κατ' ἄνθρωπον (that is, in accordance with the limits to human understanding). On the distinction between κατ' ἀλήθειαν and κατ' ἄνθρωπον, see the *Critique of Pure Reason* AA III, B 767–768.

195. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 383–384. In *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, as I present below (see "A bottom-up Grand Narrative of Materialism:" 627 ff.), Strauß says explicitly that in humanity nature seeks to understand itself. In other words, Strauß no longer speaks of Absolute Spirit wanting to achieve knowledge of Itself through humanity.

freedom.[196] However Kant's 'evil principle' is not to be imagined (*vorgestellt*) as a determining, innate capacity (*Anlage*) from birth as inescapably ontological[197] like Augustine's claim with respect to original sin. Although a both good and evil are capacities possessed since birth, neither freedom nor evil is ontologically determining on its own of the individual.

   In *Religion*,[198] Kant calls both evil, as well as the good[199] an 'inclination'[200] (*Hang*). In his *Menschenkunde oder philosophische Anthropologie*, he articulates more precisely his meaning of the word '*Hang*' and employs the Latin '*penchant*' (leaning, liking) to indicate *that both good and evil are always a "possibility," acquired," and "brought by the human being upon himself.*"[201] Radical evil, then, is an 'indwelling principle [possibility, not a fact] alongside the good.' He writes in *Religion*, as well: "Whenever we, therefor, say, 'The human being is by nature good,' or 'He is by nature evil,' this only means that he holds within himself a first ground (to us inscrutable) [of autonomous freedom] for the adoption of good or evil (unlawful) principles [....][202]

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196. For a Hegelian reading of Kant's evil principle as original sin, see in Chapter 8: "Strauß' Reading of Kant Over His Career:" "Kant's Internal Contradictions according to Daub" 856 ff. For F.C. Baur's reading of Kant's evil principle as original sin, see the "Introduction:" 79, n. 11. Baur writes of Kant's notion of evil that it "[...] *precedes every use of freedom given in experience, and is ingrained in man as a natural inclination which itself corrupts the root of all particular evil principles and actions, the supreme subjective cause of all principles.*" Baur, *Versöhnung* II: 575–576.

197. On the 20th C reading of Kant's notion of 'radical evil' as ontologically determining of humanity, see McGaughey, "What is 'Radical' Evil? A Reading of Ricoeur on Kant and Religion'" at https://criti calidealism.org/ricoeur-on-radical-evil-and-kant/.

198. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 28–29.

199. Overlooked by too many readers, the very title of "Part One" of *Religion* establishes that for Kant the evil and good principles are 'alongside,' one another as options for autonomous freedom. The title is: "Part One: Concerning the indwelling of the evil principle alongside the good or of the radical evil in human nature." After the 'or,' Kant leaves it to the reader to supply 'of the radical good in human nature'. This is surely part of Kant's strategy to obtain approval from the state censors for the publication of this work on religion. He knew that they would read his text without applying 'reflecting judgment' – only take what Kant means to be established by the Christian tradition's conclusions of re-produced judgment.

200. CUP translates '*Hang*' as 'propensity', which implies that it is an innate, inescapable, ontological condition that, specifically and permanently, determines humanity as 'radically evil'.

201. In the *Menschenkunde*, Kant is clear that the only thing 'permanent' about '*Hang*' is that it always remains a possibility, never a pre-determined fact. '*Hang*' is defined by its 'object' (it does not predetermine the relationship to the object), 'does not prevail in a lasting way', and 'can be prevented'. Furthermore, Kant distinguishes among 'desire' (*Neigung*), 'inclination' (*Hang*), and 'instinct' (*Instinkt*) and explicitly says that an inclination (*Hang*) is nothing permanent (and, therefore, has nothing to do with Augustine of Hippo's novel notion of 'original sin'): "Desire (*Neigung*) arises only from acquaintance with the object for which nature has given us the inclination (*Hang*). Inclination can be prevented that it does not become desire (*Neigung*) [...]. Between inclination (*Hang*) and desire (*Neigung*), one can place instinct (*Instinkt*). Inclination (*Hang*) is not a prevailing desire (*Neigung*), but a desire (*Neigung*) that arises in an opportunity, which does not prevail in any lasting way [...]" Kant, *Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1112; Olms ed.: 299–300.

202. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 21.

Kant's claim that humanity is essentially 'good' is not an ontological claim that the morally 'radical' good dominates over the morally 'radically' evil of humanity (no more than the morally 'radically' evil dominates over the morally 'radically' good). Autonomous freedom must always and already precede every choice between a 'moral-ly' good or a 'morally' evil principle that confronts, consciously or unconsciously, the individual every time s/he gives her-/himself permission to act.[203]

The 'innate goodness' of humanity 'remains inexplicable' because it is the capacity (*Anlage*) of autonomous freedom, which as an *a priori pure* idea of reason is incapable of proof or disproof[204] although it is capable of defense:[205] "[…] [T]he original capacity [*Anlage* of freedom] (which none other than the human being himself could have corrupted, if this corruption is to be imputed to him) is an asset to everyone [*eine Anlage zum Guten*]."[206] (Parentheses come from Kant) Kant explicitly adds:

> Humanity is created good, this can only mean nothing more than: He [*sic*.] had been creat-ed for the good and the original capacity (*Anlage*) is [an amoral] good; humanity is not thereby good as such but brings it about that he becomes either good or evil, according as he either incorporates or does not incorporate into his principles the incentives contained in that capacity (*Anlage*) (and this must be left entirely to his free choice)."[207]

Kant underscores: "[…] we must presuppose in all this that there is still a germ of goodness left in its entire purity, a germ that cannot be extirpated or corrupted."[208] It is not good 'by moral choice' but *amorally* good. In fact, neither 'radical evil' nor 'radical good' in themselves are moral. Autonomous freedom, and 'radical evil' as well as 'radical good' are morally 'good,' but *amorally* good: without the capacity (*Anlage*) of autonomous freedom and the inclination (*Hang*) to invoke an evil or good maxim to give ourselves permission to act, we could not be transcendental consciousness. We would only be able to act by instinct, or we would be mechanical automatons.

In other words, neither 'radical evil' nor 'radical good' are themselves causal, ac-cording to Kant. The causality of morality is deeper than either evil or good principles. It is the causality of autonomous freedom.

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203. See Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 35: "[…] the relation of the free power of choice (the concept of which is not empirical) must be cognized *a priori* from the concept of evil [… maxims]" as well as *a priori* from the concept of good principles. Hence, it is a 'good asset' for everyone.

204. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 586.

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

206. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 43. It is ‚good' that humanity possesses autonomous freedom because without it humanity cannot be what it is. However, this is neither a *morally determining* goodness nor is the 'good' an objective goal. Rather, is is an 'asset for everyone' because it is the 'ground' of autonomous, creative freedom-from and freedom-for without which there can be no assumption of personal responsibility for one's agency. Hence, it is a 'good asset' (capacity, *Anlage*) for everyone.

207. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 44.

208. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 45.

V) Moral Consequentialism:

The themes of human perfectibility and material progress provide a framework for discerning not only the trajectory of Strauß' metaphysical odyssey but also his understanding of ethics. In the *LJ* of 1835, the traditional Personal Theism theme of perfectibility by means of atonement in terms of the issue of personal sins is replaced by the Hegelian point of indifference of the Second Negation by Spirit that escapes the pain and suffering of this life. We can see the decline of this theory of atonement, though, within a couple of years of the *LJ* as Strauß seeks an alternative metaphysics. What remains constant as of "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity" is the increasing significance of ethics in his understanding of religion. In 1838, Jesus is a 'religious genius' of internal, rational harmony and unsurpassable, if not exclusive, moral teacher. The metaphysical harmony of reason in the universe is retained in 1841 with the *Glaubenslehre*. In 1864 with the *LJEGP*, the 'religion of Jesus' is replaced by the 'religion of humanity,' that is, with history constituting the framework of religion and with the recognition that Jesus as a moral teacher is surpassable because there are crucial moral themes that he never addressed. This results in Strauß' emphasis on moral improvement as an issue of the species in acknowledgement that the individual is and remains ethically imperfect – the ethical theme from Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" that Strauß retains throughout his career.

With *The Old and the New Faith* of 1872, however, we are confronted with the full product of the importance of history for Strauß and the seed of his materialist shift planted in 1838. Strauß' *new faith* (not knowledge) in 1872, which, rather than finite consciousness constituting the inward turn to Absolute Spirit as the 'point of indifference,' now conceives humanity as the point where nature (not Absolute Spirit) turns inward on itself' to continue its creative advance. Strauß retains his ethical pessimism here by acknowledging the unattainability of individual moral perfection, but he stresses the importance of individual ethical effort *for the sake of the species*. The individual cannot be an individual without society so that the influence of the species on the individual assumes moral weight. The species is what grounds moral improvement and saves the notion of moral improvement from being merely an 'empty abstraction.' The species with its capacity to discern ever new moral principles as a consequence of its ever changing historical context(s) *combined with* the communal influence on the individual's agency becomes the historical location of moral improvement.

When it comes to the perfectibility of humanity, a clear shift is discernable within the common thread that 'sensuousness' is the fundamental 'problem for humanity that drives the search for its solution. Strauß' *LJ* of 1835 is concerned with 'spiritual' perfectibility by means of his universal, inclusive Christology that leads to Absolute Knowledge and divinization beyond sensuousness.

In the *LJ*, Strauß asserts that Christology is 'not in the mind alone,'[209] but it is the 'idea of the race as "the infinite manifesting itself in the finite and finite spirit remembering its infinitude" *in history*[210] *One cannot achieve ethical perfection (understood as Hegel formulates it in "The Moral View of the World" as consequentialism), but one can achieve Absolute Knowledge and the Absolute Freedom of Absolute Spirit*, again, as a conscious experience in history[211] 'Salvation' is acquiring knowledge of Absolute Spirit. Salvation is a matter of theoretical, not practical reason.

As part of his *inclusive* Christology formulation in the *LJ*, Strauß claims:

> Humanity is the union of the two natures—God become man, the infinite manifesting itself in the finite, and the finite spirit remembering its infinitude. It is the child of the visible Mother and the invisible Father, Nature and Spirit [...] It is sinless existence, for the course of its development is a blameless one, *pollution cleaves to the individual only, and does not touch the race or its history*. It is Humanity that dies, rises, and ascends to heaven, for from the negation of its phenomenal life there ever proceeds a higher spiritual life; from the suppression of its mortality as a personal, national, and terrestrial spirit, arises its union with the infinite spirit of the heavens [...] [B]y the kindling within him of the idea of Humanity, the individual *man participates in the divinely human life of the species*.[212] Now the main element of that idea is, that the negation of the merely natural and sensual life, which is itself the negation of the spirit (the negation of negation, therefore), is the sole way to true spiritual life.[213] (emphasis added)

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209. F.C. Baur writes: "For Kantian religion itself, regardless of all antipathy against Judaism, is only a religion of the law because it (in accordance with the essence of the law) can never overcome [*aufheben*] the contradiction between the individual with her/his moral 'should', and also, as long as the Savior disappears into an unachievable distant future of an ideal, [Kant's religion] leaves the divine and human as never arriving at a unity." Baur, *Gnosis*: 667–668. These themes of an unachievable 'should' and achievement of the unity of the divine and human are Hegelian. Baur is a Hegelian, and his criticism of Hegel is a matter of Christology, not theology or anthropology. Baur accuses Hegel of ignoring history whereas Baur views Christology as all those individuals (the 'body of Christ') who in the infinite open-endedness of history recognize the unity of finite and infinite Spirit in themselves as the God/Man. See Baur, *Gnosis*: 721; see as well, 736, n. 34 (actually 738).

210. Strauß, *LJ*: 780.

211. In "On the Transient and Permanent in Christianity" three years after the *LJ*, Strauß continues to place humanity's consciousness at the pinnacle of reality based on reason's ability to grasp the 'infinite' in the 'finite' in history, however, *without the denial or 'overcoming' of history as with Hegel*. In the *Glaubenslehre* of 1841, Strauß is still clinging to the anthropomorphic grounding of religion in a human capacity: reason. However, his engagement of Feuerbach and co., though, undermined that ground of anthropomorphic projection and focus on the exceptional role of consciousness and reason, and it took him twenty years before attempting another formulation of 'religion' in *LJEGP* of 1864.

212. This can be labelled an 'Arian' Christology. Strauß writes two pages earlier: "the believer, finding himself environed with the conditions of nature, must, like Christ, do to nature – but only inwardly, as Christ did outwardly, – must spiritually crucify himself and be buried with Christ, that *by the virtual suppression of his own instinctiveness* [*Aufhebung der Natürlichkeit*]*, he may become, in so far as he is a spirit, identical with himself, and participate in the bliss and glory of Christ*." Strauß, *LJ*: 778.

213. Strauß, *LJ*: 780.

Here, one sees that the Christological issue for Strauß is *not* a solution to the *negative* failure of the individual's sin but the *positive*, 'divinization' or 'elevation' of humanity into Absolute Spirit achieved fy finite consciousness. This can occur, Strauß maintains, because '*pollution cleaves to the individual only, and does not touch the race or its history*.' In other words, in the *LJ*, humanity is 'ontologically' 'pure' because it is inseparable from Absolute Spirit. Christianity is not concerned with the ethical perfection of the individual but with a development of spiritual awareness (gnosis) in the species.

In the *LJ*, Strauß insists that Kant's moral religion of 'practical reason' is concerned only with individual, moral improvement, not spiritual enlightenment.

> Science (Speculative Metaphysics[214]) has perceived that to convert ideas simply into an obligatory possibility [e.g., *Moralität*], to which no reality [Being (*Sein*)] corresponds, is in fact to annihilate them; just as it would be to render the infinite finite, [were one] to represent it as that which lies beyond the finite. Science has conceived that the infinite has its existence in the alternate production and extinction of the finite [e.g., *Sittlichkeit*]; that the idea is realized only in the entire series of its manifestations; that nothing can come into existence which does not already essentially exist; and, therefore, that it is not to be required of man, that he should reconcile himself with God, and assimilate his sentiments to the divine, unless this reconciliation and this assimilation are already virtually effected [divinization].[215]

Reconciliation with God in 1835 is an issue of epistemology (consciousness), not morality. Because the Christ is an 'ideal,' reconciliation does not need, and even rejects the claim of, an exclusive, historical event to establish, much less prove, its possibility.

Having given up on the Hegelian meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit within three years of the publication of the *LJ*, he attempts an alternative understanding of 'spiritual perfectibility' of consciousness by the writing of "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity" of 1838.[216] Here, the ultimate achievement of humanity is 'God-consciousness,' not in the Schleiermachian sense of 'perfect God-consciousness' anchored in the 'feeling of absolute dependence,' but with respect to the role of reason in history expressed by the notion of immortality as the experience of 'the eternal in every moment.' This intellectual/spiritual moment of humanity's capacity to grasp the infinite in the finite, the eternal 'harmony' within the 'chaos' of history is retained, however increasingly fading, down to *The Old and the New Faith* of 1872. Strauß' final religious formulation was a faith in nature (that is, the material order of history). Nature eclipses consciousness, which, in turn, is only a product of, and (even unintentional) contributor to, nature's historical development.

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214. ‚Science' here is the system of Absolute Knowledge that is the 'new' Speculative Metaphysics of Hegelianism.

215. Strauß, *LJ*: 776–777.

216. See in Chapter 5: "Traces of an Intellectual Crisis" the section "l838 "On the Transient and Permanent in Christianity" 216 ff.

However, in addition to the formulation of the perfectibility of humanity spiritual-ly/intellectually, there is an accompanying, second notion of perfectibility formulated as a 'moral' perfectibility as Strauß wrestles with the 'problem' of sensuousness. In the *LJ*, as I pointed out above, Strauß viewed 'moral perfectibility' of the individual as impossible because 'moral pollution' is tied to the individual. However, moral pollution of the individual constitutes no limitation *for the species* because the species is the point of spiritual liberation from sensuousness. "It is humanity that dies, rises, and ascends to heaven, for from the negation of its phenomena life there ever proceeds a higher spiritual life; from the suppression of its mortality as a personal, national, and terrestrial spirit, arises its union with the infinite spirit of the heavens."[217]

With the *LJEGP* of 1864, Strauß modifies his understanding of 'moral perfectibili-ty' consistent with his understanding of Jesus as a moral teacher among other moral teachers in "On the Transient and Permanent in Christianity" of 1838. In the *LJEGP*, though, the theme of perfectibility of the species is not understood as a 'spiritual liberation from sensuousness' to unity with the godhead as the case in the *LJ* of 1835 but is clearly formulated in terms of the 'moral development *of the species*' as the location *in history* where new moral principles are formulated in order to govern human agency in its new historical contexts.

In the *LJEGP* of 1864, one can see the influence of the 'turn to Kant' movement among his friends as Strauß employs Kantian vocabulary of the "idea of human perfection" in history in terms of morality (practical reason):

> The idea of human perfection, as the case with all ideas, is *initially given to human spirit only as a capacity* [*Anlage*], which receives its formation [McG: that is, actual achievement] gradually through experience. Among different peoples it appears in different designs in accordance with their natural character,[218] their climatic and historical conditions,

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217. Strauß, *LJ*: 780.

218. Here, obviously, Strauß is viewing 'peoples'/'nations' in terms of Hegelian consequentialism. A 'people' and/or a 'religion' manifest Absolute Spirit in form (representations) as a consequence of each 'nation's' and each 'religion's' particularities. In "Schleiermacher und Daub," Strauß summarized Daub's Hegelian understanding of religion as inseparable from a 'people': "Entering into finiteness, religion cannot but be variously determined according to *the different character of the peoples*. The principle: religion enters into a single people is only the reverse of the other principle: a people comes to the consciousness of its supersensible essence (see in this respect [… Daub's]"Essay on Theology and its Encyclopedia," *Studien*, Vol. II: 58 ff.)" Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub": 60 (emphasis added). "A people as a whole, that is, not only the totality of all its members living at the same time, but also of all successive generations, can only ever be religious, because it is one and the same with its religion, as with its higher self-consciousness. However, when it comes to the individual members of a people, this consciousness can be more or less alive, brighter or duller – according to which they are pious or impious, believing or superstitious and unbelieving. In this fashion those particular organs of religion in their public activity can either agree with the people's religion or be opposed to it: and this difference [...] is [...] the difference between orthodoxy and heterodoxy." Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub": 61. See Hegel's discussion of consequentialist, 'absolute ethics' (in contrast to abstract, moral duty) as the ,totality of a people.; that defines a ,nation' in "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 481.

and enables us to observe progress throughout the course of history [...] Every ethically extraordinary person, every great thinker who made the object of his [*sic.*] concern humanity's practical agency contributed in parochial and expansive spheres to revise, supplement, and mold this perfection. *Among these developers of the ideal of humanity we find, unequivocally, Jesus first and foremost [...] To be sure, the Christian community originated out of entirely different concerns than the ethical meaning of its founder [...] However, the features of patience, mildness, and love of humanity*, which Jesus made prominent, *have, nonetheless, not been lost. Out of them could germinate and constitute everything that we now call humanity.*[219] (emphasis added)

Strauß emphasizes that, from the identifiable, historical features of Jesus' ministry, one does not find the full, Spiritual perfection of humanity as the God/Man, a teaching, which pushed Jesus' ethical teaching into the background and subjected "[...] ethical duties that can have validity only in that they lie in the nature of humanity under the erroneous light of positive, divine commandments."[220]

> For that reason, the critic [...] does a good and necessary task, when he [*sic.*] clears away all that, which turned Jesus into a superhuman being, possibly with good intention and initially even beneficially, but in the course of time is destructive and now downright pernicious delusion and retrieves a picture of the historical Jesus in his simply human features, as best as he is able. However, when it comes to their salvation, the critic refers to the ideal Christ, to that ethical model of which the historical Jesus first brought several main features to light,[221] but which, as a capacity [*Anlage*], belongs just as much to the general dowry of our species as its further development and perfection can only be the task and the work of the whole of mankind.[222]

Here in the *LJEGP*, Strauß employs the theme of the perfectibility of humanity that he had formulated in "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity" as a historically natural, ethical project of the species.[223] In "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity," the pinnacle of the ascending stages of human development is no longer limited to the individual's self-awareness of eternal Spirit (the divine Idea) in humanity but shifts from the 'religion of Jeus' to the 'religion of humanity' as moral advancement with respect to the species.[224]

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219. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 625.
220. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 627.
221. In other words, Strauß does not claim that Jesus taught 'the' perfect ethical system. In fact, Strauß points out that vital elements of human life are not addressed in the material that we have from Jesus. These include, family life, the economy, art, and the 'good life'. (See *LJEGP*: 626.) In *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, he adds a discussion of national and international politics, social democracy and inequality, voting rights, the death penalty, and the church as a state institution. See section "IV: How do we structure our life?" in *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 225–296.
222. Concluding lines of Strauß' *LJEGP*: 627.
223. See §§ 29 – 31 of " Vergängliches und Bleibendes" (1838): 126–132.
224. See § 28 of " Vergängliches und Bleibendes" (1838): 123–26.

Having acknowledged in Section 99 of his *LJEGP* that there are surely elements to the gospel narratives that give us historical certainties with regard to Jesus of Nazareth, a theme that he embraced unequivocally in "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity," Strauß immediately qualifies here in the *LJEGP* that these certainties a) are few in number and b) they are by no means adequate to establish anything close to certainty about Jesus as miracle worker and the superhuman deeds of his fate as claimed by Church doctrine.[225] In 'our age,' no rebuttal is required that humanity's blessedness depends upon belief in such things as having occurred as historical facts. He then proceeds to emphasize 'blessedness' is a question of 'achievement' (the consequences of agency):

> [...] *blessedness* [*Seligkeit*] [...] (or more reasonably expressed, *the possibility that a person achieves the purpose of his [sic.] implanted abilities and that a person experiences proportionally the corresponding measure of well-being as a consequence*) cannot depend upon [...] knowledge of facts [about the historical Jesus] about which hardly anyone among thousands is able to make a thorough investigation, and even he [*sic.*] is not able to come to any certain conclusion. Rather, *as certain as the fulfilment of human abilities is generally and for each individual achievable, the conditions for that to occur must be satisfied*. That is, all that is external to and prior to the will, which moves itself to achieve its goal, as well as the knowledge of the goal itself *must be given* to the person. *The goal cannot be merely some accidental knowledge derived from external historical facts. It must be a necessary, rational knowledge, which each person can find in himself*.[226] (Strauß' parenthetical comment in the first three lines) (emphasis added)

Astonishingly absent from this definition of 'blessedness' [*Seligkeit*] is the theme of the assumption of moral responsibility for one's personal agency when it comes to achieving one's purpose in life in correlation with one's abilities. His formulation with respect to 'blessedness' as an ideal of moral duty is deliberately linked to its unattainability as an always yet to be attained goal:

> Like Spinoza, Kant also distinguished the historical person of Jesus from the ideal, lying in human reason, of humanity pleasing to God, or of the moral disposition in all its purity to the extent possible in a world dependent on needs and inclinations.[227] It is *the general duty of humanity* to rise to this ideal; but although we cannot imagine it otherwise than in the image of a perfect man, and although it is not impossible that such a man once lived, because we should all resemble that ideal, it is not important that we know of the existence of such a man or believe in it, but *only that we hold that ideal before us, recognize it as obligatory for us, and strive to make ourselves like it*.[228] (emphasis added)

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225. In *The Old and the New Faith*, Strauß has given up on the attempt to identify the teaching of Jesus much less the writing of a biography of him based on the gospels. See Strauß, *The Old and the New Faith*: 58 (as well, 53) and the "Epilogue": 33–34.

226. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 624.

227. Strauß' nod to Hegel's "The Moral View of the World."

228. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 624.

In fact, Strauß immediately links the realization of the 'ideal' with 'cultural development,' not with individual achievement:

> The idea of human perfection, like other ideas, is initially given to the human spirit only as a capacity [*Anlage*], which gradually receives its formation through experience. It shows in different peoples, according to their natural condition, their climatic and historical conditions, a different formation, and lets us notice a progress in the course of history.[229]

Elevation to this ideal is a universal human duty, and it now "constitutes the development from the religion of the Christ to the religion of humanity."[230] T

> [...] on the front line of educators of the ideal for humanity, one finds Jesus [...] Admittedly, the religious community [i.e., Christianity] went on to be concerned about entirely different things than the ethical meaning of its founder [...] However, the features of patience, leniency, and human love were preserved and are what out of all that has come down to us could germinate what we now call humanity.[231]

> This distinction of the historical Christ from the ideal, that is, the archetype of man that lies in human reason, as he should be, and the transfer of salvific faith from the former to the latter, is the inevitable result of the newer development of the mind; it is the further *development of the religion of Christ into the religion of humanity*, toward which all the nobler endeavors of this time are directed.[232] (emphasis added)

Strauß claims that, in what is portrayed of Jesus in the gospels, there are gaps when it comes to the moral ideal of humanity. Whereas we find "completely developed" the ideal with respect to love of God and one's neighbor, the purity of the heart and mind of the individual, there is no guidance with respect to life in the family (from a teacher who had no family of his own); the relationship of the individual to the state is relegated to passivity; he rejected all concern with finances as well as his own profession; and everything to do with art and appreciation of beauty in life was left completely outside his scope of view.[233] Strauß insists that "here supplementation is required not only from other cultures but also from other epochs, states, and educational systems [...]"[234]

If one ignores in the teaching of Jesus the seeds of the religion of humanity with respect to the moral ideal and concentrates only on him as the exclusive, moral exemplar,

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229. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 625.
230. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 626.
231. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 625–626.
232. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 625.
233. See Strauß, *LJEGP*: 626.
234. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 626.

> [...] all that upon which everything depends [for the religion of humanity] is pushed to the back row. The ethical significance of Jesus in its complete potency is stunted, including ethical duties, which have legitimacy only in that they lie in the nature of humanity, and placed in a false light. For that reason, the critic [...] performs a good and necessary task when he [*sic.*] tries, as best as possible to restore the picture of the historical Jesus in its sober human traits and, therefore, eliminates all that which turns Jesus into a superhuman creature, even when initially well intended and originally even beneficial but in the end is detrimental and, today, is poisonous madness. *When it comes to salvation, though, the critic's task is to refer humanity to the ideal Christ, to that ethical model, which the historical Jesus brought to light in many of its main features but whose capacity [Anlage] belongs as much to the endowment of our species [Gattung] as its further improvement and completion can only be the purpose [Aufgabe] and the work of the whole of humanity.*[235] (emphasis added)

The understanding of moral improvement/perfectibility as a concern of the species as the location for the emergence of moral principles, rather than the moral improvement/perfectibility of the individual is at the core of Strauß' understanding of a non-Christologically centered 'religion' in *The Old and the New Faith* at the end of his career, as well:

> In all forms, in innumerable repetitions, humans learned that in a human society no member's life, his fought-for booty, or property is secure, if there are no limits to raw desire in the relationship among groups. From the expensive and bloodily purchased experience of what is harmful and what is beneficial, first customs, then laws, and finally a moral doctrine of duties gradually arises peoples.[236]

In 1872, *Strauß now embraces an alternative not only to Traditional Theism's exclusive Christology or to Böhme's goal of absorption in the divine will, but also to Spinoza's 'dead substance,' to Hegel's Gnostic and Indifferentist meta-narrative of the Double Negation of Absolute Spirit, as well as to the unrealizable divine standard of morality, of Hegel's "The Moral View of the World," Baur's church as the 'body of Christ that is a singular 'people,' and, finally, to Schleiermacher's 'feeling of absolute dependence.'* Moral perfectibility is not associated, though, with the moral improvement of the individual any more than Strauß was concerned with the notion of failed, individual ethical effort in the *LJ*. Clearly, in *Der alte und der neue Glaube (The Old and the New Faith)*, becoming human occurs 'only' within linear history. Although the individual's ethical life can only fall short of moral duty because of the limits of the individual and of her/his particular situation, yet, with 'evil' (negation) as the motor that drives 'progress,' the perspective on morality 'must' shift to the trajectory of the history of the species as it cultivates and adapts its moral principles to its ever-changing historical context, not a focus on the mere individual and her/his (failed) efforts.

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235. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 627.
236. Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 229.

However, the moral improvement of the species as the capacity to discern ever new moral principles in changing historical circumstances is embedded, in an entirely new theme: *an emphasis on nature's material 'progress' that accounts for the emergence of consciousness in nature.* The moral development of the species is neither on Spirit's Self-Awareness in humanity nor on a development from a Christ-centered religion to the religion of humanity. Nature's material history replaces the exclusive status of consciousness in itself.

> "The most important general conclusion [...] that comparative Geology and Paleontology" – and we could add, the natural sciences altogether – "reveal to us is that *nature is ruled by the law of progress* [...], and this progress [...] is perhaps the most comforting truth that science has ever discovered. In it, *natures internal striving according to a tireless progressive improvement and refinement* of its organic forms, might also lie the authentic proof of nature's divinity, a great and beautiful word," [Moriz] Wagner adds, "for, admittedly, the natural scientist gives the term an essentially different meaning from that of the priest of a so-called revealed religion."[237] (emphasis added)

Clearly under the influence of Moriz Wagner, Strauß criticizes what he takes to be Kant's claim that there will never be a material explanation for organic phenomena to claim that the natural sciences have not only a material explanation of the organic but also have so-good-as having successfully generated organic phenomena out of mere inorganic matter. Strauß portrays nature in *The Old and the New Faith* as a bottom-up, material process and defends hylozoism, the idea that matter is able to generate organic living things out of itself:

> Let us remember here the Kantian aphorism: "give me matter; I will show you how a world can arise from it;" an enterprise, which he claimed could be carried out with respect to the inorganic world but must fail already with "a caterpillar." *Today's science has not only shown us how the caterpillar but even man arises from matter; though granted it has not yet accomplished it, science has found the sure way for accomplishing it in the future.*[238] (emphasis added)

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237. Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 239–240. Moriz Wagner (d. 1887) was a German explorer, collector, geographer and natural historian.

238. Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 216. The reference to a caterpillar means that the ultimate source of Strauß' recollection is Kant's *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens, or Essay on the Constitution and Mechanical Origin of the Entire Universe, treated in accordance with Newtonian Principle* because this is the only place where his example is a caterpillar – although Kant includes here 'weeds' and 'insects' as well as the caterpillar. Kant wrote: "*Give me matter, I will build a world out of it*! In other words, give me matter, I will demonstrate to you how a world ought to arise from it. For, when matter capable of an essential power of attraction is present, it is not difficult to determine those causes that could have contributed, generally speaking, to the shaping of a world system. One knows all that is needed for such a determination [...] *However, can one do the same when it comes to the most simple plants or insect? Is one able to say: Give me matter; I will demonstrate to you how a caterpillar can be generated? Is one not left stuck in ignorance with the very first step here when it comes to understanding the true composition of the object and the entanglements of its*

Nature has reached "its highest point" with humanity. "Because [... *nature*] *cannot rise above itself, it turns inward on itself*. Reflecting in oneself is quite a good expression from Hegel.[239] Nature already feels itself in an animal, but it also wants to know itself."[240] (emphasis added) Note the difference in Strauß' formulation here, though: It is no longer Spirit that wants to 'know itself' (as the case with Hegel) but nature!

Nonetheless, the individual's struggle ethically is with sensuousness. An individual cannot escape animality, but s/he has been endowed with a moral capacity that makes possible its elevation above animal sensuousness:

> In the individual, nature has not wanted merely in general to move upwards. She has wanted to go beyond herself. *The individual should not merely be only an animal, but* [...] *more and something better. The proof that he should is that he can.* [...] [H]e should refine his animality ['the raw, gruesome struggle of existence] according to the standards of his higher capacities [*Anlagen*] and soften his animality toward his own kind, especially through the consciousness of the inseparability and mutual obligation of the species [*Gattung*].[241] (emphasis added)

Remarkable here is the claim that humanity 'can' live up to the moral 'should.' This is precisely what Hegel had denied in "The Moral View of the World." Yet, Strauß skirts the contradiction, here as well, by shifting the focus from the individual to the species. 'Over time' the species is capable of moral progress as it responds responsibly to an ever-changing historical context.[242]

The individual's moral capacity is the presence of innate virtues, which are a version of Plato's Four Cardinal Virtues of wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice,

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existing multiplicity? It should surprise no one when I require of myself to say: the construction of all the stars and planets, the cause of their movement, in short, *the origin of the entire make-up of the presently experienced world order can be more easily understood, before the generating of a single weed or caterpillar will become completely clear*." (emphasis added) (AA I: 229–230) Kant addresses the theme in his later works, for example, in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* he speaks of *a blade of grass* (AA V: 400) and his example in his *Lectures on Philosophical Theology* (Pölitz) is a moth (AA PR: 125). Strauß' reference here, though, is vague enough that perhaps he has it from some other source than a text from Kant. The *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* was not actually published until 1795, 40 years after its writing. The publisher went bankrupt in 1755 during the production of the text with Kant receiving the only copy. See Volker Gerhardt, *Immanuel Kant: Vernunft und Leben* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2007): 35.

239. Surely, an ironic aside at this point.

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

241. Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 241.

242. Strauß' belief here is in sharp contrast to Kant's rejection in *Der Streit der Fakultäten* (*Conflict of the Faculties*) of the pessimistic alternative of humanity's permanent decline ("Terrorism"), the optimistic alternative of humanity's gradual improvement ("Eudaimonism"/"Chilianism"), as well as a status of moral stagnation ("Abderitism") to affirm the ambiguous moral rise and fall because morality is grounded in the capacity (*Anlage*) of autonomous freedom, which can only be free if it is inescapably confronted with the choice between a good and an evil principle to govern its agency. See the section " Classification of the concept of what is to be foreseen for the future" in Part II *Der Streit der Fakultäten* AA VII: 81 ff.

without attributing them to Plato[243] or accounting for how they can arise from matter.[244] To be sure, Strauß stresses that humanity did not 'fall' from perfection but slowly rises out of the realm of animality.[245] He now specifies the moral capacity (*Anlage*) of innate virtues serves as an undeveloped basis for the climb above animality:

> [...] we [see] [...] already in their semi-animality two features given [*angelegt*], which appear to us as *two human*, cardinal virtues: *courage and justice*. And where they once occur, there it cannot fail that soon also the *two others, namely, perseverance and thoughtfulness*, will branch off from them. At the same time, however, we recognize how moral qualities can develop only in society.[246] (emphasis added)

Humanity is to "be master of nature" by which Strauß does not mean exploitation and capricious dominance over nature but dominance in terms of control over humanity's own nature: sensuousness.[247] Humanity shares sensuousness with other animals, but

> [...] the higher an animal is [in the hierarchy of animals], the less it is shaped directly by every possible attraction. A higher-ordered animal can remember what it did and the consequences of its response to an attraction in the past to adjust its actions in the present. This capacity is what establishes the animal's educational aptitude [...] The animal remembers, compares different occurrences and adjusts its behavior accordingly, but it is not able to form from the experience a general principle, an actual thought.[248]

The strongest defense against sensuousness, Strauß writes, is humanity's mental capacity.[249]

> One can think of the generic term [*Gattungsbegriff*] humanity in different ways, and, consequently, therein determines how a person is brought to think in a proper manner [...] *Humanity's position at the pinnacle of nature, its capacity to resist sensuous impulses,* lies in the generic term humanity. Further, however, the solidarity of humanity lies [...] in the fact that only through cooperation does the individual become a human being [...] and constructs an interlinked community through solidarity.[250]

There is no talk here of humanity's definition in terms of an inclusive Christology in which every individual is called to think the content (*Inhalt*) of incarnation as Absolute Spirit for her-/himself in history. Humanity is defined as a social being in

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243. See Plato, *Republic* (426–435).

244. Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 228.

245. Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 225.

246. Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 228. Note here that Strauß is suggesting that Plato's Four Cardinal Virtues (from Book IV of the *Republic* 426–435) are inexplicably assumed to be capacities 'given' mysteriously available to humanity but, apparently, no other species.

247. See Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 244.

248. Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 244.

249. See Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 245–246.

250. Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*. 246–247.

linear history ever cultivating new moral principles to respond to a changing world and, consequently, moral improvement applies to the species as a whole; a social being who understands the task of a human animal is to resist mere sensuousness in mutual solidarity with others who properly understand what it means to be 'elevated above nature' through education and reflection. Such a conscious, reflecting animal, Strauß claims, 'has a solid ground for his [*sic.*] moral conduct':

> Only through mutual assistance is the individual elevated above nature; only insofar as he [sic.] recognizes and interacts with others as the same creatures as he, can he maintain and improve himself further. *Whoever thinks the generic term* species [*Gattungsbegriff*] *in this manner and grasps its complete content* [*Inhalt*] *has a solid ground for his moral conduct.*[251]

Starting from the Hegelian notion of Spirit moving to self-awareness through its externalization in matter in the *LJ*, one can identify a dramatic transformation in Strauß' understanding of *'human development' as a historical, natural 'progress'* that already shapes "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity." In the *LJEGP*, Christianity is no longer Christ-centered (a 'religion of the Christ as the God/Man) but has become the 'religion of humanity,' which consists in the moral improvement of the entire human species as it is required to adapt its moral principles to ever-changing historical circumstance as the counter-weight to individual ethical shortcomings. Finally, in *The Old and the New Faith*, Strauß embraces a materialist reductionism that views the 'progress of material nature' to be the cause of, and to consist in, the emergence of the organic out of matter and in human consciousness 'turns inward' to continue nature's onward advance both in terms of sovereignty over nature and in terms of the moral improvement of the species. Nature replaces Spirit, and over his entire career, Strauß is an ethical consequentialist.

1) Kant is no Consequentialist

Hegel and Strauß are ethical consequentialists because they measure moral status in terms of moral perfection defined by external, ethical achievement (rather, non-achievement). On the basis of this consequentialist ethic that distinguishes between perfect moral duty and imperfect ethical achievement, Strauß across his career distinguishes between the ethical status of the individual and the species. To be sure, in the *LJ*, Strauß places emphasis on the species not with respect to failed ethical achievement but as the location of historical consciousness of Absolute Spirit. His Christology in the *LJ* of the species is a universally inclusive Christology grounded in the *positive* achievement of one's divine status *beyond history* (as with other Hegelians) but not as an escape from history. Although the function of 'species' changes across

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251. Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*: 247.

his career, Strauß retains his conviction articulated in the *LJ* that ethics 'pollutes' the individual, not the species.[252] Shifting from Christology to morality as of "The Permanent and Transient in Christianity," Strauß locates *objective*, moral improvement as the goal of the *species*, not the individual, precisely because he retains the notion of his consequentialist ethics. Humanity is ethically imperfect because of the limits placed on the individual by nature. Humanity's moral improvement in history is a collective achievement (or non-achievement) by the species.

For Kant, morality is anchored by a 180° opposite perspective to consequentialism. Kant, in contrast, is amoral 'intentionalist' (one could say 'archaeologist').[253] What matters morally for Kant is that over which the individual has moral control: the maxim on the basis of which s/he gives her-/himself permission to act. Kant writes in *Menschenkunde*:

The good is invisible everywhere because it is always present in thinking. We judge everything by the benefit that springs from the action [...]. [However,] that which rewards us for the goodness of character itself is the peace of mind and the applause that one gives oneself. This is the greatest and most excellent reward.[254]

The individual only has direct access in the senses to a world of appearances – not 'reality' as it is in itself. Even before the individual seeks to gain understanding, her/his transcendental consciousness is limited because its understanding is a matter of non-epistemic 'faith' not epistemic knowledge. *In short, there is no separation between moral duty and ethical achievement/failure according to Kant because the goal of morality is neither to achieve happiness nor perfection.*[255] This is what Kant calls humanity's 'precarious position'.'[256]

To be sure, Kant grounds both theoretical and practical reason in appearances. *Appearances matter*! *Experience always commences with appearances and returns to appearances.* However, in the middle of the process, transcendental consciousness is required by its limited condition to *add to* phenomena elements that are not directly given with the phenomena.

Lest one be tempted to conclude that Kant ignored the issue of consequences, he writes in the "First Preface" to *Religion*: "[...] while morality requires no end but the law sufficient for it to act rightly [...], [I]t cannot possibly be a matter of indifference to reason what the answer to the question may be: What is then the result of this right conduct of ours? or the question to what are we to direct our doings or non-doings,

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252. On ethics a matter of the species, not the individual, see Strauß, *LJ*: 780 and above: 776.

253. On Kant's criticisms of moral consequentialism and his moral intentionalism, see the 'four moments' of his rejection of consequentialism in: 556, n. 108.

254. Kant, *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1108–1109; Olms ed.: 295–296.

255. On Kant's rejection of happiness and perfection as the goal of morality, see: 28, n. 11.

256. For Kant's description of humanity's 'precarious position', see Kant, *Groundwork*: AA IV: 425–426.

even granted this is not fully in our control [...]"[257] The answer is not the achievement of happiness or perfection, which are not fully in our control, but the self-application of that over which we have control: the moral law that we invoke to give ourselves permission to act. In short, duty alone is the ultimate goal of human agency. He adds in a footnote:

> [...] [T]hese laws [of moral duty] command absolutely, whatever their consequences; indeed, they even require that we abstract from such consequences entirely whenever a particular action is concerned, and thereby they make duty the object of *the highest respect*,[258] without proposing to us, or assigning, a goal [*Zweck*] (a final cause [*Endzweck*]) such as would constitute some sort of inducement for it and an incentive to the fulfillment of our duty [...] What need have [... human beings] to know the outcome of their doings and non-doings that the world's course will bring about? *It suffices [...] that they do their duty, even if everything were to end with life in this world and in this life too happiness and desert perhaps never converge.* Yet it is one of the inescapable limitations of human beings and of their practical faculty of reason [...] to be concerned in every action with its result [...] Hence, the law that only inspires respect [...], although it does not recognize this sought-after something as a need, nevertheless is extended for the sake of its result to include the moral end of reason among its determinants. That end is to make the highest possible good in the world your end! *as an a priori synthetic judgment introduced by the moral law itself* [...][259] (emphasis added)

The goal of moral duty is neither personal happiness nor objective, moral perfection but the hope *that the categorical and the conditional are complementary because there is no categorical without the conditional.*[260] The origin and effectiveness of humanity's hope is grounded in the moral capacity (autonomous freedom) of the individual,

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257. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 5.

258. ‚Respect' for the laws of moral duty does not mean the objective goal of achieving the fulfil-ment of the moral law. It means just the opposite: the acknowledgement of the duty on the part of the individual to invoke *internally* a moral principle when s/he gives her-/himself permission to act. See "2) Kant's Respect for the Law::" 797 ff.

259. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 6*. Joseph Schmucker maintains that the major influence on Kant's thought is Francis Hutcheson and not Shaftesbury or Rousseau. See Schmucker, *Die Ursprünge der Ethik Kants in seinen vorkritischen Schriften und Reflexionen* (Meisenheim: Anton Hain Verlag, 1961): 124–142. Francis Hutcheson wrote in 1726: *We are not responsible for unintended or miscalculated consequences but for weakness of moral character.* See Hutcheson, "Treatise II, Section III: "The Sense of Virtue and the Various Opinions about It, Reducible to One General Foundation. The Manner of Computing the Morality of Actions" in *An Inquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, In Two Treatises* (London: J. Darby, A Betesworth, F. Fayram, J. Pemberton, C. Rivington, J. Hooke, F. Clay, J. Batley, and E. Symon, 1726): 189. Nonetheless, Hutcheson applies the principle that "[...] the most universal unlimited tendency to the *greatest* and *most extensive happiness* of all the *rational agents*, to whom our influence can reach" is required for discernment of what is 'most perfectly virtuous.'"" *Ibid.*: 180. Hutcheson proceeded to formulate a 'utilitarian calculus' (*ibid.*: 180–190) that anticipates (served as a prototype for?) Jeremy Bentham's hedonistic 'utilitarian calculus."

260. Kant speaks of religious hope not (!) in terms of receiving divine assistance (grace) but in terms of maintaining our moral attitude (see *Religion* AA VI: 68–69).

which is required for there to be a moral law in the first place.[261] The capacities of transcendental consciousness, generally, call humanity to respect the moral law and to invoke the moral law to govern its own agency, internally, because they are the conditions that make it possible for us to be human. Kant's morality is defined neither by 'pleasing God' nor by achievement of moral perfection.[262]

Without the *addition* of *a priori* synthetic elements, which each individual must apply for her-/himself, transcendental consciousness could not experience, understand, or exercise responsible agency in the world. No more than the 'truth' of theoretical reason is established solely by appearances, so too with practical reason. Appearances neither determine theoretical knowledge nor moral status. The key to both theoretical and practical reason is the *a priori* synthetic elements that both require in order for transcendental consciousness to be what it is and to do what it does. Especially when it comes to practical reason, it is not only epistemologically limited by theoretical reason, but it is also limited by its lack of control over its external circumstances – *as important as external circumstances are*! That over which the individual has control is the *a priori* elements of its transcendental consciousness, which s/he *adds to* her/his experience of appearances.

In other words, determination of the moral status of the individual (or species) by reduction to external appearances is, paradoxically, not merely an illusion but also a cutting of the tap root of morality, according to Kant. The individual's moral status is established by one's innate possession, and proper exercising, of *the internal capacities of practical reason, not the achievement* (or non-achievement) *of specific, external goals. Although the individual has no control over her/his external circumstances, s/he alone does have control over the moral principle s/he employs in order to give her-/himself permission to exercise agency in the world.*[263]

The criteria of moral status, then, are not external appearances (consequences) but internal *moral effort*. Only the individual knows the moral principle that s/he invoked to give this permission to act. T in an imperfect world by a limited transcendental consciousness.

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261. See Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 4*: "[…] [F]reedom is, after all, the *ratio essendi* of the moral law; however, the moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom."

262. On Kant's rejection of (ontological) 'moral feeling' grounded in happiness and (theological) expectation of perfection for morality, see *Groundwork* IV: 441–443.

263. See the discussion of 'internal freedom' in Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 405, 406–407, 420. That one has control over one's internal freedom, not external circumstances, is illustrated by Kant's two accounts of the 'knock at the door." Kant gives two accounts of the temptation to lie to someone at the door. One is in his *On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy* AA VIII: 426–427, where the lie to the murderer at the door results in the death on the street of the person purported to be protected by the lie; and in the "Doctrine of Virtue" of *The Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 431, where the lie by the servant to the authorities at the door who have come to arrest the master of the house results in the master leaving the house and committing a murder on the street. Both cases serve to illustrate one's control over the principle one acts on but lack of control over its consequences because consequences are incalculable.

I know of no explicit connection made by either Hegel or Strauß to Utilitarianism (by employment, for example, of Hutcheson's calculus of the 'greatest good for the greatest number'), but Hegel/Strauß stand in the midst of the trajectory of utilitarianism, the grounding of morality in consequences that stretches from Aristotle to Hutcheson/Bentham/Mill Utilitarianism. Of course, one could say that the trajectory goes back to the 'Second' Testament (and surely before) in the saying that "You can judge a tree by its fruit" (Luke 6:43–35 and Matthew 7:16–18; 12:33–35). Whatever its roots, especially for Hegel and Strauß, ethics is a matter of achievement (consequences) with respect to 'subduing' the perceptible world (*sinnliche Anschauung*) based upon abstract moral duty (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) independent of appearances, which are to govern agency in the perceptible world. For both Hegel and Strauß, though, it is impossible for humanity to achieve ethical perfection, which means that moral duty is a set of 'empty ideas.'

As part of the Copernican Turn, in contrast, the Kantian autonomous ethic turns the moral spy glass around from external consequences to internal motivation.[264] According to Kant, *the test of moral achievement is not external success or failure but internal determination of the moral principle to govern one's efforts.*

Despite the weight that consequentialism places on external appearances, when it comes to consequences of its actions, transcendental consciousness is limited by it's a *priori* synthetic conditions, but also it is especially limited when it comes to calculation of external consequences. Such calculation is limited to the extremely near future with no control over the long-term consequences of its actions. What looks to be a clear moral choice for the moment can, with a shift in circumstances beyond one's control, turn out to be a moral catastrophe. The aphorism that "the road to hell is paved with good intentions" confirms the 'everyman' awareness of humanity's limits.

Nonetheless, rather than the limits in control over consequences justifying either no moral effort whatsoever or action only on the basis of self- and one's group's interest, autonomous morality places the moral weight on the selection of the *universal*, moral principle that one invokes for oneself to guide one's decision taking and action.[265]

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

265. Kant is famously ridiculed for turning merely subjective self-interest into a universal maxim, which then allows the individual to gloat over her/his having fulfilled moral duty. In order to reduce the likelihood of the German *selbstgesetzgebend* lead to capricious 'universalizing' self-interest, I prefer to translate 'self-selecting' rather than the more frequent 'self-legislating'.

The attribution of moral, subjective, capriciousness is surely the case for Hegel. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 460 and the quote cited as footnote 26 on page 658 above. However, it is an error committed by many. For example, having acknowledged that Kant rejects self-interest and happiness as the ground for morality, Alasdair MacIntyre focuses primarily on the 'universalization' criterion for the categorical imperative and dismisses it as absolutizing merely what the individual wishes: "It is very easy to see that many immoral and trivial non-moral principles are vindicated by Kant's test quite convincingly [...] 'Persecute all those who hold false religious beliefs'

Categorical, universal, moral principles are distinguished from *hypothetical,* technical and pragmatic imperatives. Technical imperatives are required for the accomplishment of a technical goal (e.g., how to construct a house). Pragmatic imperatives are required for the pursuit of personal welfare (e.g., fulfilling the requirements to enter a profession).[266]

Morality grounded in the autonomous freedom of individuals to self-select categorical imperatives is far 'wider' than an ethics restricted to sensuousness and empirical interests of achieving particular, technical and pragmatic goals because in this 'wider' morality the dignity and absolute worth of the individual is in play with the motivation of loathsomeness were one to fail to act on anything less than a self-selected, 'wide' categorical imperative to govern one's agency with respect to 'narrow,' technical and pragmatic hypothetical imperatives.[267]

The will is acknowledged to be 'subject to the law.' However, self-legislating, the frequently used term for translating *selbstgesetzgebend,* can mean that the law is created by the will, or it can mean that the will subjects itself to a law not of its creation by *selecting the law* to which it will conform. The imposition of a law on the self, in

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and 'Always eat mussels on Mondays in March' will all pass Kant's test, for all can be consistently universalized." (*After Virtue*: *A Study in Moral Theory*, second edition [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984]: 45–46) In a projection of piety onto Kant, MacIntyre writes: "[…] Kant never doubted for a moment that the maxims which he had learnt from his own virtuous parents were those which had to be vindicated by a rational test." (*Ibid.*, 44.), which is claiming that Kant merely assumed the moral principles of his Pietist upbringing to be universalizable. That is simply a ridiculous claim as MacIntyre himself points out that Kant rejected a religious grounding of moral principles (see *ibid.*, 44–45). MacIntyre refers to the second formulation of the categorical imperative "'Always act so as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of others, as an end, and not a means'. (*ibid.*, 46), but, having ignored the grounding of morality by Kant NOT in moral principles but in autonomous freedom (the moral principle is the *ratio cognoscendi* or basis of knowing *a*utonomous freedom, whereas the *ratio essendi* or reason for the existence of moral principles is autonomous freedom [see *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 4*; 29–30]), MacIntyre asserts "This formulation clearly does have a moral content, although one that is not very precise […]." (*ibid.*, 46). MacIntyre completely ignores Kant's third formulation of the categorical imperative, which anchors morality in the 'good will' that is not to be defined as ontologically good but who acts on the basis of 'duty' grounded in the individual's self-selecting, autonomous freedom: "[…] the supreme condition of [… the practical principle of the will's] harmony with universal practical reason [… is] the idea of the will of every rational being as a universally legislating will." (*Groundwork* AA IV: 431)

Hegel ridiculed Kant in this manner. See above: 728. On Kant's meaning of 'categorical imperative,' see above: 56, n. 61. On Kant's acknowledgement that, given the limits to theoretical and practical reason, one can never be sure one is acting on the basis of self-interest, see the beginning of the Second Section of the *Groundwork* AA IV: 406–408.

266. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 414–421.

267. On the significance of the differences between categorical and hypothetical imperatives, see Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 414–421. On the difference between 'wide' categorical and 'narrow' hypothetical imperatives, see section "VII [Internal] Ethical Duties are of Wide Obligation, whereas [External] Duties of Right are of Narrow Obligation" in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, AA VI: 390–391. Kant distinguished between "narrower" (unrelenting, *unnachlasslichen)* and "wider" (meritorious, *verdienstlichen*) duty already in the *Groundwork* AA IV: 424.

turn, can be either *heteronomous* (demanded externally, e.g., the civic law, God) or *autonomous* (initiated solely internally by the individual).[268] *An autonomous moral law doe/s not mean self-created any more than the heteronomous giving of the physical law or the civic law to the self means that the will's employment of the physical or civic law means that it creates them.* Laws (and lawfulness, generally) are relationships within the two causal systems of nature and autonomous freedom,[269] and those relationships must be *dis-covered* in experience, *not self-created.*

Whereas physical laws and civic laws are heteronomously imposed on the will, moral laws are not because that would be a denial of the very autonomous freedom to which the moral laws apply. The moral law must be self-imposed, autonomously, as an act of self-determination, but not of the individual's personal creation.

Transcendental consciousness has exclusive and exhaustive control over its legislation of the moral principle that it invokes to give itself permission to do something.

> [...] [T]he pure representation of duty, and in general of the moral law, *mixed with no alien addition of empirical stimuli*, has by the route of reason alone (which in this first becomes aware that by itself it can also be practical) an influence on the human heart so much more powerful than all other incentives[270] one can summon from the empirical field, that reason, in the consciousness of its dignity, regards the latter with contempt, and little by little can master them in the place of which a mixed doctrine of morals, composed of incentives of feelings and inclinations and at the same time of rational concepts, must make the mind waver between motives that can be brought under no principle [for example, mere self-interest[271]], that can lead only very contingently to what is good, but quite often also to what is evil.[272] (emphasis added)

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268. On Kant's distinction between 'autonomy' and 'heteronomy', see *Groundwork* IV: 432–433. See as well, *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 43. "Heteronomy" is the label for externally imposed moral principles. It is contrasted by Kant with "autonomy," which is the label for internally self-selected moral principles. (See *Groundwork*, AA IV: 440–441) Humanity's autonomy, then, is concerned with a form of causality neither separable from nor reducible to physical causality. As a *freedom from* nature, it can initiate sequences of events, intentionally, that nature on its own cannot. As an *internal* causality independent of nature, it's principles cannot be derived *externally*. If they were, they would not be *autonomous* principles. Hence, in his *Groundwork*, Kant distinguishes between *hypothetical* and *categorical* imperatives. (See *Groundwork*, AA IV: 414–415) The former are *necessities* demanded by one's physical circumstance. The latter are *necessities* demanded by one's self.

269. Kant identifies two 'domains' of lawfulness: 'nature' and 'autonomous freedom'. The former is the domain of *theoretical reason*; the latter, of *practical reason*. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 174–176.

270. Kant adds a footnote here that ends: "[...] [T]he commonest observation shows that when one represents an action of righteousness – [...] without aiming at any advantage in this world or another [...] – it leaves far behind and obscures every similar action that was even in the least affected by an alien incentive, that it elevates the soul and stirs up the wish to be able to act like that too. Even children of intermediate age feel this impression, and one should never represent duties to them in any other way." *Groundwork* AA IV: 410*.

271. Kant was well aware that there's no escaping self-interest, but he makes clear that merely acting on the basis of self-interest is immoral. See *Groundwork* AA IV: 206–408.

272. Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 410–411.

In contrast, sorting out the causal elements of our empirical actions with respect to which are "[…] ascribable to the pure effect of freedom, how much to mere nature, that is, to faults of temperament for which there is no responsibility, or to its happy constitution (*merito fortunae*), *can never be determined*; and upon it therefore *no perfectly just judgments* can be passed."[273] (emphasis added)

Even more crucial, though, *it is not even the identification of a moral principle that one might invoke to determine what one 'ought to do' that grounds morality*. When it comes to morality and 'what ought to be.,' the *ratio essendi* (the reason for morality) is *not the moral law but autonomous freedom*. In turn, the moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi* (the basis for knowing) autonomous freedom.[274] The recognition of a single, wide categorical imperative is sufficient,[275] though, to acknowledge autonomous freedom as the *ratio essendi* of morality.[276] To be sure, the existence of 'moral law' does not prove *autonomous* freedom.[277]

> […] we can explain nothing but what we can trace back to laws whose object can be given in some possible experience. But [*sic*.] freedom is a mere idea, the objective reality of which can in no way be established according to laws of nature […] But [*sic*] where determination by laws of nature ceases, there all *explanation* ceases as well, and nothing is left but *defense*, i.e. warding off the objections of those who pretend to have looked deeper into the essence of things, and therefore boldly declared freedom to be impossible.[278]

Kant points out that the best 'defense' of *autonomous* freedom one gets when one denies it because "[a]ll human beings think of themselves as having a will that is free.

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273. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 579ᵃ. On reason's capacity to act according to its order and not according to the 'order of things.,' see the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 576.

274. See Kant's "Preface" to the *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 4*.

275. See Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 26*: "[…] this [moral] law is the only law that makes us conscious of the independence of our power of choice from determination by all other incentives (of our freedom) and thereby also of the accountability of all our actions."

276. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 459: "[…] [W]here determination by laws of nature ceases, there all explanation ceases as well, and nothing is left but defense, i.e. warding off the objections of those who pretend to have looked deeper into the essence of things, and therefore boldly declare freedom to be impossible. One can only show them that the contradiction they have supposedly discovered in it lies nowhere else than in this, that in order to make the law of nature hold with regard to human actions, they necessarily had to consider the human being as an appearance, and that now as one demands that as an intelligence they think of him also as a thing in itself, they continue to consider him as an appearance all the same, in which case the separation of his causality (i.e., of his will) from all natural laws of the world of sense in one and the same subject would of course prompt a contradiction; but it vanishes if they were willing to come to their senses and, as is reasonable, admit that behind the appearances there must lie at their foundation the things in themselves (though hidden), and that one cannot demand of their laws of operation [McG: autonomous freedom] that they be one and the same as those under which their appearances stand [McG: natural laws]." (CUP Trans.)

277. See Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 21*.

278. Kant, *Groundwork*: AA IV: 459.

From this stem all judgments about actions such that they ought to have been done even if they were not done."[279]

Kant gave in the *Groundwork* four examples of categorical imperatives:[280] don't commit suicide out of social disgrace,[281] don't lie,[282] cultivate one's talents,[283] and respond to the suffering of others.[284] However, are we capable of controlling our self-interest, and do we in fact experience *a priori* such wide categorical imperatives? In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant demonstrates that we are capable of controlling our self-interest and that we do experience circumstances in which we are confronted with a moral principle from within. Not only is transcendental consciousness not exhaustively determined by 'mechanical' physical laws (we are not products of (mechanical) material determinism, but also the moral principle not given by the phenomena (it is an *a priori* synthetic judgment *added to* phenomena). Kant provides examples of our possession of precisely the capacity of self-control over sensuous, self-interest as well as of a compelling categorical imperative.

Kant's example of self-control is the case of a man in a house of prostitution whereby he finds the temptation to sex irresistible. Kant asks, though, if a gallows was erected before the house and he was to be hanged the next day should he succumb to the temptation, would we be surprised if he controlled his inclinations?[285] As an example of the power of a categorical imperative, Kant gives the case of a ruler demanding of a subject on pain of death to give false testimony against a person,

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279. Kant, *Groundwork* IV: 455.

280. Kant grounds these moral principles in 'internal duties owed to oneself'. Nowhere does Kant attribute these examples to his upbringing in a pious household as Alasdair MacIntyre conjectures. See *After Virtue*: 44.

281. On suicide, see Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 421–422. In "The Doctrine of Right" of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant grounds the obligation to preserve one's physical life in a 'duty owed to oneself:" "... an individual [can] be sovereign over himself, (*sui iuris*) but not the owner of himself (*sui dominus*) (able to treat himself as he pleases [e.g., suicide; McGaughey] – still less can he be the owner of other people ... because he is responsible himself as a person." I take the German to be a clear rejection of the "ownership" ("*Eigentümer*" means "owner"] of other persons (e.g., slavery) whereas the CUP translation weakens the statement by translating *Eigentümer* as "own master" and substitutes "disposition over" for "owner" ("*Eigentümer*") of others. Already in his 1773/1774 or 1774/1775 (44) *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie*, Kant condemns suicide as the dominance of animality over humanity (67,) a violation of autonomous freedom (174), we have disposition over all things that have no freedom but not over an essence [thing] that itself has choice (e.g., prostitution 180, slavery 181, bestiality 181, suicide 181), and a usage of the self as a mere means (216, 221, 226). See as well, the *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 44, 69–70; "The Doctrine of Virtue" in *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 420 and "§ 9. On Killing Oneself" AA VI: 422–423.

282. On lying, see Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 422. See as well, Kant's *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie*: 33; *On the Supposed Right to Lie Out of Philanthropy* AA VIII: 425–430; *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XXIX: 793; as contradicting the duty owed to oneself, see "The Doctrine of Virtue" of the *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 420–421 and "§ 9. On Lying" in *Ibid.*, 429–431.

283. On cultivating talents, see Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 423 and 429.

284. On responding to the suffering of others, see Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 423 and 429–430.

285. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 30.

whom the subject had never met, in order for the ruler to have juridical grounds to execute the stranger.[286] Whatever the subject might decide, even a child recognizes the injustice of the ruler's demand, and no one doubts that it is possible for the subject to choose to deny her/his self-interest and be executed rather than violate his duty owed to another.

However, according to Kant and in contrast to Strauß' claim,[287] we neither possess moral principles as innate, Platonic ideas nor are they merely social constructions although our awareness of them emerge for us out of the challenge of concrete experience as something to be learned. Yet, *moral 'respect for the law' requires us to assume that there is an objective system of moral principles that governs the exercising of our autonomous freedom just as understanding of physical phenomena requires us to assume that there is a system of physical laws that we must discover through experience.* This is why Kant calls his philosophy 'Critical Idealism'[288] and stresses as the third leg of his methodology of pure reason[289] *the search for an 'architectonic' of principles and laws that govern transcendental consciousness.*

Rather than any list of moral principles that one would have to somehow establish to be universal,[290] which we cannot generate for physical laws, either, Kant offers a three-fold litmus test for 'wide' categorical imperatives for *discerning the internal grounds of duty*: 1) Act *as if* the maxim you use to give yourself permission to act is universal and not merely serving self-interest.[291] If one is acting solely on the basis of self- or community-interest, then one surely knows that the criterion of universality

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286. See Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 30; see as well, *ibid.*, AA V: 35–36 and AA V: 155–157.

287. On Kant's rejection of innate as well as the construction of ideas, see in Chapter 1: 166.

288. Kant uses the label of 'Critical Idealism." See *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XIX: 928, 938; *Prolegomena* AA IV: 375; and *On a Discovery, whereby Any New Critique of Pure Reason is to be Made Superfluous by an Older One* AA VIII: 210.

289. See Kant, "Chapter III The Architectonic of Pure Reason" in the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 860–879.

290. John Rawls' *Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Belknap Press [Imprint of Harvard University Press], 1971) is concerned with 'distributive justice' and develops a superstructure for the discernment of a fair and equal distribution of resources based on universality and commencing with what Rawls calls the 'original condition' of a 'veil of ignorance' (a 'state of nature')in light of the inequalities of resources and opportunities in society. Whereas Aristotle distinguished between 'retributive justice' (sometimes translated as 'corrective justice') based on 'arithmetic' and 'distributed justice' based on geometry (see *Nicomachean Ethics* Bk V, Chap. 3), Rawls proposes the social structures of universal rules/principles that are necessary to achieve proportionality with respect to merit. What one has in Rawls is a version of Aristotelian calculative, hence, consequentialist ethics, not a Kantian autonomous morality. Furthermore, Jennifer Uleman calls Rawls insistence upon establishing the "universality" of one's ethical framework and moral principles in advance of one's decision-making the "cold fish" version of universalized moral principles because its implementation would so delay the individual's decision-making that, were one to arrive at an appropriate principle (a highly unlikely prospect in itself), it would no longer be applicable to the live situation to which the principle was a response. See Jennifer Uleman, *An Introduction to Kant's Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

291. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 421 and 430.

has been ignored. 2) treat oneself and the other only as 'ends' and not merely as mere 'means.'[292] This does not claim that we should never be a means to someone else's ends but that we should not allow ourselves to be treated or to treat the other as *only a mere means*. 3) Acknowledge the other as her-/himself an agency of autonomous freedom.[293] This means that we recognize the other as equally an agent capable of self-selecting the wide, categorical principles to govern her/his discernment of what 'ought to be.' In fact, this constitutes acknowledgement of the 'dignity' and 'absolute worth' of each and every transcendental consciousness because autonomous freedom is inalienable and can only be exercised by the individual her-/himself.[294]

In other words, simply following some list of moral principles by checking off the one(s) one employs to justify one's actions as proper is/would not be sufficient for claiming the morality of one's actions. One can adhere to a moral law out of self-interest (for example, to please God or one's neighbor) or some other inclination rather than out of pure duty because it is right. Simply following a 'list' could be merely serving self-interest. *Transcendental consciousness is never governed merely (!) by self-interest, it is governed responsibly only when it subordinates itself in 'respect for the moral law.'*[295]

The opening sentence of Kant's *Groundwork* is: "It is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be taken to be good without limitation, except a good will."[296] The claim, however, is not that a will is either good or evil, but, as in the later *Religion*,[297] a good will is a will that self-selects a good maxim in giving itself permission to act. Kant adds on the next page: A good will is "good not because of what it effects, or accomplishes, not because of its fitness to attain some intended end, but good just by its willing, i.e., in itself. Considered by itself, it is to be esteemed beyond compare much higher than anything that could ever be brought about by it in favor of some inclination, and indeed, if you will, the sum of all inclinations."[298] *An action has moral worth, then, "[…] not in the purpose that is to be attained by it, but in the maxim according to which it is resolved upon."*[299] (emphasis added)

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292. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 429 and 430.

293. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 431.

294. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 434–436; 449–450.

295. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 400–401. See, especially, the footnote at *ibid.*, AA IV: 401*.

296. Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 393.

297. On Kant on radical good and radical evil, see above: 742. See as well, Chapter 5: "Traces of an Intellectual Crisis:" 621, n. 233

298. Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 394.

299. Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 399–400. Kant's criticism of consequentialism has four moments: See: 556, n. 108.

2) Kant's 'Respect for the Law'

According to Kant, morality is governed by 'respect for the law,'[300] not because there is a proof for the law any more than the physical sciences are grounded in proven physical laws. Discernment and self-selecting the law to govern one's agency is also not an exercise in capricious construction of the law (either physical or moral). Practical reason is exercised according to *reflecting* judgment just as in the case of theoretical reason.

All laws are held in the form of a *universal* 'as if' and with the grasp of them in light of their fitting into an ever-expanding understanding of the coherent architectonic of lawfulness. *Our understanding of the law can be modified, but our commitment to lawfulness can never be compromised.* Otherwise, there is no understanding by theoretical reason and there is only self-interest governing practical reason.

One does not deny that nature is lawful simply because one is incapable of proving that physical laws apply to all material phenomena at all times and in all places. Such a proof is impossible. Even when we know the physics is wrong, Newtonian mechanics demands recognition. We don't hesitate to climb into an airplane, an automobile, or an elevator because of doubts over the universality of physical laws because we are incapable of proving them. If we deny that there is lawfulness, including mechanical laws, to the order of nature, we might as well shut down our attempts at understanding the world/universe. Physical lawfulness is an assumption that is required for theoretical reason to understand anything.[301]

When our lawful explanations fail us, as is the case today with the Fermi Lab's confirmation of the existence of 'muons.,' which call into question the reigning understanding of physical laws, the challenge is to find a more adequate lawful explanation, not to shut down our efforts at understanding.

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300. On the centrality of respect [*Achtung*] for the law not merely as motivation for morality but as morality itself, see Birgit Recki, *Ästhetik der Sitten*: 272–278.

Kant proposes three propositions (*Sätze*) with respect to practical reason. The first is not explicitly formulated but consists, apparently, of the proposition that there is "[…] a law, to advance one's happiness, not from inclination, but from duty, and it is not until then that […] conduct has its actual moral worth." *Groundwork* AA IV: 399. The second is: "[…] an action from duty has its moral worth not in the purpose that is to be attained by it, but in the maxim according to which it is resolved upon […]" *Groundwork* AA IV: 400. Finally, the third is: "[…] duty is the necessity of an action from respect for the law." *Groundwork* AA IV: 400. See Birgit Recki, *Ästhetik der Sitten. Die Affinität von ästhetischem Gefühl und praktischer Vernunft bei Kant* (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 2001): 272–278.

301. Lawfulness is the criterion for what Kant calls a 'domain'. A region of experience for which we do not yet have a grasp of its lawfulness but for which a lawfulness is possible ('territory'), we explore by means of 'statistical significance' and 'algorithms' in search of lawfulness. We also experience (for example, in nocturnal dreams) 'fields' in which there can be no lawfulness despite clarity and distinction of perception, On 'fields', 'territories', and 'domains', See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 174–176 and in Chapter 1: 160.

Already in the *Critique of Pure Reason*,[302] Kant insisted upon the open-endedness of the sciences precisely because of the *a priori* synthetic conditions under which we can know anything, and he proposes the same in the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*[303] and in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*.[304] When it comes to his convictions with respect to scientific research, he both embraced its open horizon for both 'scientists' and 'laity:'

> I myself am a researcher by inclination. I feel a complete thirst for knowledge and the eager restlessness to advance in it, or the satisfaction of every acquisition. There was a time when I believed that this alone could constitute the honor of mankind and I despised the rabble who knew nothing. Rousseau set me right. This deluding preference disappeared, I learned to honor men (*sic.*), and I would find myself more useless than the common laborer if I did not believe that this contemplation could confer a value on all others to establish the rights of mankind.[305]

In short, Kant's reflections on science were not tied either to the Newtonian universe nor Euclidean geometry[306] as is too frequently maintained.[307] Knowledge in the sciences is always dependent upon the open-endedness of the variations in phenomena (we experience only appearances) and upon the theoretical framework of *a priori* synthetic judgments (laws) in use at any particular point in time for the understanding of those variations, and it is precisely for this reason that Kant's own reflections are tied neither to Euclidean Geometry nor to Newtonian Physics.

Kant claims that the assumptions, including lawfulness, of theoretical and practical reason are what drive humanity's rational 'desire' to understand and to act responsibly. Our capacity for understanding (*Erkenntnisvermögen*) is driven by the conviction that we can establish an understanding of 'what is' by the internal discernment in transcendental consciousness of lawfulness (*Gesetzmöglichkeit*), which governs physical phenomena, whereas our capacity of desire (/*Begehrungsvermögen*) is driven by the conviction that we can determine 'what ought to be' by the internal discernment in transcendental consciousness of the final aim (*Endzweck*) of our autonomous freedom.[308] We have control over what laws we apply to our understanding of 'what is'

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302. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 508, 641, 684, 708, 720, 786, and 862.

303. See Kant, *Prolegomena*, "§ 12" AA IV: 284–285 and AA IV: 352–3.

304. See the "Preface" to Kant's *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* AA IV: 473.

305. Kant, (Aus dem Nachlaß – Phase h: 1764 – max. 1768) *Bemerkungen zu den Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* AA XX: 44.

306. See Höffe, Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft. Die Grundlegung der modernen Philosophie (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2004): 177, 205, 208, and 288.

307. See the "Postscript" to Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*: 266.

308. The identification of the capacity of reason as the 'capacity of desire' (*Begehrungsvermögen*) (see *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 198) can cause confusion because it appears to collapse reason into 'objective interest'. A clear case of such a mis-reading of Kant is C. Daub (see: 855). Daub has taken Kant's label *Begehrungsvermögen* to mean the capacity for sensuous self-interest rather than as the 'appetitive capacity' for 'lawufulness'.).

and our granting ourselves permission to exercise our autonomous freedom according to 'what ought to be.'

With reference, then, to moral laws (wide, categorical imperatives, not narrow hypothetical imperatives), Kant adds:

> [...] [U]nless one wants to refuse the concept of morality all truth and reference to some possible object, one cannot deny that its law has such wide [*ausgebreiteter*] significance that it must hold not merely for human beings but for all rational beings as such, not merely under contingent conditions and with exceptions, but with absolute necessity; then

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Kant is neither reducible to a philosophy of self-interest as Daub claims nor a talking head who ignores feelings. In both the 'First Introduction' (1789) AA XX: 246], and the 'Introduction' to the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* (1790) AA V: 198, Kant distinguished humanity's capacities among 1) 'the cognitive capacity' of understanding, grounded in lawfulness (*Gesetzmäßigkeit*); 2) the 'feeling of pleasure and displeasure (*Lust* and *Unlust*) of judgment, grounded in teleological ends (*Zweckmäßigkeit*), and 3) capacity of desire or will (*Begehrungsvermögen*), grounded in humanity's final/highest goal of morals. This is the significance of Kant's 'negative method' in the *Menschenkunde* (see "Kant's 'Negative Method'" in 45, n. 28.) is that: "*Man has not lived so long as in that s/he has savored life, but as long as s/he has exercised* [responsibly] *her/his agency.*" (*Menschenkunde* XXV,2: 1080; Olms ed.: 261) To exercise agency responsibly requires the third human capacity of reason grounded in humanity's final/highest goal of morals.

In the "Introduction" to the "Doctrine of Right" of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant distinguishes between 'practical' pleasure (*Lust*) and 'contemplative' pleasure (*Lust*). "The pleasure (*Lust*) which is necessarily connected with the desire (*Begehren*) (of the object whose conception so affects the feeling) may be called *practical pleasure*: it may be the cause or the effect of desire. On the other hand, the pleasure (*Lust*) which is not necessarily connected with the desire (*Begehren*) of the object, and which therefore is not essentially a pleasure in the existence of the object of the imagination, but clings to the imagination alone, may be called merely *contemplative pleasure* or *inactive pleasure*. We call the feeling of the latter kind of pleasure taste (*Geschmack*). *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 212 He further distinguishes between 'desire' (*Begierde*) and 'inclination' (*Neigung*): "[...] [A]s far as practical pleasure (*Lust*) is concerned, the determination of the faculty of desire (*Begehrungsvermögen*), which must necessarily precede practical pleasure as a cause, is called desire (*Begierde*) in the narrow sense, but habitual desire (*Begierde*) is called inclination (*Neigung*) [...]" *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 212 In short, he maintains a distinction between desires for objects and 'a purely rational interest:' "[...] [W]here a purely rational interest must be assumed, no interest of inclination can be imputed to it, yet, [...] we can concede an inclination, even to what can only be the object of an intellectual pleasure, to be a habitual desire from a purely rational interest, which then, however, would not be the cause but the effect of the latter interest, and which we could call *sense-free inclination interest* (*Neigung*) (propensio intellectualis). *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 213 In his *Menschenkunde oder die philosophische Anthropologie*, Kant identifies these two kinds of inclinations (*Neigung*) as 'formal' and 'material: "*All our inclinations* (*Neigungen*) *can be divided into formal and material inclinations. Formal inclinations* refer, without distinction of objects, to the animation (*Bewegung*) by which we can satisfy our inclinations in general. They therefore *have no particular object* ['contemplative pleasure']. *Material inclinations are those which are determined with respect to the object* ['practical pleasure']. *Formal inclinations are twofold: freedom and ability* (*Vermögen*), which are the first and foremost inclinations (*Neigungen*) of all. *Freedom* means the removal of all resistance to act according to one's own inclination: it *is a formal negative inclination* [freedom-from]; but *we also have a positive formal inclination*, *the possession of the means to fulfil one's inclinations* [freedom-for]. With freedom[-from] we seek the state of satisfying the inclinations; with [... freedom-for] (*Vermögen*), however, we seek the means to do so." (emphasis added) *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1141; Olms ed.: 334–335.

it is clear that no experience can give occasion to infer even just the possibility of such apodictic laws. For [...] how shall laws for the determination of our will be taken as laws of the determination of the [autonomously free] will of a rational being as such and, only as such, for our will as well, if they were merely empirical, and did not originate completely *a priori* from pure but practical reason?[309] (McG ed. of CUP trans.)

3) Kant on Future Prognostication

When it comes to the future, Kant sketches out in the opening paragraphs of the second section devoted to the "Conflict with the Law Faculty" of his *Conflict of the Faculties* the usual prognostication alternatives for the future as 1) "moral terrorism" (permanent decline), 2) "eudaimonism" (steady progress); and 3) "Abderitism" (stagnation).

Although Kant warned in his *Lecture on Moral Philosophy* (*Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie*) 23 years earlier that humanity's autonomous freedom gives humanity the power to destroy the earth were it not for its power to restrict its own freedom, he believed in the survival of the human species so that he rejected the notion of "moral terrorism" because that would lead to the elimination of humanity.

Kant writes of the second option, eudaimonism: "The effects cannot exceed the capacity of their cause so that the quantity of good mixed with evil in humanity cannot exceed a certain amount of the evil above which humanity could work its way up and progress to something better. Eudaimonism with its sanguine hope appears to be untenable."

When it comes to Abderitism, he writes: "This opinion probably has the majority on its side [...] In humanity's natural capacity, the principle of evil appears here, as well, not so much to be amalgamated with the good (fused [*verschmolzen*]) but rather one neutralizes the other; with the consequence being inaction (which here would be stagnation) [...], which would result from the perspective of reason in no greater value than other animals have, who play this game with less burden and pursue it without the effort of understanding."

Kant rejects all three prognostications and, true to the Copernican Turn, emphasizes that humanity possesses the capacity for moral improvement, but it is always capable of being compromised by the requirement of the alternative between good and evil principles so that only alone out of the perspective of the tendency of humanity as a whole (the species [*Gattung*]), not on the achievements of individuals, can the issue be decided.

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309. Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 408.

Not the actual deeds of individuals but, rather, the "moral character[310] of the species […] confirms at least the capacity [Anlage], which not only allows hope of improvement for the better, but is itself an improvement for the better as far as the capacity is already adequate for such improvement."[311] This confirmed hope is not articulated in the "Conflict with the Law Faculty" as an abstract obligation demanded by the individual of her-/himself in isolation but is the basis for the rejection of political revolution and establishment of democratic, republican government, and a cosmopolitanism in which the sovereignty of nations is reined in by governments themselves by commitment to international agencies (not by a world government) in order to achieve an international, just, economic and political, social order.

Nonetheless, Kant was no blind optimist! His confidence in the long run in the history of a species in possession of transcendental consciousness is grounded in its capacities, not in its certain success. Speaking of the failures and only temporary achievements of political reform, Kant points out:

> […] this philosophical prediction [of eventual, republican government] loses nothing of its power. – The occurrence [of the failure] is too significant, so much interwoven with the interests of humanity, and its impact is so widespread throughout the entire world and revived in memory whenever more favorable circumstances arise and should be awakened for a new attempt of this kind; because then, in a matter of such importance for the human race, the intended constitution must at last at some time attain that firmness which instruction by frequent experience would not fail to effect in the minds of all.[312]

Here beyond a doubt, Kant challenges those interpreters who take his autonomous moral theory to be concerned merely with the individual and who, as a consequence of his suggestion that pure religion is concerned with morality, claim that he 'reduces' religion to personal morality. Far more accurate would be to say that Kant's autonomous morality includes theoretical reason's understanding of material phenomena without which nothing else can transpire, practical reason's concern for responsible, human creativity, pure religion's goal of encouraging a moral culture (!), a political philosophy of republican government based on the separation of administrative, legislative, and judicial powers, a cosmopolitan philosophy of international cooperation, and a vision of history as an evolving process of success and failure but given the

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310. Kant distinguishes between 'physical' character (temperament or the mindset of natural gifts) and 'moral' character (the way of thinking). See Kant, *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1156–1157; Olms ed.: 337). The 'way of thinking' of moral character is *to act on the basis of universal, moral principles.* See *Ibid*. AA XXV,2: 1158, 1169, 1170; Olms ed.: 338, 346, 348). In the *Anweisung*, Kant writes that "Character is what fixes freedom." Kant, *Anweisung* Olms ed.: 58 Character is not innate but "[…] develops late in the individual." Kant, *ibid*.: 58. Kant describes four temperaments: sanguine, choleric, melancholy, and pflegmatic. Kant, *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1158 ff.; Olms ed.: 338 ff. and *Anweisung* Olma ed.: 53–54.

311. Kant. *Streit der Fakultäten* AA VII: 85.

312. Kant, *Streit der Fakultäten* AA VII: 88.

capacities of transcendental consciousness justifies confidence in the human species as a whole.

Kant's shifting of the hope in 'progress' to the species is far broader than Strauß' because it is not limited merely to sovereignty over sensuousness (better, self-interestedness) and over nature but includes constructive progress as a consequence of humanity's creative capacities in theoretical and practical reason, religion, political philosophy, and international cosmopolitan cooperation.

It is accurate to say that Kant's optimism is a matter not merely of advancement of the 'culture of skills' (theoretical reason) but is profoundly an expression of the presence and power of the 'culture that promotes the (moral) will' (practical reason).

What makes homo sapiens human is not understanding (theoretical reason) but morality.[313] Theoretical reason's technical, instrumental reason is measurable by an ever expanding quantity of its products as a consequence of its ever expanding understanding of nature. In contrast, practical reason's moral capacity requires no increase in the quantity of capacity but an 'increase in the products of its legality' in order to realize its 'natural' goal[314] of a society governed by a republican constitution – "even if according to the letter it would not be asked for its consent."[315]

Conclusion

Other than metaphors, there is little, if anything, shared between Hegel/Strauß and Kant when it comes to their understanding of either 'theoretical' or 'practical' reason. Had they not themselves claimed to represent Kant accurately and merely been satisfied to formulate their own version of 'practical reason,' there would be no justification to spill so much ink comparing and contrasting them. However, although Hegel/Strauß claim to be accurate readers of Kant, they, along with the other powerful voices of the anti-Kantian and anti-Enlightenment movement in the first half of the 19th C, sculptured a granite statue of Kant that made it far more difficult to 'return to Kant' for living inspiration – even for 'Kantians.'

Strauß is a paradigmatic example of how, even when understanding himself to be engaged in a 'return to Kant' mid-century, the pre-figured Kant of his predecessors blinded him. Whereas Strauß' epistemological and metaphysical reflections were ignored, the materialistic world view that he articulated in 1872 has come to dominate the hearts and minds of most of humanity today. One might say that Strauß' influence on the subsequent reading of Kant, then, is secondary to his materialism. Yet, his

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313. See Kant, *Streit der Fakultäten* AA VII: 72: "[...] Moralität und nicht der Verstand ist es also, was den Menschen erst zum Menschen macht."
314. Kant, *Streit der Fakultäten* AA VII: 91–92.
315. Kant, *Streit der Fakultäten* AA VII: 91.

mis-readings of Kant contributed as much if not more to modern materialism than his mentor, Hegel, who continues to be read as a philosophical 'genius' to this day although he, too, would have failed the Kant seminar.

A quick overview of the themes of this chapter on 'Practical Reason,' illustrate that Kant was never given a chance:

Hegel drove a wedge between theoretical reason and practical that could only be overcome by his dialectical, causal explanation of Absolute Spirit's *a priori* synthesis that generates of all 'that is' both intellectual and actual by means of a dialectical logic of Double Negation.[316] Whereas Hegel views his philosophy as 'objective,' Absolute Knowledge, he dismisses Kant as a 'subjective relativist,' who elevates subjectivity above the 'truth' of Absolute Objectivity. He, then, accuses Kant of not taking '*pure theoretical reason*' (that is, Absolute Spirit) seriously and describes Kant's practical reason as a bottom-up constructivist system of capricious understanding along with individually and socially constructed norms that are all merely 'empty abstractions.'

Yet, Hegel's own meta-narrative involves a circular paradox. Although Absolute Knowledge is the *necessary* condition of possibility for all 'that is,' It, too, also *requires* actual history for It to avoid Its own status as an 'empty abstraction.' The circular paradox is that It avoids the status of an 'empty abstraction' only because it is, ultimately, the author of the very representations that are to ground its actuality. Finally, those very representations, themselves, have no meaning other than as the empty place-setter for Absolute Spirit's Second Negation that is required for Absolute Spirit to experience Its own Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Freedom, and Absolute Truth. Finite history's own pain, suffering, exploitation, persecution, and injustices are meaningless illusions. Meaning is reserved for the Absolute, and finite history is left with only being thankful for having a role in the Absolute Concept's Self-realization.

Furthermore, neither Hegel nor Strauß ever grasped the significance of Kant's autonomous freedom as *both freedom-from and freedom-for*. Hegel, especially, describes the finite, human condition as trapped between subjective freedom and nature's freedom with the role of the state to make possible humanity's winning of its *freedom-from* nature and society, to a degree.

Kant's autonomous freedom is far more profound. It identifies a capacity of transcendental consciousness that makes it the location in the natural, causal order where events intentionally can occur that nature's blind, mechanical (not free!) causality could not begin to achieve. Thanks to the autonomous freedom of transcendental consciousness, nature is open-ended and not a merely zero-sum game of the struggles of interest over limited natural resources and the individual achieves her/his dignity and absolute worth.

Strauß, too, never grasped the significance of autonomous freedom, and he viewed humanity's moral condition as a losing struggle with sensualism that, at least in 1872,

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316. On Kant's rejection of dialectic for grounding the ultimate, causal ground of 'what is,' see , see *Critique of Pure Reason* B 697 and Chapter 6: 670.

took solace in the moral development of the species to neutralize the ethical failures of individuals.

Strauß' ignoring of Kant's autonomous freedom is most clear in his treatment of Kant's notion of 'radical evil,' which is taken to be a polished up notion of original sin. Strauß adapts Jakob Böhme's objective notion of evil to account for the driving force of negativity that pushes reality forward in history.

Evil, though, is no version of causality, for Kant. It has the same *amoral* status as the key trilogy of transcendental consciousness: autonomous freedom, radical good, and radical evil with the latter two presupposing the first.

Furthermore, where Hegel and Strauß are dyed-in-the-wool consequentialists, their consequentialism begins where Kant's moral theory arrives as the set of *a priori* conditions and capacities of transcendental consciousness that make consequentialism possible in the first. Place.

To be sure, in 1872 Strauß' materialism views human consciousness no longer as the 'point of indifference' where Absolute Spirit attains consciousness of Itself. Rather, human consciousness is now taken to be the location where nature 'turns inward in itself' to further its materialistic, creative advance. The determinism of Absolute Spirit has been replaced by the determinism of nature. Transcendental consciousness' extra-*ordinary a priori* capacities as the place where there is a genuine open-ness to nature has been entirely eclipsed.

In 1872, Strauß reserves the primary significance of 'moral improvement' to the species. He, thereby, overlooks that any and all experience, understanding, and conscious granting of permission to exercise agency in the world, as well as, rigorous judgment of moral status occurs in the inaccessible inwardness of individual, transcendental consciousness, *not in the consequences of agency or in social pressure*. Consequently, he has no appreciation of Kant's cosmopolitanism, which unites all of humanity on the basis of shared, internal, universal capacities.