Chapter 8: Strauß' Kant Reading Over His Career: Misleading Mentors and Inadequate Influence of Friends

Chapter Overview

After examining key pre-figurations of Kant by his mentors, Strauß' various readings of Kant across Strauß' career are presented.

The Pre-figured Reading that Shaped Strauß' Understanding of Kant

Strauß' philosophical mother's milk was Hegel's ‚Philosophy of Religion,' which he acquired at the Gymnasium in Blaubeuren and the Protestant Seminary in Tübingen in the class room of his beloved Professor Ferdinand Christian Baur.[1] Always the bold, clever logician, Hegel unhesitatingly embraced and fueled the popular anti-Kantian and anti-Enlightenment spirit (*Weltgeist*) of his day.[2] To be sure, Baur located Hegel in the school of pseudo-Clementine Gnosticism and rejected Hegel's accounting for

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1. Although not actually published until 1835, in his *LJ* of 1835 Strauß cited Baur's 740 page Christian Gnosticism or Christian Philosophy of Religion in its Historical Development (Die Christliche Gnosis oder die Christliche Religionsphilosophie in ihrer Geschichtlichen Entwicklung).

2. This anti-Kantian/anti-Enlightenment perspective was shared among key figures in Strauß' world: F.C. Baur (see, especially, *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung*: 505–506) Hegel (see "Glauben und Wissen" GW II: 287–288 and "4. Aufklärung" in *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* GW XX: 311–313) and, particularly, the vituperative attack of Kant by Carl Daub reported by Strauß in "Schleiermacher und Daub" in which Daub claims that Kant ‚despises reason and science' (132) and for whom Kant's understanding of humanity's 'creativity' is merely a manifestation of self-interest (*Selbstsucht*) (94). Included in this anti-Kantian, anti-Enlightenment circle is Schleiermacher, as well. The anti-Enlightenment theme is in *On Religion* of 1799. Andreas Arndt documents that in the announcement of the publication of *On Religion* Leipzig Book Fair, Schleiermacher addressed the "[…] '*enlightened* despisers of [… religion)' or 'the *enlightened* among their despisers'." Rather than religion's 'cultured despisers,' which Arndt proposes became the sub-title "[…] especially out of consideration for the Atheism Controversy around Fichte." Andreas Arndt, "Schleiermacher und die Religionskritik der Aufklärung:" in *Aufgeklärte Religion und ihre Probleme. Schleiermacher – Troeltsch – Tillich*, Ulrich Barth, Christian Danz, Wilhelm Gräb und Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, hrsg. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013): 647. correctly points out that "[a] look at the book itself, however, shows that 'despisers' referred to the indifferent rather than the outspoken critics of religion (i.e., those who did not care for the region in their minds that, according to Schleiermacher, belongs to the *conditio humana*): religion." However, to the extent that Schleiermacher saw science as a threat to religion and his *Glaubenslehre* locates religion in the 'feeling of absolute dependence' (a substitution for Kant's apperception) prior to/deeper than knowledge (Kant's theoretical reason) and morality (Kant's practical reason), he, too, was anti-Kantian and a critic of the Enlightenment.

the 'historicity' of the God/Man,[3] yet, he shared with Hegel the meta-narrative of the Double Negation attributed to Absolute Spirit as '*science*' (Absolute Knowledge).

For his part, in the opening paragraph of his "Faith and Knowledge or the Reflective, Subjective Philosophy in its Complete Form as Kantian Jacobian, and Fichtean Philosophy" ("Glauben und Wissen oder die Reflexionsphilosophie der Subjektivität in der Vollständigkeit ihrer Formen als Kantische, Jacobische, und Fichtesche Philosophie"), Hegel vituperatively attacks Kant and the Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) as the 'barbarian' rejection of 'reason' and 'faith:'

> That reason is a handmaiden of faith, as it was expressed in older times and against which philosophy insurmountably asserted its absolute autonomy, these ideas or expressions have disappeared, and reason, if it is otherwise reason, which gives itself this name, has asserted itself in positive religion in such a way that even a dispute of philosophy against positivity, miracles and the like are regarded as something dismissed and obscure, and that Kant, with his attempt to enliven the positive form of religion with a meaning from his philosophy, did not make anyone happy not because his peculiar [positive] formulations were no longer the same [as had been believed in the past] but because they no longer seemed worthy of this honor of positive claims. *The question is, however, whether the victor, reason, does not suffer the same fate that the victorious strength of barbarian nations tends to have against the defeated weakness of educated ones, namely, to retain the upper hand according to the outward rule, but to succumb to what has been overcome according to the spirit.* The glorious victory that enlightened reason has won over that which, according to the small measure of its religious understanding, it considered itself opposed to as faith, is, when seen in the light of day, no other than that *neither the positive, with which it was struggling, was religion, nor that it, which was victorious, remained reason*, and that the birth of the unifying child of peace, which hovers triumphantly over these corpses as their common element *has as little to do with reason as with true faith*.[4] (emphasis added)

In other words, what Kant offered as 'enlightened' religion and reason was not only no longer recognizable as traditional Christianity, but it also had little if anything to do with either reason (Absolute Reason) or faith (Absolute Spirit) in Hegel's judgment. Hegel proceeds:

> Reason, which in and of itself was already degraded by the fact that *it understood religion only as something positive* [external]*, not idealistic*, could not do anything better than to look at itself after the struggle [with faith] and come to its self-knowledge, which acknowledges its own non-being by embracing a belief outside and above it as that which is better than reason itself. This is what has happened in the philosophies of Kant, Jacobi

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3. F.C. Baur viewed Hegel as a pseudo-Clementine Gnostic. See "Die Hegel'sche Religions-Philosophie" in *Gnosis*:, 679 and 736, n. 34 [actually 738]), and he rejected Hegel's account of the 'historicity' of the God/Man see *ibid.*: 696 (see 697–698, 685, 706, n. 30 [actually 709–710] 721, 734–735) to develop his own understanding of the 'incarnation of the Christ' on the basis of the Gnostic/Hegelian meta-narrative logic of Double Negation but not as a single God/Man but as a singular community, the Christian Church as the body of Christ.

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

and Fichte in that philosophy again makes itself the handmaiden of belief. *According to Kant, the supersensible is incapable of being known by reason. The highest idea has no reality* [*Realität*[5]] [...] *According to all three* [Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte]*, the Absolute, according to the old distinction between knowledge and faith, cannot be against, as little as for, reason but is above* [and inaccessible to] *reason.*[6] (emphasis added)

Kant's philosophy reduces reason, according to Hegel, to 'merely empty ideas' not only because Kant's philosophy is subjectivist construction over against the empirical world but also because already the highest condition of possibility of reason, the highest Idea (Absolute Concept), has no 'actuality'/'reality'[7] for Kant.

Strauß unequivocally embraced Hegel's anti-Kantianism and anti-Enlightenment reading in the "Concluding Dissertation" of the *LJ* (*Life of Jesus Critically Examined*) where he formulated his 'restoration' of Church dogmatics with his own Hegelian Christology. Nonetheless, he was forced immediately after publication to vigorously defend his Christology against the Hegelians. His *Streitschriften* of 1837[8] and in his criticism of Carl Daub in his 1839 "Schleiermacher und Daub" article are the documentation of that Hegelian controversy.

In the first volume of his *Glaubenslehre* of 1841, Strauß defends the anti-Enlightenment thesis by drawing an analogy between the use of 'Allegory' in the ancient Church and the 'enlightened,' Rationalist 'Accommodation Theory' of gospel exegesis. He doesn't criticize Kant as a Rationalist exegete who applied the 'Accommodation Theory' to the gospels, but *he surely includes Kant among those of the 'general Enlightenment,*[9] who took their understanding of reason to be far superior to the world of the ancient Church.

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5. According to Hegel, ideas are 'truth' (*Ideelle*) as intellectual perception (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) whereas representations as sense perception (*sinnliche Anschauung*) are merely 'actuality' (*Wirklichkeit*) as real (*Reelle*), blind without the 'truth' of intellectual perception. Equally, thoughts that are not 'real' (that don't appear in representations) are 'merely empty abstractions." Hegel's claim is in agreement with Kant's famous aphorism in the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 75 (see as well, B 165–166, 178): thoughts without ideas are 'empty' whereas 'representations' without ideas are 'blind." Note, though, that Hegel, as Kant does, is taking content to mean sense perception (*sinnliche Anschauung*), not what Hegel normally means with 'content' as intellectual perception (*intellektuelle Anschauung*). Kant takes Kant to mean that the activity of thinking (*Gedanken*) without the 'content' (*Inhalt*) of ideas is meaningless whereas perceptions (*Anschauungen*) without concepts (*Begriffe*) are blind. In other words, As an idealist, Hegel turns Kant's emphasis on the embeddedness of reason in a world of empirical appearances into an elevation of true ideas above the world of appearances (*Wirklichkeit*). See the Chapter 1: "Methodology:" 160, n. 186.

6. Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen" GW II: 288.

7. It is not insignificant that Kant distinguishes between 'concepts' of the understanding and the three 'pure ideas of reason (God, freedom/cosmology, and the soul) in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In other words, 'concepts' are not 'ideas' as, for example, in Platonism.

8. The *Streitschriften* also contain his response to the Conservative Christians.

9. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 147.

> [T]he need for a middle link had to become all the more urgent, which [...] in the manner of the old allegory connected together the diverging sides, the literal sense of the biblical writer and that which the interpreter would have liked to have found. The author of the sacred text said something, but he should have said something else. Certainly, he wanted to do so, and would have done so if he had had as his audience *such enlightened scholars as his present interpreters*; the original authors had to submit to the prejudices of their contemporaries. As in Origen's time allegory, so now accommodation, was the link by which the supposed lead and copper of the biblical ideas was transformed into the pure gold of reasonable religious concepts – with the common aim of avoiding prejudice to the appearance of the biblical persons and authors.[10] (emphasis added)

For Strauß 'Enlightenment' means superior rationality. Applied to biblical exegesis here, it resulted in the Rationalists' 'Accommodation' theory of exegesis or 'making the text say what one wants it to say,' which was the 'modern' equivalent of the 'Allegorical' reading in the early Church.[11] In this respect, the 'enlightened' Rationalists and ancient Allegorists claimed to be following the example of 'Christ' in Matthew 13:13 ("The reason I talk to them in parables is that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding") and the Apostle Paul I Cor. 3:1–2 ("I treated you as sensual men, still infants in Christ. What I fed you with was milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it; and indeed, you are still not ready for it since you are still unspiritual.").[12]

Hegel concludes that, as with ancient allegory, the Rationalists' and Kant with their 'enlightened reason' suffered the same fate of succumbing to the barbarism of what had been overcome because they were no longer recognizable as traditional belief or satisfying as an alternative, Christian doctrine.

The Hegelian *Weltgeist* that formatively shaped the early Strauß' understanding of Kant divided 'theoretical' and 'practical' reason between the intelligible and the perceptible.[13] *With respect to 'theoretical' reason, Hegel's primary concern is 'pure thought,' which is imperceptible, Absolute Knowledge and consists of the singular, a priori synthetic judgment of the Absolute One as a causal system that generates 'all that is.' In contrast, Kant's primary concern is 'pure reason,' which is the required, imperceptible elements that make it possible for transcendental consciousness to experience, understand, and exercise responsible agency in the phenomenal world.* These imperceptible elements include the multiple (not merely Hegel's singular) *a priori* synthetic judgments that enable *understanding* phenomena and exercise agency in the world.

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10. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 147–148.
11. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 147–148, esp. n. 22.
12. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 149.
13. This summary is drawn, primarily, from Hegel's "Glauben und Wissen" GW II: 287–433; "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten:" 90–178; GW II: 434 – 530, and "The Moral View of the World" in the *Phänomenologie* GW III: 442–452.

With respect to 'practical' reason, Hegel limits 'practical thought' to *a posteriori* analytic judgments.[14] Analytic here means 'distinguishing' (*diairesis/dihairesis/* διαίρεσισ), and the thinker's task is to establish the identity of things by distinguishing their differences from other things. Plato called those who engage in this method "dialecticians" (Phaedrus 266b). The identity (synthesis) of 'practical thought' is exclusively *a posteriori*, and, for Hegel, this synthesis is the effect of the bottom-up dialectic between perceived 'representations' (perceptible, *actual form*) and abstract 'concepts' (imperceptible, *true content*). *Hegel's 'practical thought' provides the 'actual'/'real' basis for a hierarchical system of dialectic that assures that ideas are not 'empty' by 'grounding' the 'truth' that is ideas in actuality, which, in turn, serve as the ground for the ultimate dialectic's achievement of Absolute Knowledge. In contrast, the primary concern of Kant's 'practical reason' is the required, imperceptible elements that make it possible for transcendental consciousness to exercise responsible, creative, autonomous freedom in the physical world.*

Furthermore, *Hegel's meta-narrative claims to be a monism* with Absolute Knowledge, which consists of the exclusive 'sovereignty' of Absolute Spirit above sensuous experience although he insists on a dualism between Absolute Freedom and nature's freedom as the condition for the Second Negation, results in Absolute Knowledge of the Absolute Concept. In contrast, *Kant identifies two 'domains' in which finite, transcendental consciousness is 'sovereign'* (*in the sense of possessing understanding in the world*): *nature and autonomous freedom.*[15] *These are not two, objective dimensions over-against one another* as are Hegel's Absolute Freedom and nature's freedom. *Rather, they are two systems of lawfulness in a single world of appearances.* The 'ground,' then, for Kant's necessary (that is, required, not prescribing) knowledge is 'lawfulness:' the imperceptible, physical laws that govern nature as well as the imperceptible, moral laws of autonomous freedom.

Whereas *Hegel's philosophy is elitist* because Absolute Knowledge is limited either to *a single individual* (the Christ) *or a few persons* (those philosophers who grasp the significance of the 'point of indifference,' which is the Second Negation), *Kant's philosophy is egalitarian* because the *conditions* of possibility of theoretical (understanding) and practical reason (moral responsibility) are universally shared by all although individuals are different with respect to the skills that each cultivates by means of 'theoretical reason' as well as by the internal permission that each individual must give to her-/himself to allow an exercise of agency. In short, Kant's 'autonomous freedom' of 'practical reason' universally grounds *the dignity of all persons*. Dignity is owed to all transcendental consciousness. Respect, however, is not based on the bestowal of status and prestige by others but on the degree to which one adheres to the two systems of

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14. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten:" GW II: 460, 463, 466–467.
15. See Kant, The *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 174.

imperceptible lawfulness that govern nature and autonomous freedom in the world.[16] One knows whether one has earned respect or disdain without need of any applause or scorn from others.

Another crucial difference between Hegelian 'pure thought' and Kantian 'pure reason' is that *Hegel calls for the elevation of consciousness out of the world* with a promise of spiritual 'perfection'/'divinization' of the individual by achieving Absolute Knowledge and Absolute Freedom. In contrast, *Kant's sole concern is ever-expanding understanding and pursuit of responsible agency in this world* by any and all species that possess transcendental consciousness. Although Kant doesn't deny or affirm an 'after-life' (because such a judgment is a fanciful claim beyond the limits of reason), he emphasizes that the after-life's significance is its contribution to our efforts at understanding and responsible agency in this world. In short, whereas the exclusive goal of Hegel's system is to achieve Absolute Knowledge (as causal explanation) *beyond the sensuous world*, the goal of Kant's system is to achieve understanding (as an open-ended activity and responsible agency) *in the sensuous world.*

Hegel 'read out' of Kant what he 'read into' him. There is little evidence other than shared metaphors that he came even close to understanding him. The tragedy is that so many (including Strauß) thought that he did understand him.

On Strauß' Understanding of Kant

Six elements account for Strauß' understanding of Kant although he never thoroughly read him:

I)   Strauß' view of Kant in the *LJ*
II)   Carl Daub's Reading of Kant from Strauß' 1839 "Schleiermacher und Daub"
III) After a twenty year theological silence, a theology treatise nudged by the 'Return to Kant Movement'
IV)   What Hegel Distorted and Strauß Overlooked in Kant: Aesthetic Judgment
V)   On the Significance of Skepticism and the Copernican Turn
VI)   Why Strauß' Failed Kantian Turn Matters

I) Strauß' view of Kant in The Life of Jesus Critically Examined

In 1835, Strauß refers only to Kant's moral "ideals" and Christology while devoting no attention to the philosophical framework of Kant's *theoretical* and *practical* reason that grounds them. His Christology erroneously equates Schleiermacher's Christology of

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16. See Kant, *The Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 76–89, esp. 81*; 92, 151–152 and *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 467–468. See Recki, *Ästhetik der Sitten*: 272–278.

"Perfect God-consciousness" with Kant's Christology of "Moral Ideals." Furthermore, he entirely ignores Kant's presentation of the strength (*Kraft*) of reason that is able to grasp the imperceptible order of phenomena even, as in the case of beauty, without concepts as well as reason's sublimity being 'greater' than the infinite universe and more 'powerful' than nature.

I examine nine thematic strands to Strauß' reading of Kant as presented in the LJ:

1. Hegel's Reclined Plato and Kant as a 'subjectivist'
2. Strauß has no grasp of what Kant means by 'critique'
3. Religion is morality that is 'grounded' only in 'empty ideas'
4. Sensuousness is evil
5. Kant claimed no role for the resurrection and ascension of Christ. The afterlife defended by Strauß' Kant is merely the figurative expressions of humanity's embracing of the ideal of the moral order in the sense of Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" and F.C. Baur as merely 'abstract' and 'ineffectual' obligation
6. Strauß misunderstands the role of moral perfection in Kant's moral philosophy
7. Kant's exclusive focus was on the individual, not on the species
8. Strauß claims that Kant a) grounded moral principles in the scriptures and b) that Kant anachronistically projected the morality of his age onto the past.
9. Kant is faulted for not providing an historical account for the rise of religion or the scriptures.

1) Hegel's Reclined Plato and Kant as a 'Subjectivist'

Kant's 'ideal,' Strauß criticizes, is not the Hegelian, 'objective,' Absolute Idea but finite, subjective (and ineffectual) ideas "confined to reason." At least echoing Hegel's "Glauben und Wissen" of 1802, Strauß writes that *Kant* "[…] *as a philosopher, did not concern himself with* […] *history* […] *[H]e sought the idea involved in* […] *history : not, however, considering it as* […] *an absolute idea, at once theoretical as well as practical, but regarding it only on its practical side, as what he called the moral imperative and consequently belonging to the finite.*[17]" (emphasis added)

A helpful strategy for grasping what is meant here by 'objective' and 'subjective' is to employ Plato's *pre-figured* Similes of the Sun and Line:

In Book VI of the *Republic*, Plato employs the 'Simile of the Sun' (*Republic* 507b-509c) and 'Simile of the Line' (*Republic* 509c-511e) to indicate four regions of experience and their significance.[18]

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17. Strauß, *LJ*: 51.
18. For a drawing of the Simile of the Line and more detailed analysis, see Douglas McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*: 222–239. and McGaughey, *Religion Before Dogma: Groundwork in Practical Theology* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2006): 115–126. Available on-line with permission

Pressed by his interlocutors to say what the Good is, Socrates first employs the 'Simile of the Sun' as an introductory formulation of the functions of the Good. With Being consisting of the unchanging ideas of the mind, the Good itself is a 'unity above Being' (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσιας).[19] Plato speaks of the physical sun as the 'source' of light that is required for any and all perception in the world with the eye the most prized capacity that enables sight. Furthermore, the sun is also the source of (the condition that enables) all life in the world. The sun, then, has two functions: It is the source of light that 'unites' the eye and the object, and it also enables 'generation and growth.' According to Plato, we are to think of the Good in the imperceptible, intelligible realm of the mind as analogous to the physical sun in the perceptible realm: The Good enables intellectual perception and intellectual 'generation and growth.'

In the 'Simile of the Line' that immediately follows the Simile of the Sun, Plato describes experience by means of a 'stick figure' that is divided into four sections. He does not say explicitly that the line is to be drawn vertically, but the tradition took it to be so drawn.

Beginning with the vertical line as a 'whole', undivided line, Plato calls for an initial division between the perceptible realm of 'becoming' and the imperceptible realm of 'Being.' These two divisions, themselves are unequally divided in two, which results in four regions with the lower regions in both the perceptible and the imperceptible realms being larger than the upper regions. Beginning at the bottom, Plato labels these four regions as: 1) copies and shadows, 2) objects of perception, 3) understanding, and 4) reason. These regions get their 'size' because of the quantities they involve (not their 'importance'). Hence, there are more copies and shadows than there are objects of perception, and understanding is concerned with more content greater than reason.

'Imagination' is the key mental capacity that 'connects' the understanding with the 'images' of the objects of perception. The 'appearances' are, at least in principle, infinite. The 'imagination' is necessary because images, shadows, and objects cannot be placed directly in the mind. However, what 'connects' the two imperceptible realms of reason and understanding in the mind is 'ideas' (not 'images' of appearances, obviously) with both understanding and reason using the same ideas but for different functions.

The key to all four regions, according to Plato, is a bottom-up epistemological 'dialectic.' Beginning at the bottom, each of the segments establishes the theses and antitheses, which permits the experience of the segment above it. The differences among copies and shadows (requiring thesis and antithesis to distinguish among them) are 'united' (synthesis) by the appropriate, physical object of which they are a copy. In the second segment of the line, the differences among sets of physical objects (requiring thesis and antithesis to distinguish among them) are 'united' (synthesis) by

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of the respective publishers on the home page at https://criticalidealism.org. See as well in the "Foreword:" 19 n. 1.

19. Plato, *Republic* 509b.

their appropriate 'idea.' The differences among ideas (requiring thesis and antithesis to distinguish among them) result in the highest form of 'unification' (synthesis), that is, the Good. The Good is the originating unity, which Plato says is 'above Being,' yet inseparable from 'Being.'

Whereas the crucial point of transition between the perceptible and the imperceptible realms is the mental capacity of the 'imagination,' Plato calls 'understanding' the region of experience devoted to comprehending the realm of sense perception 'below' it. Understanding matches up the appropriate 'ideas' with the appearances of the sensible realm that are only experienced in the imagination, in order to 'make sense of' the lower realms of objects and copies/shadows. Understanding, then, constitutes the bulk of the individual's mental activity, according to Plato. Hence, its segment on the line is larger than that of reason above it.

Reason, Plato says, is the mental capacity of 'contemplation' (θεωρία, theoria), which employs the same ideas as the understanding but, unlike understanding which 'looks downward' to the realm of becoming, reason 'looks upward' towards the Good. It does so not by matching up an idea with its appropriate phenomena because the Good is 'above' all becoming and even ideas. In other words, *the Good is not the highest Idea.* Rather, reason contemplates the Good by distinguishing between ideas (as thesis and antithesis) as imperceptible, mental 'things' to then think what cannot be directly thought, which is their unity.

Given that the Good is taken to be 'above' Being but is on the unified continuum from shadows and images all the way up to the top of the line, *the Good*, then, *is neither an Idea among ideas nor is it mere nothing*. The Good is the ultimate unity of all ideas and understanding in the mind as well as the ultimate unity of all that is becoming in the perceptible realm. In short, *the Good is no 'thing'* (no-thing) *yet the imperceptible unity of everything*. Remove the Good, which is not nothing, and the whole system of dialectic collapses into nothingness. Plato's Simile of the Sun challenges his reader to think of this no-thingness of the Good as analogous to the Sun's two functions of light and life in the perceptible realm. The Good, then, is the 'light' of the mind that enables 'all that is.'

In my *Strangers and Pilgrims,*[20] I proposed that an option for understanding this two-fold function of the Good as no-thing yet connected to every-thing is to take it to be *the possibilities* that all actuality conceals but presupposes. Remove possibilities, and, like the light of the physical sun, there can be neither mental experience nor experience of perceptions in the world. Furthermore, possibilities, like the sun as source of generation and growth, are what is required for there to be any generation and growth, whatsoever. Plato's Good, then, would may be thought of as *amoral* possibilities, which are inseparably related to *moral virtue* because there is finite

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20. See McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*: 228–229. On Plato's Similes of the Sun and Line, see: 19, n. 1.

consciousness/mind that can assume responsibility for the possibilities that it intentionally actualizes.

Turning now to Hegel: His reading of Kant as a subjectivist can be understood as Hegel having *re-figured* Plato's four 'regions' of experience and their significance in that Hegel *con-figures* Plato's *pre-figuration* by means of new metaphors and adding a 'top-down' dialectical logic based on the ultimate synthesis of Absolute Spirit as the Good to Plato's 'bottom-up' epistemology.

Rather than treat the Simile of the Line as a vertical relationship (a standing stick figure) between the ultimate source and all that is dependent upon it, Hegel can be read as taking the Simile of the Line to be horizontal history (a reclined stick figure)with the ultimate source of all that is in the immeasurable past. Furthermore, Hegel can be read as adding to Plato's *bottom-up dialectical process* of understanding a claim for Absolute Knowledge of the ultimate source of 'all that is' by introducing *a top-down dialectical process of causal logic* to portray the generation of history out of its ultimate source.[21]

Just as Plato is said to have 'de-mythologized' Greek Mythology by substituting his doctrine of eternal ideas (λόγοι) for 'stories' (μῦθοι) about the Greek Gods, Hegel has 'de-mythologized' Greek Gnosticism by substituting his logical meta-narrative of Double Negation (λόγοι) for Gnostic stories (μῦθοι) of cataphasis/κατάφασις and apophasis/ἀπόφασις. *Hegel's 'novelty' is that his own anthropomorphic 'stick-figure' is reclined on a chaise lounge (κλίνη), not standing – as Plato's line is usually drawn. Hegel's version represents historical Immanentism in contrast to those who take Plato's line to represent a Personal Theism as 'outside' and 'above' history.*

In the *Timaeus* (27d ff; 69b-70a) , Plato describes 'creation' of the world as the action of the (anthropomorphic) Demiurge (a Personal Deity) who thinks and then copies her/his thoughts externally. In Philo of Alexandria[22] and Christianity (John's gospel and Justin Martyr, especially, as well as the Church Fathers, generally) this is expressed by the 'thought Logos' (λόγος ἐνδιάθετος) and the 'spoken Logos' (λόγος προφορικὸς). Creation by God is a two-step process: first, thinking; second, externalization of her/his thought in matter. Note: creation is described anthropomorphically!

Strauß writes indirectly of Hegel and the two forms of the λόγος in the *Glaubenslehre*:

> God is only a Person to the extent that he eternally generates his Son [McG: λόγος προφορικὸς] with whom He is joined in the unity of Spirit [McG: λόγος ἐνδιάθετος]. This would be that relationship in God that Hegel calls a play of love with Himself, which *does not amount to a serious alterity, that is, to separation and a rupture [Entzweiung, literally, a*

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

22. On Plato's/Philo's two-step creation, see the "Vol. II: Introduction:" 543.

twofoldness[23]]. Yet, amazingly, this is merely an immanent distinction within God Himself and is, according to Hegel, not yet truth. He [Hegel] says that *the life of God* and divine knowledge may well be an externally spoken [= λόγος προφορικὸς] play of love. However, this idea *diminishes to edification, even to blandness when the gravity, the pain, the patience, and the work of negation is not included in it.*"[24] (emphasis added)

Whereas Plato employs bottom-up dialectic to 'move up' the four segments of the line from shadows to the Good, Hegel, adds a 'top-down' dialectic of negation (horizontally, left-to-right) that accounts for the 'creation' of the multiplicity of ideas, the phenomenal world, and the emergence of finite consciousness. Finite consciousness as the level of 'understanding' is at least capable of being the location of a 'turn' or 'point of indifference.'[25] Those who 'know' are capable of 'reversing' this first sequence of dialectical negation that moves 'downward' from Absolute Spirit to multiplicity by means of the 'Platonic' dialectic that leads 'upward' to Absolute Spirit/Absolute Unity/Absolute Freedom, above multiplicity. A Dialectic of Double Negation (unity negating into multiplicity; multiplicity, in turn, negating into unity) governs Hegel's meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit coming to awareness of Itself in finite spirit (consciousness) at the 'point of indifference' (both as a turn to unity or non-difference and a turn away from multiplicity, which is ultimately affectless) where multiplicity is 'negated' in thought to 'return' to Absolute Spirit's Oneness. Absolute Spirit is the single, *a priori* synthetic dialectical judgment that is 'objectively' necessary for the creation of the conditions that are necessary in order for it to be experienced by 'subjective,' finite consciousness in history.

Therefore, according to Hegel, *Kant's 'limiting' of reason to 'finite consciousness' of phenomena is a decapitation of Absolute Reason.* With respect to Plato's Simile of the Line, then, *Kant limits reason to 'understanding' and he ignores the necessity of Absolute Spirit that is reason 'above' understanding.*

Hegel writes in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (*Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*):

Reason […] *demands of itself to lead perception, experience, understanding back to the infinite* [Plato's 'bottom-up' dialectic]. *That would be the most concrete thing, unification of the infinite with the finite of understanding or even of perception.*[26] (emphasis added)

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23. One can almost here Derrida's discussion of dyads here. The moral ideal, then, i

24. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 513.

25. Hegel calls this event in finite consciousness the ‚point of indifference." On ‚the point of indifference' as both a turn to non-difference and affectless, see the "Preface:" 50.

26. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* GW XX: 353.

α) On Hegel's singular, supposedly 'objective' and a priori, synthetic judgment:

Although Hegel's/the early Strauß' dialectical account of 'reality' commences with a singular, *a priori synthesis* of Absolute Oneness, this ultimate *a priori* synthetic element is 'dogmatically' necessary not because it can be empirically proved to exist but is logically necessary. Given the 'reality' of history, an *a priori* Absolute One has 'obviously' initiated the creation of all multiplicity that is the condition for finite consciousness to grasp Absolute Oneness as an *a posteriori* syntheses. It is the achievement of Hegelian 'science' or Absolute Knowledge of 'pure theoretical reason' that it can comprehend the entire cataphatic and apophatic process of negation that is 'truth.' In other words, the singular, *a priori* synthesis of Absolute Oneness, is 'scientifically' known only as the product of *a posteriori*, dialectical synthesis that only finite spirit (finite consciousness) is able to comprehend because it can comprehend unity in multiplicity.

However, this Hegelian notion of *synthesis* distorts Kant's pivotal, epistemological element of the Copernican Turn and *theoretical* reason. Kantian *a priori* synthetic judgment is no, objective (!) and absolutely knowable (!) *a priori,* dialectical synthesis that gives finite consciousness Absolute Knowledge and the prideful status of the pinnacle of the universe. Rather, Kant's notion of *a priori* synthetic judgment is a *required supplement* (*Ergänzung*) even to *a posteriori* dialectic's synthesis.[27] Kantian *a priori* synthetic judgment is concerned with what humanity *necessarily adds to the phenomena that are not given with the phenomena themselves in order to experience, understand phenomena and to exercise responsible agency in the world. Kant is neither speaking of a priori synthesis as an a priori, ultimate, eminent, causal orgin and goal of 'all that is' nor even as the consequence of a dialectic that determines a concept in common to a set of phenomena* (hence, *a posteriori*). Kant's understanding of *a priori* is 180° opposite to the goal of Hegelian 'scientific' logic.

β) On Hegel's Bifurcation of *Theoretical* and *Practical* Reason:

According to Hegel, 'theoretical reason' or what he calls 'theoretical philosophy' is concerned with the dimension of spiritual Absolute Knowledge, not with the understanding of the domain of empirical phenomena, which, in dramatic contrast, is the domain of Kant's 'theoretical reason.'[28]

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27. On the distinction between *a priori* synthesis as supplementary (*erweiternd*) and analytical illuminating (*erläuternd*), see Kant, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XIX: 968.

28. Kant speaks of two ‚domains' of reason: nature and autonomous freedom. See the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 175 ff. Both are experienced, as far as we have ever experienced them, only in a world of phenomena. Neither is concerned with rapturous claims (*Schwärmereien*) about 'absolute knowledge' 'above' phenomena, as the case with Hegel.

Whereas Kant distinguishes 'theoretical reason' from 'practical reason' as two complementary domains of empirical experience, which are governed by overlapping systems of lawfulness, Hegel separates them. Hegel's 'theoretical reason'/'theoretical philosophy' is concerned with 'abstraction,' whereas 'practical reason,' what he calls 'practical philosophy' is concerned with empirical experience. The former, theoretical reason, is 'synthetic'[29], and the latter, practical reason, is analytic.[30] *In contrast to Kant's notion of autonomous freedom that intentionally initiates a sequence of events that on its own nature could never accomplish, Hegel's concept of Absolute Freedom consists in liberation from sensuousness with all of its pain, suffering, and injustice because it is limited to the dimension of abstract Spirit*. Hegel's finite freedom consists merely in spontaneous choice within the confines of nature's own, limiting freedom and the state's social institutions. Neither Hegel nor Strauß have a notion remotely equivalent to Kant's autonomous freedom.

By yoking *theoretical* and *practical* reason and subordinating *theoretical* to *practical* reason, 'science' for Kant is not the route of escape from sensuousness or a license for humanity to capriciously exploit or 'subdue' nature, as Strauß suggests.[31] *Theoretical reason's subordination to practical reason is demanded by theoretical reason itself as an exercising of autonomous freedom*. Theoretical reason for Kant can only say 'what is.' It cannot begin to answer the highest question of transcendental consciousness: 'what ought to be." As far as we have experienced, no other species possesses in degree anything like humanity's theoretical and practical 'sovereignty' over nature. Why? – because it is *a sovereignty that is accompanied with the possibility of assumption of moral responsibility for its agency* unlike anything in degree remotely like humanity is capable!

To view the capacity of the mind with respect to nature as a power that subdues nature, as does Strauß, is profoundly different from Kant's notion of *practical* reason grounded in *autonomous freedom*, which involves *freedom-from* nature as well as *freedom-for* consciously creating things that nature cannot achieve on its own.

Without *autonomous freedom*, there is only 'subjugation' of nature by humanity. However, Kant makes clear that merely subduing nature is not the goal of either *theoretical* or *practical* reason. *Autonomous freedom* involves far more than the mere power of subjugation.[32] *Autonomous freedom* is the capacity that *makes it possible* for us to hold ourselves morally responsible for our decisions and actions.

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29. Hegel's notion of ‚synthesis' is that of dialectic, the result (*a posteriori*) of an examination of a 'thesis' and an 'antithesis." As I have said, his one, singular, *a priori* synthesis is a 'dogmatic' claim for Absolute Spirit as a *creative cause* of all that is.

30. See Hegel's "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 457–58, 460, 463, 466.

31. Strauß speaks of humanity's use of science to 'subdue' nature. Strauß, *LJ*: 778, 779–781.

32. This non-subjugation is clear from Kant's own discussion of the three forms of *categorical* imperatives. Although there is no proof or disproof that one is acting on a universal, moral principle, the first form of the *categorical imperative* offers a criterion to avoid merely acting on the basis of self-interest: We ought to act on the basis of a principle *that "we would want"* to be universal, like a

Autonomous freedom, then, is no license to destroy nature. Not least because there can be no theoretical or practical reason without a material world, humanity has a fundamental responsibility to preserve the material conditions upon which it depends to the degree that humanity influences those material conditions. This priority of the natural order of things is a crucial, yet ignored, element of the aim of 'subduing nature' that, on the one hand, Strauß values in 'science.' However, on the other hand, the Hegelian goal of 'science' as 'objective,' Absolute Knowledge and Absolute Freedom, as I have stressed, reduces the phenomenal world to insignificance/blandness (that is an indifference in two respects[33]) because the 'actual' representations of experience are a matter of indifference in the dual sense of 1) valuing Absolute Oneness over multiplicity and 2) phenomenal experience only serving as an 'empty' X in a logical equation.

However, according to Hegel and Strauß, Kant just didn't 'get it' because he limited his understanding of reason to what is 'understanding' on Plato's line. Hegel claims that Kant was aware of the importance of Absolute Spirit, but he chose to 'ignore' it. "That understanding [not reason] is the absolute of the human spirit, Kant never seems to have a slight doubt about,[34] but understanding is the absolutely fixed,

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law of nature. However, this is no excuse to turn capricious self-interest into a universal law. It is a commitment to seek universals to rein-in self-interest.

Among these wider, universal principles are what Kant calls the 'maxims of the understanding:' not allowing ourselves or treating the other as merely a means rather than an end, acknowledging the autonomous freedom (hence, dignity) of all other rational beings (see the second and third forms of the *categorical imperative* in Section II of the *Groundwork*, not lying, not taking one's own life because of melancholy, developing one's talents, responding to the suffering of others (Kant's four examples of *categorical imperatives* in Section II of the *Groundwork*), rejection of the exploitation, oppression, and persecution of others (including the rejection of racism, slavery, colonialism, and aristocracies (see "Was Kant a Racist? With an Addendum: On South Sea Islanders in the *Groundwork*" at https://criti calidealism.org/was-kant-a-racist-with-addendum-on-south-sea-islanders-01-may-2017/ [pdf version has page numbers] 7 January 2022), not intentionally testifying falsely against another (see *Critique of Practical Reason* (AA V: 30, 155–156), keeping promises (see the *Metaphysics of Morals*, AA VI: 219–210), not taking advantage of the inexperience of others (see the *Groundwork* AA IV: 397), and, especially, proper care of animals (see the *Metaphysics of Morals.*, AA VI: 443–444), ecological concern for nature (the material basis for all theoretical and practical reason) (see *ibid*., AA VI: 443). See Georg Geismann, "Kant's Alleged Racism: The Failure of Charles W. Mills(and all too many others) at https:/ /www.academia.edu/43558508/Kant_s_Alleged_Racism_The_Failure_of_Charles_W_Mills_and_ all_too_many_others_. See as well, Geismann, "Why Kant was not a 'Racist:' Kant's 'Race Theory' within the Context of Physical Geography and Anthropology – A Philosophical Approach Instead of Ideologically Motivated Ones" in *Annual Review of Law and Ethics – Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik*, 30 (2022): 263–357)., and McGaughey, "Was Kant Anti-Semitic? with an Addendum on Duty" at https://c riticalidealism.org/category/was-kant-a-racist/.

33. On the two meanings of Hegel's notion of 'indifference,' see the "Preface:" 50.

34. Hegel appears to be referencing to Kant's claim that it never occurred to Kant to doubt the existence of things (see *Prolegomena* AA IV: 293) and that the very *a priori* conditions, capacities, and structures of transcendental consciousness could never be experienced were there to be no phenomenal world that requires them for the phenomenal world to be experienced, understood, and for there to be

insurmountable finiteness of human reason."[35] Hence, Kant is a 'mere subjectivist' and rejects Hegel's 'objective' Absolute Knowledge.

In other words, were Hegel and the early Strauß to have adequately understood Kant's notion of the 'limits' to reason, they could have grasped that their claims to 'objective' Absolute Knowledge would merely be the ineffective flapping of the Dove imagining that flying in a vacuum would be easier and dreaming that it could do so.[36] In the "First Preface" to the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant writes: "[…] the chief question is always simply this: – what and how much can the understanding and reason know apart from all [empirical] experience? Not: – how is the faculty of thought itself possible? *The latter is* […] *the search for the cause of a given effect, and to that extent is similar to a hypothetical in character* (although as I shall show elsewhere, it is not really so) […]."[37] (Kant's parentheses) (emphasis added)

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the domain of responsible agency. Yet, Kant surely did not ignore either 'noumena' or the Noumenon (God).

On 'noumena,' generally, see *Critique of Pure Reason* B 311: "The division of objects into phenomena and noumena and of the world into a world of the senses and a world of the intellect can therefore not be admitted at all in a positive sense, although concepts do admit the division into sensual and intellectual ones; for one cannot determine an object for the latter and therefore also cannot declare them to be objectively valid. If we abandon the senses, how can one make it comprehensible that our categories (which would be the only remaining concepts for noumena) still mean something universally because, for their relation to some object, something more than merely the unity of thought, namely, a possible perception, must be given, to which they can be applied. [McG: Note: *Kant is rejecting dualism here*!] Nonetheless, if the concept of a noumenon be taken in a merely problematic sense, it is not only admissible, but as setting limits to sensibility [it] is likewise indispensable. However, in that case a noumenon is not a special intelligible object for our understanding, but the understanding appropriate to it is itself a problem. Namely, it is not understood discursively by means of categories but intuitively whose possibility we can't begin to conceive. In this way, our understanding gets a negative extension. That is, it is not limited by sensuousness but rather limits it by calling things in themselves (not considered as appearances) noumena. However, it also immediately limits itself not to recognize them by any categories and, thus, thinks them only under the name of an unknown something."

On the 'Noumenon' (God), see *Prolegomena* AA IV: 356–357: "If we connect the command to avoid all transcendent judgments of pure reason with the command (which apparently conflicts with it) to proceed to concepts that lie beyond the field of its […] empirical use, we discover that both can subsist together but only at the boundary of all permitted use of reason […]

However, we remain on this boundary if we limit our judgment only to the relationship that the world may have to a being whose concept itself lies beyond all knowledge of which we are capable within the world. For then we do not attribute to the highest being any of the qualities in itself by which we think of objects of experience, and thereby avoid dogmatic anthropomorphism; but we nevertheless attribute them to the relation of it to the world and permit ourselves a symbolic anthropomorphism, which in fact concerns only language and not the object itself."

35. Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen" GW II: 313.
36. See *Critique of Pure Reason* B 8–9. See as well, *Groundwork* AA IV: 462–463.
37. *Critique of Pure Reason* A xvii.

2) Strauß has no grasp of what Kant means by 'critique'

Given that Strauß has no grasp of the Kantian notion of *a priori* synthetic judgment, he has no understanding of what Kant means by 'critique.' Strauß engages in "criticism," not "critique" of the gospels. Criticism is *a posteriori* analytical; critique is *a priori* synthetic. Strauß examination of the gospels is literary criticism, not transcendental critique.

Strauß' "criticism" involves an incredibly detailed analysis of the text as an exercise in *diairesis* (διαίρεσις),[38] breaking down into its constitutive parts a set of phenomena for the purpose of comparing and contrasting them among themselves and with other phenomena. It is a form of analysis that is concerned with perceptible phenomena, not the *a priori* conditions that make it possible for us to perceive phenomena.

That Strauß' understanding of *Kritik* as empirical ‚criticism' has nothing to do with 'transcendental critique' is most clear in his *Hermann Samuel Reimarus und seine Schutzschrift* [*Herman Samuel Reimarus and his Protected Writing*] Nowhere does Strauß refer to the task of identifying the conditions of possibility of transcendental consciousness in any form. Rather, *Kritik* is the objective 'criticism' of *diairesis*, which distinguishes between and among perceptible phenomena. Strauß identifies two levels of *Kritik* in Reimarus' work: the first distinguishes between what is 'supernatural' and 'natural' whereas the second distinguishes between what is historically factual and historically false.[39] Because the 'mythical' involves, usually, only the 'critical' distinguishing between the 'supernatural' and the 'natural' (with only a few mythical stories having an historical kernel) and in light of Strauß' criticism that 'First' Testament stories, unlike Classical Mythology, have not benefited from the shift to historical criticism as in the 'pagan' world.[40] Strauß' focus after the first *LJ* of 1835 is historical criticism to the neglect of the 'kernel' at the core of the *genetic mythical principle*: the presupposed, individual theology that shaped the writings of the scriptural authors.

3) Religion is morality that is ‚grounded' only in ‚empty ideas:'

A paradigmatic example of Strauß engaging in 'criticism' and not what Kant calls 'critique' as well as illustrative of Strauß' failure to understand Kant, is Strauß' use of the metaphors, but not the content, of Kant's understanding of 'pure' religion.[41] Primarily, Strauß is only concerned to establish from the perspective of Hegelian 'science' that

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

39. See D. F. Strauß, *Gesammelte Schriften von David Friedrich Strauß*, Vol. 5 (Bonn: Verlag von Emil Strauß, 1877): 269–270; see as well, *ibid*.: 252, 269, and 31).

40. See Strauß, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus*: 296.

41. Kant uses the label 'pure' religion in the second "Preface" to *Religion* AA VI: 12–14. The following three texts contain the same paragraph on 'pure' religion: *Vorlesungen über Moralphilosophie*

Kant takes religion to be merely 'morality' and that Kant's understanding of morality is merely 'subjective' and concerned with 'empty abstractions." In short, Strauß takes Kant's moral theory to be a version of abstract, moral duty that seeks, but can only fail, to achieve moral perfection in the world, and Kant's so-called moral theory of religion entirely ignored the 'true' metaphysical significance of the Noumenon.

According to Strauß in *LJ* of 1835, Kant only took religion to consist of the moral significance at the core of religious texts. Strauß took Kant's moral theory to consist of the abstraction of a categorical ideal and is merely "an empty obligation"[42] because it consists of "[…] a collection of empty ideas […] [driven by merely] an overwhelming obligation"[43] *to seek* [external], *"moral perfection"*[44] without any connection with concrete experience.[45] "[…] [T]his ideal remains essentially confined to […] reason, because it cannot be adequately represented by any example in outward experience, since [*sic.*] such an example would not fully disclose the inward disposition, but would only admit of our forming dubious inferences [….]"[46]

Furthermore, Strauß criticizes Kant for not providing an historical account of the development of religion (as did Hegel, in Strauß' judgment) much less attribute his moral reading to the intent of the original authors of the scriptures. In short, a) Kant's Christology is not grounded in an historical theology, and in Strauß' judgment it fails, further, b) to account for how the "historical" text came to be the expression of a moral significance as well as fails c) to show that there is a relationship between the original intentions of the 'Second' Testament authors and the moral insight of the reader.

In contrast, the *LJ* concludes by focusing on Strauß' extreme, Left-Wing Hegelian Christology on the announcement of an epistemological condition for humanity to "know" (i.e., become) God in history. Kant is claimed, to the contrary, to be unhistorical and unphilosophical![47]

Although Strauß acknowledges that Kant suggested that "long before the existence of these [historical, written] records [of the 'First' and 'Second' Testament], the disposition to a moral religion as the pursuit of moral perfection was 'latent' in the human mind,[48]" Strauß claims that Kant limits the significance of this "latent" moral disposition to a theistic conclusion: "that [… the 'latent' moral disposition's] first

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(*Mrongovius*) AA XXVIII 1468; *Moralphilosophie Collins* AA XXVII 326–327; and *Eine Vorlesung Kants über Ethik* (Menser) ME: 128.

On Kant's notion of 'pure', see: 558, n. 109. On 'pure' religion, see: 928, n. 189.

42. See Strauß, *LJ*: 779
43. See Strauß, *LJ*: 776.
44. See Strauß, *LJ*: 774.
45. See Strauß, *LJ*: 51, 776–777.
46. Strauß, *LJ*: 774.
47. See Strauß, *LJ*: 52.
48. Strauß is quoting *Religion* AA VI: 82 although he gives no indication that that is the case or a page citation. See *LJ* 777: "Kant had […] said that the good principle did not descend from heaven merely at a particular time, but had descended on mankind invisibly from the commencement of the human race […]" Strauß, *LJ*: 777.

'historical' manifestations were directed to the worship of the Deity [...]" (51), as if Kant's "moral" religion was supposed to provide *speculative* information concerning the divine intention of history, which is not Kant's but is (!) Strauß' theological concern and the reason why Strauß so intently focuses on Christology. For Strauß in 1835, the Christ event is the key for understanding the meaning, purpose, and value of history because the Christ event consists in the awareness of the spiritual divinization of humanity.

As I've shown, Strauß takes the 'key to Christology' to consist, then, not 'in the mind of a unique, single individual,' Jesus of Nazareth, but an idea that "exists in historical reality" as the God/Man label appropriate to all of humanity in history. He contrasts this Christology not only with the church's but also with Kant's, who, according to Strauß, viewed the significance of Christology to be "in the mind only."[49] However, this is because Strauß erroneously accuses Kant of grounding his notion of reason in mere abstractions as "a collection of subjective, empty ideas and ideals."[50]

Strauß repeats this claim about Kant's abstract, "moral" religion at several points in the *LJ* of 1835 and in his *Streitschriften* published in 1837 shortly after the *LJ*. What does Strauß mean with the assertion that Kant's Christology is in the mind only? He appears to mean that Christology, for Kant, is concerned with the abstract *ideals* of morality as a perfect system, only symbolically incarnated in an individual. That is, Kant's Christology is taken to be the paradigmatic representative of Hegel's 'moral duty' of "The Moral World View" in the *Phenomenology*. Because these ideals are merely abstract, they cannot accomplish the task of overcoming concrete sensuousness, where Strauß in 1835 locates evil.[51]

Hence, Strauß wrote that, although Kant had maintained that "the good principle," represented as "[...] the descent of Jesus from heaven [... and], as an imaginative description of the ideal of humanity well-pleasing to God,"[52] "had descended on mankind invisibly from the commencement of the human race ...," he "understood under that expression only the moral instinct, which, with its ideal of good, and its sense of duty, has been from the beginning implanted in man.[53]"

What this 'reduction to morality' means, according to Strauß, is that Kant failed to reach the Hegelian, *metaphysical* understanding of history as a process of Spirit coming to awareness of Itself[54] but *limited religion to the pursuit of moral perfection*. Strauß claims: "... if the idea [... has] no corresponding reality (*Wirklichkeit*), it is an empty obligation and ideal," and "we should thus have fallen back again to Kant's point of

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49. See Strauß, *LJ*: 780.
50. Strauß, *LJ*: 776.
51. See Strauß, *LJ*: 775.
52. Strauß, *LJ*: 51.
53. Strauß, *LJ*: 777.
54. See Strauß, *LJ*: 777.

view, which we have ourselves found unsatisfactory [...]"[55] for *the individual's and humanity's achieving meaning, purpose, and value in history as achieving knowledge of Absolute Spirit.*

In contrast, for Strauß, the Christ event provides the *external* (!) account that informs humanity of its *central place in the metaphysical, divine plan of history*!, where 'eternal', Absolute Spirit is experienced in the 'present' as the Hegelian Second Negation that returns to Absolute Spirit only in finite consciousness. Humanity's meaning, purpose, and value is anchored not only in its participation in the divine plan of history but also in humanity being the keystone to history as the location where history is overcome and humanity is "reconciled with God," that is, divinized.

α) Hegel's Athanasianism and Strauß' Arianism: A Difference in 'Level' of Divinization

In the theological world of Eastern Christianity, the alternatives between Hegel's and Strauß' Christology can best be profiled against the backdrop of the Arian Controversy at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE that shaped Eastern Christian conceptions onward that consisted of a quarrel over the 'level' of human divinization: directly with God (Athanasius et al.) or at the level of the Logos/Christ (Arius).

Given that for Hegel man is the point where God becomes aware of Itself in the second negation of the Concept (where, by means of thinking the One, it becomes possible for God to be aware of Its oneness in that the many is negated back to the One), Hegel can be viewed as representing an Athanasian Christology that in spirit as the Absolute Idea (not in its representation as an historical event) results in the divinization of humanity at the "level" of the Father in accordance with the Athanasian formula: 'God became Man that man might become God.'

In his "The Different Schools of Thought on Christology among the Hegelians," Strauß identifies himself with the "Left-wing" Hegelians,[56] who themselves are equally representatives of the Athanasian Christological reading of Hegel (at least for 'the few' philosophers). However, Strauß acknowledges that the Left-wing Hegelians reject him because his own Christology is not a metaphysical but a "historical" Christology that views humanity as a totality to be the pinnacle of the historical process by means of which the God/Man is the universal keystone to all of history as God externalizes Himself and returns to Himself only through *individual*, human consciousness.

Therefore, rather than presenting an Athanasian Christology, Strauß' *inclusive* Christology is but an Arian Christology expressed by the formula: 'There was a time

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55. Strauß, *LJ*: 779. See as well, Strauß claimed that Kant "[...] palmed upon us a collection of empty ideas and ideals [...]." (*LJ,* 776)
56. See Strauß, *Streitschriften* III: 126.

when the Son was not.' *The divinity of the Son is a created divinity* (albeit, created by a causal logic of negation, not a Personal God as in Christian Platonism) that occurs with the very first 'objectification' of the One in the Many of 'ideas'/*Logos* (not the historical Jesus portrayed by mere 'representations' in the 'Second' Testament stories). The eternal *Logos* (the 'ideas' generated out of Absolute Spirit) remains the condition of possibility for humanity to achieve divinization, according to Strauß, but, unlike the Hegelians, for Strauß that divinization occurs *in history* where finite consciousness alone experiences "ideas" (the *Logos* who is *represented* as incarnated in the Christ). In other words, the individual Christian in history *does not become* 'God the Father' with 'the point of indifference' by which multiplicity is negated. The individual Christian in history is united with *'God the Son,'* the created, spiritually 'eternal order' brought about by the First Negation. This moment of divinization occurs in finite consciousness, in history, as the ever-present, spiritual Second Negation. It is a 'turn' to the *created God* of 'eternal ideas' (the *Logos*' multiplicity). Strauß' *inclusive* Christology affirms humanity's experience as a species.[57] of the 'eternal Logos' in the 'present' – a theme to which Strauß returns at the very end of volume II of his *Glaubenslehre.*

The early Strauß viewed the fulfillment of religion to be achieved in the individual when the divine idea is grasped spiritually (not simply in a subjective 'representation' of a historical person). Thereby, the idea

> [...] has its confirmation no longer in [subjective] history but in [objective] philosophy. *When the mind has thus gone beyond sensible history, and entered into the domain of the absolute, the former ceases to be essential* [!]*; it takes a subordinate place, above which the spiritual truths suggested by history stand self-supported*; sensible history becomes as the faint image of a dream which belongs only to the past, and does not, like the idea, share the permanence of the spirit which is absolutely present to itself [...] Thus if we know the incarnation, death and resurrection, the *duplex negatio affirmat*, as the eternal circulation, the infinitely repeated pulsation of the divine life, what special importance can attach to a single fact, which is but a mere sensible image of this unending process? Our age demands to be led in Christology to the idea in the fact [in history], to the race in the [historical] individual: a theology which, in its doctrines on the Christ, stops short at him as an individual, is not properly a theology, but a homily.[58] (partial emphasis added)

In contrast to the Athanasian and Arian options of the East, Traditional Personal Theism turned the 'spiritual meaning of the text' (Matthew 13:13[59] and I Cor. 3:1–2[60]) into a 'literal' reading of the text that insisted that the narratives in the gospels were historical facts. According to Strauß of the *LJ*, the literal reading entirely missed the

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57. See Strauß, *LJ*: 780.
58. Strauß, *LJ*: 781.
59. "The reason I talk to them in parables is that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding."
60. "I treated you as sensual men, still infants in Christ. What I fed you with was milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it; and indeed, you are still not ready for it since you are still unspiritual."

spiritual truth of Christianity that finite consciousness is the location for the spiritual divinization of humanity, properly understood.

B) A Misreading of Kant's Religion and Christology

Kant's religion is not only not (!) reduced to 'a mere moral theory' of abstraction as Strauß claimed, but also, precisely because of the limits to reason, it is not (!) a flight of metaphysical fancy that seeks to escape moral imperfection by achieving Absolute Knowledge that consists of 'truly,' Absolute Freedom above sensuousness.

Strauß acknowledges Kant's avoidance of the Christological narrowness of Traditional Personal Theism with his 'symbolic' Christ. However, by defining religion as morality and by taking morality to be the expectation of achieving moral perfection (consequentialism), Strauß' Kant ends up with a discouragingly pessimistic, infinitely-open quest to achieve religious 'blessedness'[61] that consists of being well-pleasing to God – with only a sliver of hope in divine grace.

In his presentation of Kant in the *LJ,* Strauß has failed to understand Kant's Christology. To be sure, the Christ for Kant is not an idea seeking its identification with an individual (as Traditional Personal Theism maintained) but is the "Son" of the Creator as the *a priori* synthetic system of moral duty that the individual, only for her-/himself, is able to actualize through ethical effort in the sensuous world. According to Strauß in the *LJ*, though, Kant fails because he gives no account of how this '*a priori* synthetic system of moral principles has been brought about by the meta-narrative of Double Negation. Kant's Christology not only remains detached from concrete history, but also, given Strauß' reading of Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" from the *Phenomenology*[62] and F.C. Baur's *Gnosis.* Kant's Christology is an abstract duty incapable of overcoming sensuousness and nature's material determinism, which make any and all 'perfect,' ethical achievement impossible.[63]

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61. Rather than appreciate the significance of autonomous freedom as the location for an optimistic (even if muted), non-determined 'openness' in the 'blind causality' of the material world, Strauß' reading of Kant on religion views moral open-enededness pessimistically ('I can't' as Hegel formulated in "The Moral View of the World") and is almost exactly the same as F.C. Baur's with the exception of their differences in Christology. See the "Preface:" 37, n. 8.

62. See Hegel, "The Moral View of the World" in *Phänomenologie* GW III: 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. and Chapter 7: "Practical Reason Elevates Theoretical Reason:" the section "Hegel's Account of 'The Moral View of the World' is not Kant's Mor:" 727 ff.

63. For an account of the centrality of a Kantian understanding of spirit as constitutive of the human condition, see McGaughey and James R. Cochrane, *The Human Spirit: Groundwork* (Stellenbosch: African Sun Media, 2017).

However, Kant's Christology is concerned with, but by no means reducible to, a moral "ideal," as Strauß suggests in the *LJ*, and it is, also, no "empty obligation.[64]" The 'moral ideal' confirms humanity's possession of an extra-*ordinary, autonomous freedom*, which is the condition of possibility for there to be any need of a moral ideal much less to assume responsibility for one's ethical effort – not to mention that it is *autonomous freedom* that makes it possible for humanity to respond to the anxieties and sufferings not only of one's own but also of others' by seeking the fulfilment of a just and virtuous order present as the imperceptible, Commonweal of God.

In other words, Kant's moral theory is no reduction of humanity down to a fruitless, pointless, and empty, merely individual moral effort. It requires a world of understanding and personal agency as well as the invisible, Commonweal of God (Re-ich Gottes) that is a 'culture that promotes the (moral) will' and not merely a 'culture of skills.' Humanity is the 'place' where there is a 'rupture' in nature's inescapable; 'blind'; material causality. The moral ideal, then, is an ideal grounded in the efforts of the individual and community (the culture of rearing, not simply the culture of skills[65]) committed to moral *faith* that seeks to assume subjective responsibility for decisions and actions, not faith in subjective, *miraculous examples or objective, metaphysically speculative claims* about the ultimate, cause, meaning, purpose, and value of life. Kant wrote of miracles in *Religion within the Limits of mere Reason*:

> Should we […] accept that from time to time, and in special cases, God allows nature to deviate from [… physical] laws, then we do not have the least conception, nor can we ever hope to attain one, of the law according to which God promotes any such occurrence (apart from the general moral law that whateverf God does will all be good [McG: Scholastic 'Occasionalism'] […]) Here reason is as paralyzed, for it is held back in its affairs, neither can it ever hope to be thus instructed in the world.[66]

Kant recognizes that only the individual can experience, understand, exercise agency, and assume responsibility for that agency *for itself, not for any other*. However, the individual is by no means solipsistic when it comes to her/his moral effort. Moral effort requires a public community that understands the imperceptible, *a priori* synthetic nature of morality but also provides moral support to 'do what is right because it is right' and not act solely on the basis of self- or communal-interest.

As much as Kant recognized the need for public, sensible religion, he was equally aware that this 'public world' constituted a threat to moral effort as much as moral effort is dependent upon it. In his presentation of the capacities (*Anlagen*) that are 'good' (in an *amoral* sense) at the very beginning of *Religion*, Kant describes three elements that shape humanity: Animality, Humanity, and Personality.[67] As the case

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64. See Strauß' claim that it is in the *LJ*: 779.
65. See Kant, The *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 431–432.
66. Kant, *Religion*: AA VI: 86–87. See the footnote on AA VI: 85*.
67. See "I. On the original capacities to good in human nature" in *Religion* AA VI: 26–28.

with Plato's three elements of the soul (appetites, rage/ θῦμος, and reason), the goal for Kant is not to eliminate any one of these three elements but to 'properly' cultivate them. Whereas the appetites of animality can easily, and obviously, be abused, Kant calls the abuse of 'humanity' (*Menschheit*) the blind pursuit of status and prestige in the eyes of others. Plato, too, acknowledges that 'honor,' which is the key to his element of the soul's rage/ θῦμος (*Republic* 582d; 475a), absent awareness of anything higher (reason) believes it has achieved the pinnacle of morality when it seeks to win honor among its peers (*Republic* 584d). Yet, honor is not the least adequate as a moral criterion. It is not under the control of the individual, but, to the contrary, the decision over what counts as honor is determined by the 'other' and can be extremely capricious. Left to itself alone, it can lead to immorality as the individual seeks to win applause from her/his peers *for the wrong reasons*. Hence, Kant, as well as Plato, speak of a capacity that is 'higher than honor,' which is necessary for moral governance: 'Personality' (Plato: reason). The key to Personality, according to Kant, is "respect for the moral law,"[68] which is the basis for reining in the appetites and honor. – not the elimination of either!

Here is where the spark jumps from the individual to the community for Kant. 'Personality' requires the support and encouragement (not an external, heteronomous, moral finger-wagging) of a community, not just a single individual, driven by passion for the invisible capacities of humanity. Kant calls this community, the Commonweal of God.[69] Furthermore, Kant acknowledges that moral effort can be (although when improper, it can be morally corrupting) benefited by public, sensible, ritual.[70] He speaks of internal prayer and the Church as an institution (again, when properly understood), but he also acknowledges the symbolic value of the two core rituals in Christianity (baptism and communion), which one finds in other religions as well. *Baptism is* not a ritual of objective washing away of sin but of the community's acceptance of responsibility for the moral development as well as the cultivation of technical skills,[71] and communion as an expression of the cosmopolitan moral community. However, Kant entirely rejects all public expressions of religion that are turned into physical means (that is, statutory external rules and actions[72]) to achieve "blessedness."[73] The goal of all such sensible forms of religion is to encourage the 'realization' of the inward Commonweal of God through the moral efforts of the community. In short, the goal is communal, moral virtue anchored in human creative autonomy, not personal 'happiness' or divine 'blessedness.' Kant expresses this symbolically:

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68. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 27.
69. See Kant, *Religion*: "IV. The Idea of a Commonweal of God cannot be realized (by human organization) except in the for of a church:" AA VI: 100–102.
70. See Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 193.
71. See Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 199–200.
72. See Kant, *Religion*: "Part Two: On Counterfeit Service [*Afterdienst*] in a Statutory Religion:" AA VI.
73. See Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 178–179.

[...][It] is our universal human duty to *elevate* ourselves to this *ideal of moral perfection*, i.e. *to the prototype of moral disposition*[74] [*Gesinnung*] in its entire purity, and for this the very idea [...] can give us force. Precisely because we are not its authors[75] but the idea has rather established itself in humanity without our comprehending how [...], it is better to say that that prototype has come down to us from heaven [...] This union with us may therefore be regarded as a state of abasement of the Son of God if we represent to ourselves this God-like human being, as our prototype, [...] not bound to submit to sufferings, [... who] takes these upon himself in the fullest measure for the sake of promoting the world's greatest good [...][76]

Kant adds shortly later:

From the practical point of view [that is, with respect to 'practical' reason] this idea [of elevation to the ideal of moral perfection] *has complete reality within itself. For it resides in our morally-legislating [re-producing] reason. We ought to conform to it, and therefore we must also be able to conform to it.* If one had to prove beforehand the possibility of being a man according to this archetype, as is inevitably necessary with concepts of nature (*so that we do not run the risk of being held back by empty concepts*), then we would also have to have misgivings about granting even the moral law the status of being the unconditional and yet sufficient determinant of our arbitrariness. For how it is possible that the mere idea of lawfulness can be a more powerful motive for freedom than all conceivable ones derived from [sensuous] advantages, can neither be seen by reason nor proved by examples of experience because, as far as the first is concerned, the law commands absolutely, and as far as the second is concerned, *even if there never had been one human being capable of unconditional obedience to the law, the objective necessity that there be such a human being would yet be undiminished and self-evident.*[77] *There is no need*, therefore, *of any example from experience to make the idea of a human being morally pleasing to God a model to us; the idea is present as model already in our reason.* – If anyone, in order to accept for imitation a human being as such an example of conformity to that idea, asks for more than what he sees [that is, we see only imperfection (McG)] [...] and if, in addition, he also asks for miracles as credentials, to be brought about either through that human being or on his behalf – he who asks for this thereby c*onfesses to his own moral unbelief*, to a lack of faith in virtue which no faith based on miracles (and thus only historical) can remedy, for *only faith in the practical validity of the idea that lies in our reason has moral worth.*[78] (emphasis added)

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74. Moral perfection refers to the disposition to ethical effort, not the consequentialist achievement of ends.

75. ... any more than we are the authors of physical laws!

76. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 60–61.

77. Kant has anticipated and is criticizing Schleiermacher's Christology of "Perfect God-consciousness" as well as Strauß' critique of Schleiermacher that the imperfect effects of God-consciousness in humanity do not justify an actual example of a perfect cause (the Christ as possessor of Perfect God-consciousness). Kant's claim is that we don't require an *actual* example of perfect fulfilment of the moral law. We only require the self-expectation of perfect fulfilment, and that can only be found as always and already present in the individual. How that is possible is inexplicable, but it is a matter of *moral faith*.

78. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 162–163.

Even our failure to achieve objective perfection is no limitation because, according to Kant, true moral *perfection consists in the inward 'disposition'* [*Gesinnung*] *not the external achievement* (consequences) *of moral purity*! We have control over the disposition (although only the individual can know whether or not s/he has invoked the disposition through the self-selection of a moral principle), but we don't have control over ethical, external achievement. The 'disposition' is the key to perfection, not ethical achievement:

> [...] [A] change of heart [...] must itself be possible because it is a duty. – Now the deed is *every time* (not in general [*überhaupt*], but at each instant) defective? The solution rests on the following: According to our mode of estimation, [to us] who are unavoidably restricted to temporal conditions in our conceptions of the relationship of cause to effect, *the deed, as a continuous advance in infinitum from a defective good to something better*,[79] always remains defective, so that we are bound to consider the good as it appears in us, i.e. according to the deed, as at each instant inadequate to a holy law. But *because of the disposition from which it derives and which transcends the senses, we can think of the infinite progression* of the good toward conformity to the law as being judged by him who scrutinizes the heart (through h is pure intellectual intuition) *to be a perfected whole* even with respect to the deed (the life conduct). *And* [*sic.*] *so notwithstanding his* difficulty lies here: How can this disposition count for the deed itself, when this *permanent deficiency, a human being can still expect to be in* general [*überhaupt*] *well-pleasing to God* [that is, possessing a perfect moral disposition (McG)], at whatever point in time his existence be cut short.[80] (emphasis added)

Far from the moral ideal consisting in an ineffectual abstraction or an unrealizable goal, as Strauß claimed Kant to mean in 1835, faith in the moral ideal, according to Kant, is faith in there being moral order that structures the causality that is our autonomous freedom just as there is a physical order that structures the causality of our material experience. This faith gives us confidence in our capacity to act in accordance with the moral order and in harmony with nature. We give up our humanity when we deny this freedom, but, when we embrace this freedom, we also embrace our capacity of a perfect moral disposition to act in accordance with the lawful (moral) order that governs this causality. Rather than 'well-pleasing to God' and ethics consisting of a goal yet to be achieved, they both are an indelible and ineradicable capacity that makes responsible agency always possible. *The only ambiguity about being 'well-pleasing to God' is on the shoulders of the agent – will I or will I not give myself permission to act on the basis of a 'wide,'[81] moral principle?* As a capacity 'in general' (*überhaupt*), I can, but only the individual can establish for her-/himself what he 'should' allow himself to do:

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79. This is the key to Kant's two accounts of the 'knock at the door' (see 789, n. 263) and his invocation of the entire species as the goal of moral improvement, not simply the goal of individual, moral improvement.

80. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 66–67.

81. Categorical imperatives are 'wide,' universal principles in contrast to the 'narrow' rules that govern technical skills and the civic law In other words, not all imperatives are categorical imperatives.

[...] only a human being conscious of [...] a moral disposition in himself as enables 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 himself not an unworthy object of divine pleasure*.[82] (emphasis added)

γ) Neither Happiness nor Pleasing God, but Worthiness of Happiness in History

Throughout his career, Kant stressed the issue of worthiness as the key concern of humanity, not happiness.[83] Morality is at the core of what it means to be human not because it will make us happy. Rather, morality is concerned with *worthiness* for whatever happiness independent of the experience of happiness itself. The worthiness of happiness has nothing to do with the degree of *external* success or failure. It has to do with *internal* decision taking and effort.

Already in his *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie* from 1774/5 (that is, in his so-called pre-critical period), Kant had said that worthiness is the condition of possibility for happiness.[84] In his *Metaphysik Mrongovius* from 1783 he underscored, again, that "worthiness" is far superior to happiness: "[...] a person finds in so far no satisfaction in his reason [...] than when he makes the effort to know and to achieve his *summum bonum*, that is, the highest final end of all his goals, the highest degree of worthiness to be happy combined with the greatest moral life.[85] In the *Critique of Practical Reason*[86] from 1788, Kant had suggested that the goal of morality is not happiness (for example, *the receipt of divine pleasure*) but the worthiness of happiness, no matter how great or small the consequences of one's efforts. In fact, the "principle of happiness," which states "Love yourself above everything else, but love God and your neighbor for your self-interest," is exactly the opposite to the "principle of morality."[87]

However, the issue is not that moral worthiness is what earns or guarantees happiness. We have no control over what brings us happiness, and, in fact, the thing

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On the difference between 'categorical' and 'hypothetical' imperatives in Kant, *Groundwork* IV: 414–421. On the difference between 'wide' and 'narrow' obligation, see Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 390–391 and: 791.

82. 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-ascription of the moral law. In short, Hegel/Strauß are ethical consequentialists whereas Kant is a moral archaeologist.

83. On the role of happiness in Kant's reflections on morality, see the "Foreword:" 28, n. 11.

84. Kant, *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004): 12, see also n. 10.

85. Kant, *Metaphysik Mrongovius*, AA XXIX: 948: " [...] man finds no satisfaction for his reason [...other] than striving to recognize and achieve his summum bonum, i.e. the ultimate aim of all his goals, which [consists in] the highest degree of worthiness to be happy combined with the greatest morality."

86. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 450 – worthy even without attainment of happiness; and *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 130–131.

87. See Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 83*.

that brought us happiness in the past may not bring us happiness today or tomorrow. However, we do have control over whether or not we have committed to moral effort in our decisions and actions, which is alone what would make us worthy of happiness. *Worthiness is nothing objectively measurable. Only the individual can know if, and what, moral principle s/he invoked to give her-/himself permission to act. Hence, only the individual can know whether or not s/he is worthy of happiness.* The necessary constant throughout our lives over which we have control is whether or not we are worthy of whatever happiness we might experience now or in the future.

If Kant's Christology is no mere abstraction, and its goal is not personal happiness – although it does not deny happiness, why is it not just empty ideals, as Strauß proposed in 1835? The answer is as concrete as any answer can be: Kant's Christology is a call to be and to become human in history by exercising and taking personal responsibility for the capacities that are necessary for us to experience the world as we do.

δ) The learly Strauß and Hegel: A Call out of History

Strauß' Christology of 1835 is a version of divinization that seeks identity with God *beyond history* as the realization of the double negation that is the Christ. *Strauß' Christ of 1835 is a turn away from "sensuousness" and history whereas Kant's Christology is concerned with human beings being/becoming human in the world in and through sensuousness and history.*

Contrary to Peter Hodgson and James Livingston that Strauß was not a Hegelian,[88] it is clear that the *LJ* of 1835 is shaped by Hegel's "absolute philosophy." History is a profound process of "double negation." The goal of history is its own denial in order that the eternal and absolute One (i.e., God) can experience Itself. Humanity's 'failure' with respect to ethical achievement is compensated for by the 'cunning of reason,'[89] the hidden hand of reason governing Hegel's meta-narrative of Absolute Knowledge. Absolute Knowledge results in moral indifference. Whether as only acknowledging the Hegelian, *partially inclusive* Christology or Strauß' *universally inclusive* Christology,

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88. This claim is based on a general rejection by Hegelians of Strauß' *LJ*. Strauß directly addresses their criticism in *Streitschriften* III: 55–126, and expresses exasperation over, particularly, the Left-Wing Hegelians to whom he felt he belonged. See particularly, Strauß' sarcasm Pamphlet III: 126: "[...] I would stand on the side [... of] the Left in the Hegelian school, if this school didn't prefer to shut me out and throw me into other schools of thought; – only of course, for me to be thrown like a ball by these other schools back to them."

89. On the 'cunning of reason' as silently functioning 'in the background,' see Hegel, "Introduction" to the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: GW XII: 49 (Sibree trans.: 34).

the Hegelians and Strauß are squarely on the spectrum of mystical, Greek Christianity, not Latin Christianity.[90]

Contrary to Strauß' claim that "[…] to convert ideas simply into an obligatory possibility, to which no reality corresponds, is in fact to annihilate them,[91]" Kant claims that *the feeling for respect of the 'wide,' moral law that is above all social conventions and hypothetical imperatives of technical skills is a matter of moral faith that internally selects the universal moral principle to guide one's efforts to achieve 'what ought to be'*.[92] The power of respect for the moral law is that it motivates the individual to desire to be and to become human by exercising these highest capacities out of respect for the internal, moral law *in history*. Humanity's "duty" is to grant oneself permission to exercise ones agency according to this internal moral law, and the capacity of autonomous freedom that grounds dignity because of the universality of autonomous freedom is the necessary condition that makes moral effort possible. All those who do make this moral effort are worthy of unqualified respect and have achieved worthiness of happiness (regardless of the success or failure, great or small, of the consequences of one's agency over which one has no control) and have achieved worthiness of being 'well-pleasing to God' (without need of any external divine applause or fear of punishment).

Strauß' presentation in the *LJ* of Kant's religion is an exercise in external 'criticism,' not transcendental 'critique.' He describes what he believes Kant claims about religion and, especially, Christology and compares it with his Hegelian commitments without asking what are the transcendental, *a priori* synthetic conditions required for there to be anything like a description, much less the practicing, of religion, much less without having questioned the sufficiency of Hegelianism. Within three years, though, his Hegelian commitments hit the skids with the exception of his commitment to Hegel's "The Moral View of the World."

4) Sensuousness is evil

Strauß believed that for Kant the abstract moral ideal is set over against sensuousness because sensuous is evil. Speaking of Kant, Strauß writes:

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90. See "The Conservative-Liberal Spectrum of the Unification Model" in McGaughey, *Christianity for the Third Millennium*: 136–146.

91. Strauß, *LJ*: 777.

92. Categorical imperatives are 'wide', universal principles in contrast to the 'narrow' rules that govern technical skills and the civic law. In other words, not all imperatives are categorical imperatives. On the difference between 'categorical' and 'hypothetical' imperatives in Kant, *Groundwork* IV: 414–421. On the difference between 'wide' and 'narrow' obligation, see Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 390–391. For Kant's criticism of consequentialism see his 'four moments' in 556, n. 108.

To elevate himself to such a state of mind [morally well-pleasing to God], man must depart from evil, cast off the old man, crucify the flesh; a change [... that is] essentially connected with a series of sorrows and sufferings. These the former man has deserved as a punishment, but they fall on the new for the regenerated man, who takes them on himself, though physically and in his empirical character, as a being determined by the senses, he remains the former man; is morally, as an intellectual being, with his changed disposition, become a new man.[93]

Strauß cites here his professor, F.C. Baur's, "Comparison of Schleiermacher's *Christian Faith* and Kant's *Religion within the Limits of mere Reason*" from Baur's *Gnosis* with respect to the notions of *capacity* [*Anlage*] and *inclination* [*Hang*]. Baur claims that Schleiermacher and Kant share the same understanding of good and evil. "The two principles that Schleiermacher differentiates as sensuous consciousness and God-consciousness, Kant called the good and the evil principle."[94]

Although correct for Schleiermacher, Baur and Strauß have misunderstood Kant's discussion of radical evil in *Religion*. Humanity's status of "radical evil" does not consist in "sensuous consciousness." In fact, Kant says, exactly the opposite: "[...] the ground of [...] *evil cannot be placed, as is commonly done, in the sensuous nature of the human being*, and in the natural inclinations originating from it."[95] Rather, "radical evil" is a *necessary* (but not sufficient), transcendental, condition of possibility for us to be *free-from* nature's mechanical causality and for the exercising of our *freedom-for* creating things that nature cannot do on its own. Without this *necessary*, 'radical' *option* between 'good' and 'evil' principles, we could only be mere animals governed by instinct or permanently good or permanently evil.[96]

Furthermore, our capacity for autonomous freedom is "good" in an amoral sense, not ontologically as guaranteeing our always doing what is right. It is "good" because without it we could not be and become human, and, presumably, it is good that we exist. However, the "goodness" of autonomous freedom does not guarantee that we are always morally good. Kant's autonomous freedom is a *capacity* [*Anlage*] that he distinguishes from *inclinations* [*Hänge*].[97] We can be inclined to do something because, and only because, we have the capacity to do it. The capacity is an amoral good whereas the inclination can be good or evil.

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93. Strauß, *LJ*: 775.

94. Baur, *Gnosis*, 660–661.

95. Kantz, *Religion* AA VI: 34–35.

96. Kant points out that sensuousness alone is too little to account for evil in humanity because it would make evil a matter of animality alone. Reason alone is too much to account for evil in humanity because it would elevate evil to a diabolical principle equal to the other ideas of reason: God, freedom, and the soul. See Kant, *Religion*, AA VI: 35.

97. Kant discussions the differences between "capacities" (Anlage) and "inclinations" (Hänge) in *Religion* AA VI: 26–32.

Therefore, rather than having placed "radical evil" at the foundation of morality, Kant identifies *amoral*, autonomous freedom as the *ground* of morality[98] with two, in themselves, *amoral* principles as options for autonomous freedom: good and evil principles. Nonetheless, in order for freedom to be exercised, it must *necessarily* be capable of distinguishing and choosing between "good" and "evil" principles. If there were only "good" principles or if there were only "evil" principles, there could be no freedom. Hence, practical reason requires both good and evil principles at its (radical) core. In other words, both good and evil are 'radical.' This is a radical goodness and a radical evil that are *necessary* for, but not determinative of, our freedom. Both radical goodness and radical evil, however, presuppose the amoral goodness of autonomous freedom.[99]

There is absolutely no "crucifying of the flesh" or turn away from "sensuousness" called for by Kant. To be sure, in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*, Kant discusses the importance of the experience of the sublime for the encouragement of moral awareness and effort because it confirms "[…] a power of the mind to soar above certain obstacles of sensibility […]"[100] However, even the sublime is no escape from the world. He adds '*tumultuous effect on the mind' of attraction or repulsion* (*Lust* or *Unlust*) "[…] *can in no way claim the honor of being a sublime presentation, if they do not leave behind a disposition of mind that […] has influence on the consciousness of its strength […] in regard to that which brings with it intellectual purposiveness* (the supersensible)."[101] (emphasis added) In other words, "[…] the sublime must always have a relation to […] principles for making the intellectual and the ideas of reason superior to sensibility."[102] Kant adds:

There need be no anxiety that the feeling of the sublime will lose anything through such an abstract presentation, which becomes entirely negative in regard to the sensible, for the imagination, although it certainly finds nothing beyond the sensible to which it can attach itself, nevertheless frees itself to be unbounded precisely because of this elimination of the limits of sensibility; and that separation is thus a presentation of the infinite, which for that very reason can never be anything other than a merely negative presentation, which nevertheless expands the soul.[103]

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98. Klaus Konhardt articulates this relationship between freedom and evil as follows: "In [...] Kant's practical philosophy one cannot speak of an insurmountable gap between a free will, under moral laws', on the one hand, and a teaching of radical evil, on the other hand [...]. Far more, the conception of radical evil in *Religion* is due to Kant's insight that human freedom if not the cause nonetheless is the condition of evil." [Author's translation] Konhardt, "Die Unbegreiflichkeit der Freiheit. Überlegungen zu Kants Lehre vom Bösen," in *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 42, no. 3 (1988): 400.

99. See McGaughey, "What is 'Radical' Evil? A Reading of Ricoeur on Kant and Religion" at https://criticalidealism.org/ricoeur-on-radical-evil-and-kant/ (24 November 20017) (pdf version has page numbers): 12–13.

100. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 271.

101. Kant. *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 273.

102. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 274.

103. Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 274.

Furthermore, he embraces the notion of "apathy" in the "Doctrine of Virtue" of the *Metaphysics of Morals,* but he explicitly distances his understanding of apathy from (Stoic) 'indifference:' "[…] '[M]*oral apathy*' […] is to be distinguished from indifference because in cases of moral apathy feelings arising from sensible impressions lose their influence on moral feeling[104] […] because respect for the law is more powerful than all such feelings together."[105] Without the flesh and sensuousness there can be no moral effort, which, for its part, as the very 'strength of soul,'[106] 'strength of one's resolutions,'[107] and 'strength of a human being's principles in fulfilling his duty,'[108] is the very definition of virtue for Kant.[109] Kant goes so far as to say that humanity stands 'under obligation to *virtue' not by escaping from the world but by 'practicing virtue' in the world*

> For while the capacity (*facultus*) to overcome all opposing sensible impulses [!!] can and must be simply *presupposed* in man on account of his freedom [i.e., on account of the ability to do things that nature on its own cannot do; McG], yet this capacity as *strength* (*robur*) is something he must acquire; and the way to acquire it is to enhance the moral *incentive* […] both by contemplating the dignity of the pure rational law in us (*contemplation*) and by *practicing* virtue (*exercitio*)."[110]

Finally, "the true strength of virtue is a *tranquil mind* with a considered and firm resolution to put the law of virtue into practice."[111]

   In fact, there is a danger of turning virtue into 'tyranny,'[112] which consists in 'allowing nothing to be indifferent' by turning the heteronomous, hypothetical imperatives of technical and practical agency into autonomous 'duties' of categorical imperatives: "Fantastic virtue is a concern with petty details which, were it admitted into the doctrine of virtue, would turn the government of virtue into tyranny."[113] Virtue is not slavish submission to merely abstract rules that heteronomously demand the 'proper' performance of external skills and choices but to 'wide,' moral principles that govern internal, creative freedom.[114] Therefore, *'evil' is not the objective world of sensuousness*

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104. Not to be confused for "moral sense" theory. See "Doctrine of Virtue" AA VI: 399–400.
105. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 408.
106. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 384.
107. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 390.
108. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 394.
109. See Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 394 and 405. On the 'positive methods' of the Stoics, Epicureans, Democritus, etc. as well as Kant's own 'negative method,' see the section "Kant's 'Negative Method':" 45, n. 28.
110. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 397.
111. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 409.
112. See Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 409.
113. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 409.
114. Kant distinguishes between the "doctrine of right" (e.g., civic law) and the "doctrine of virtue" in the *Metaphysics of Morals* as the difference between duties of "external" and of "internal" freedom. (AA VI: 407) "Virtue […] commands and accompanies its command with a moral constraint (a

but an "inclination" (Hang) to self-select subjectively an evil principle although equally primordial is the "inclination" to self-select subjectively a good principle to govern one's decisions and actions. As such both good and evil are "radical" because they always constitute a live (not a merely abstract) option for the exercising of our autonomous freedom *in the world* – precisely, not because they allow for, or even encourage escape from, sensuousness as claimed by Hegel and Strauß. Rather than moral duty illuminating the 'weakness' of reason because it demands a 'should' that 'can't be achieved, the sublime demonstrates the strength of moral duty to 'rise above' sensuousness in order to exercise its moral capacity i*n the world* – not to escape from the world.

5) Kant claimed no role for the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

The afterlife, according to Strauß' reading of Kant, is merely the figurative expressions of humanity's embracing of the ideal of the moral order according to both Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" and F.C. Baur's *Gnosis* and is merely an 'abstract' and 'ineffectual' obligation.

Strauß' opinion of Kant's Christology in 1835 was influenced by his professor, Ferdinand Christian Baur[115] to whose *Gnosis* Strauß explicitly cites Baur who writes that Schleiermacher's "[...] Christology in many respects recalls that of Kant [...].[116]"

Strauß maintains that Kant's "religion" involves freeing of the individual from materiality by means of a pure religion of "moral ideas." For this reason, the resurrection and ascension (the afterlife) of the Christ play no role in a religion "within the limits of reason." Strauß writes: "Kant, like Schleiermacher [...], carries his appropriation of

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constraint possible in accordance with laws of inner freedom). But [*sic.*] because this constraint is to be irresistible, strength is required, in a degree which we can assess only by the magnitude of the obstacles that the human being himself furnishes through his inclinations. The *vices*, the brood of dispositions opposing the law, *are the monsters he has to fight* [emphasis McGaughey; vices, not sensuousness per se]. Accordingly, this moral strength [...] is called *wisdom* in the strict sense, namely practical wisdom, since [*sic.*] it makes the *final end* of his existence on earth [!] McGaughey] its own end." (AA VI: 405) Furthermore, "[i]n the moral imperative and the presupposition of freedom that is necessary for it are found the *law*, the *capacity* (to fulfil the law), and the *will* determining the maxim; these are all the elements that make up the concept of a duty of right. But [*sic.*] in the imperative that prescribes a *duty of virtue* there is added not only the concept of self-constraint but that of an *end*, not an end that we have but one that we ought to have, one that pure practical reason therefore has within itself. *The highest, unconditional end of pure practical reason [...] consists in this: that virtue be its own end and, despite the benefits it confers on human beings, also its own reward* [emphasis McGaughey]." (AA VI: 396) Virtue is not a slavish external performance in conformity with heteronomous duty but a quiet internal concern for what one *ought to do with one's creative freedom.* Virtue is its own reward.

115. See F.C. Baur, "Vergleichung der Schleiermacher'schen Glaubenslehre mit der Kant'schen Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft" ["Comparison of Schleiermacher's *Christian Faith* with Kant's Religion"] in *Gnosis*: 660–668.

116. Strauß, *LJ*: 775 and n. 5; also in the first edition 725, and n. 5. Strauß cites to Baur's judgment here. See Baur, *Gnosis*, 660 ff. Strauß accepts Baur's reading of Schleiermacher and Kant.

the Christology of the church no farther than the death of Christ. Of his resurrection and ascension, he says, […] they cannot be available to religion within the limits of pure reason, *because they would involve the materiality of all existences*. Still in another light, he employs these facts as *symbols of the ideas of […] reason*; as images of the entrance into the abode of blessedness, that is, into communion with […] the good […]"[117] (emphasis added)

According to Strauß in 1835, then, for Kant the resurrection and ascension of Christ are merely figurative expressions of humanity's embracing of *the ideal of the moral order, again in the sense of Hegel's "The Moral View of the World"* in the *Phenomenology*, as an abstract and, hence ineffectual, obligation.

Kant, surely, does not take the resurrection and ascension of Christ to be historical facts, which would divert focus on the moral effort of the individual to encourage concentration on how one can assure one's participation in the afterlife. In other words, *as historical facts, resurrection and ascension shift attention to personal interest* – away from disinterested embracing of moral principles to govern one's decisions and actions.

Nonetheless, Kant writes in *Religion*: "[…] one cannot think of any kind of religion without faith in an afterlife […]"[118] The notion of the afterlife has a concrete function to play with respect to moral effort in this life.[119] The function of the afterlife, though, is not to motivate moral effort out of fear that one's failure will result in divine displeasure and blockage of one's entrance into paradise.

Kant explicitly acknowledges that, when it comes to the afterlife, there is neither proof nor disproof:

My reason recognizes here [when it comes to the afterlife] its weakness to rise above all experience, and is indeed able to show that all objections of the opponents are fruitless and in vain, but on the other hand it is also too weak to even find out something apodictically certain.[120]

Were one to dismiss or embrace the notion of the afterlife as certainties, then one would be engaging in a dogmatic dictum (*Machtspruch*) that is an 'empty abstraction.'

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117. Strauß, *LJ*: 775.

118. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 126. Kant does point out that "[…] reason can […] neither find an interest in dragging along, through eternity, a body which, however purified, must yet consist (if personality rests on its identity) of the same material which constitutes the body's organic basis and which, in life, the body itself never quite grew fond of, nor can it render comprehensible what this calcareous earth, of which the body consists, should be doing in heaven […] *Religion* AA VI: 128* (actually, 129).

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

120. Kant, *Vorlesungen über die philosophische Religionslehre (Pölitz)* AA PR: 196.

Rather than commit such an error, Kant insists that the notion of the afterlife is necessary for religion.[121] It is necessary, though, not as a certainty that would turn morality into fear and anxiety, which undermines morality. It is necessary because it motivates one to focus in this life on moral worthiness for happiness or blessedness. Rather than afterlife justifying moral effort out of merely personal interest in salvation in the next life, for Kant the lack of proof or disproof of the afterlife forces us to consider what *positive* function can the afterlife have on autonomous, self-selecting moral effort *in this life*.

Given what we can know of the centrality of moral effort and its conditions of possibility in this life for what it means to be a human being, the *possibility* of an afterlife would consist of the preservation of the conditions of moral effort for all eternity. In short, the afterlife, were it to exist, would permit ceaseless moral improvement (that is, imposing a moral principle to govern one's agency, not achieving objectively moral ends), but, in any event, it encourages moral effort in this life in that it fosters curtailment of discouragement in the face of suffering in this world and the shortness of life as well as the ineffectual consequences of morality and the *apparent* victory of the unjust over the just in this world that can result in diminished moral effort in this life.[122]

The afterlife is an example of the value of the *critical* Copernican Turn: Rather than focus on the objective reality of the afterlife, Critical Idealism shifts the focus to the *necessary* conditions of possibility that would make the afterlife valuable for moral effort *in this life*. Because self-interest as an exclusive motivator of moral effort is undermining of the very conditions of moral effort that require the self-selecting of a moral principle that one would want to be universal like a law of nature (i.e., not as an excuse for private, particular interest), the productive function of the afterlife for moral effort *must necessarily* be its value for encouraging disinterested (but by no means uninteresting) moral effort in this life.

Kant writes in his *Lectures on Metaphysics L₁: "On the Condition of the Soul after Death*"

> In general, […] it is not at all in accordance with our destiny here to worry much about the future world; rather, we must complete the circle to which we are destined here and wait to see how it will be in view of the future world. The main thing is that we behave righteously and morally well in this post and try to make ourselves worthy of future happiness.[123]

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121. For example, Kant writes: "It is true that this opinion of the other world cannot be demonstrated, but it is a necessary hypothesis of reason." *Vorlesungen über die Metaphysik L₁ (Pölitz)* AA PM: 257. See as well, Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 126.

122. See the "Final Comment" at the end of Kant's *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* AA VIII: 120–123 as well as the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 769–770.

123. Kant, *Vorlesungen über Metaphysik L₁*: Über den Zustand der Seele nach dem Tode:" AA PM 260.

The main thing is always morality: this is the sacred and inviolable thing that we must protect, and this is also the reason and purpose of all our speculations and investigations. All metaphysical speculations go to this. God and the other world is the only goal of all our philosophical investigations, and if the concepts of God and the other world were not connected with morality [McG: in this world], they would be of no use.[124]

In his *Reflections on Metaphysics* (From the Literary Remains), Kant adds:

These are matters of faith, in which the morality of forewarning is the essential. The existence of God and of the future world are matters of faith of mere reason. As far as speculation is concerned, they are of no great importance, nor can they be proved apodictically. However, if morality is taken as a basis, these elements of faith are indispensable hypotheses to put faith into practice.[125]

6) Strauß misunderstands moral perfection in Kant

Strauß also misunderstands the role of moral perfection in Kant's moral philosophy. In fact, contrary to Strauß' claim that Kant maintained that moral perfection was attainable,[126] Kant was not optimistic concerning the perfectibility of the species, and he rejected the notion that perfection was the goal of morality. The goal of the human species, for Kant, is not moral perfection in the sense of external achievement but moral perfection as the ever-increasing dominance of the moral disposition.[127]

In the first footnote to the first Preface of *Religion* AA VI: 4*, Kant maintains that *the determining ground of duty is nothing external and teleological*. Any external, teleological ground of morality would define duty as "natural perfection" in terms of "skill in the arts and the sciences, taste, physical agility, etc." Rather, *the determining ground of duty is internal and archaeological*, that is, it is concerned with "one's own perfection." However, one's moral perfection is no external attainment. It "[…] can only be one thing (namely a will unconditionally obedient to the [moral] law)." Moral improvement, then, is progress in terms of one's obedience to the internal, unconditional moral law, and that, in turn, is obedience to one's *archaeological* capacities, not external, *teleological* achievements either of skill or of happiness.

In other words, one's "moral perfection" is not determined by an external measurement either of ethical "success" or "failure" much less happiness but by one's internal adherence to a universal, moral principle as standard and guide for one's

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124. Kant, *Vorlesungen über Metaphysik L₁*: Über den Zustand der Seele nach dem Tode:" AA PM 261.

125. Kant, *Reflexionen zur Metaphysik* (Aus dem Nachlaß: 1780–1789) Phase ψ AA XVIII: 580.

126. See Strauß, *LJ*: 774–775.

127. See the discussion of moral perfection in the disposition that calls for effort at moral improvement rather than achievement of moral perfection in the section above, "B) A Misreading of Kant's *Religion* **and Christology**:" 825 ff.

agency and internal satisfaction over one's efforts.[128] Strauß acknowledges this in his *Glaubenslehre* in 1841. Furthermore, he recognizes that hope for reward in the afterlife as the motivation for doing good is "a crude error"[129] and is denounced by Spinoza but also by Clement of Alexandria, Calvin, Socinius, Shaftesbury, Lessing, Feuerbach,, Bayle, Wieland, and Schelling.[130] However, he fails to acknowledge that it is at the heart of Kant's teaching on morality. For Kant, it is not merely egocentrism that is at stake but a contradiction of the very *a priori* synthetic conditions for morality, in the first place.[131] Those conditions may involve (require) a 'symbolically anthropomorphic' notion of God as the 'giver' of the law, but, above all, the concern of moral effort is not 'pleasing' God or a reward in the after-life, but the degree of respect one gives to the moral law within.[132]

Kant writes:

> Natural perfection (consequentialism) is "always only conditionally good" whereas moral perfection "alone commands unconditionally [...]; hence natural perfection cannot be, when made into an end [teleological], the principle of the concerns of duty. The same also applies to an end [teleological] when associated with the happiness of other human beings. For an action must first be weighed in itself according to the moral law before it can be associated with the happiness of others. The action's promotion of [...] happiness, therefore, is duty only conditionally, and cannot serve as the supreme principle of moral principles."[133] In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant points out that we "[...] are not able to determine with complete certainty, according to any principle, what will make [... us] happy, because omniscience would be required for this. To be happy, one cannot [...] act on determinate principles, but only according to empirical counsels [...]"[134]

Therefore, it is not the deeds of individuals but a "[...] moral character of the species that confirms at least the capacity that not only allows hope in improvement but

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128. This is by no means a novel claim by Kant. Although Strauß doesn't refer to Kant, he points out that it is the meaning of Spinoza's notion of "blessedness is virtue itself" ("*Seligkeit ist Tugend selbst*") (*Glaubenslehre* II, 709) and Leibniz proposal that happiness is "internal moral satisfaction" (*Glaubenslehre* II: 713–714).

129. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 711.

130. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 709–714.

131. See Kant, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XXIX: 776–77 In the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant emphasizes that fear and hope as motivation for morality destroys it (AA V: 129–130), and he stresses that "[...] nothing honors God more than that which is most precious in the world, respect for His commandment, observance of sacred duty" (AA V: 131). On the notion of 'duty,' see McGaughey, "Addendum: On Duty" in "Was Kant Anti-Semitic? with an Addendum on Duty" at https://criticalideal ism.org/was-kant-anti-semitic-with-an-addendum-on-duty/ (22 November 2023): 29–39.

132. 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.

133. Kant, *Reason* AA VI: 4*.

134. *Groundwork*: AA IV: 418. Special thanks are owed to Prof. James R. Cochrane for calling this passage to my attention!

confirms hope as far as the capacity already is adequate for such improvement."[135] This *confirmed hope* is the basis for the rejection of political revolution, the establishment of a 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.[136]

7) Kant's exclusive focus was on the individual, not on the species

According to Strauß, Kant's exclusive focus, when it comes to moral improvement, is on the individual, not on the species as a totality. Strauß, in contrast, stressed, especially in *The Old and the New Faith* of 1872 that moral improvement refers to the species not the individual because humanity is incapable of ethical perfection.

Kant frequently emphasized that the focus of moral development (not the achievement of perfection!) is on the *species*.[137]

8) Kant: Claimed moral principles are derived from the scriptures but, actually, projected morality onto the past.

Kant is faulted by Strauß for not providing an historical account for the rise of religion or the scriptures.

According to Strauß, *Kant grounded moral principles in the text, but actually, he anachronistically imputed the morality of his age onto the past without giving any account of how they came to be expressed in the gospels.*

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135. Kant, Conflict of the Faculties, AA VII: 85.

136. See Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties,* AA VII: 85–94. See as well, Kant's *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* AA VIII: 17–31. In *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project*, Kant proposes a "federation of free states" (AA VIII: 354 ff.) at the minimum a "peace alliance" (*ibid*., 356, 385). See as well, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* (AA VIII: 24 ff.) and §54 of the "Doctrine of Right" in the *Metaphysics of Morals* (AA VI: 344). There are good reasons to believe that Kant's reflections played a decisive role (although concealed for obvious political reasons) in the development of the League of Nations among Woodrow Wilson's advisers. See Gerhard Beestermöller, "Die Umsetzung der Völkerbundsphilosophie in politische Wirklichkeit durch Woodrow Wilson" in *Die Völkerbundsidee. Leistungsfähigkeit und Grenzen der Kriegsächtung durch Staatensolidarität* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1995): 94–142.

137. His emphasis on the species, not the individual is found in *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* (1784) (AA VIII: 18, 20), Conjectural Beginning of Human History (1786) (AA VIII: 115, 123), *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798) (AA VII: 328–329, On Pedagogy (1803) (AA IX: 445–446), Conflict of the Faculties (1798) (AA VII: 84), as well as, the text from Kant most frequently quoted by Strauß, Religion (1793/1794) (AA VI: 25, 97–98).

> Whilst Kant [...] sought *to educe moral thoughts from the biblical writings*, even in their historical part, and was even inclined to consider these thoughts as the fundamental object of the history [of the texts]: on the one hand, he derived these thoughts only from himself and the cultivation of his age, and therefore could [...] assume [only in rare cases] that they had actually been laid down by the authors of those writings; and on the other hand, and for the same reason, he omitted to show what was the relation between these thoughts and those symbolic representations and how it happened that the one came to be expressed by the other."[138] (emphasis added) (McG: translation modifications)

Strauß criticizes Kant for not accounting for how the 'moral instinct' for duties 'descended invisibly' at the commencement of the human race.[139] Absent any accounting for the scriptural formulation of them as valid grounding of the 'duty' required by moral principles is taken by Strauß to justify a charge of anachronism against Kant for imposing ethical principles from a later on an earlier age. A final Kantian failure is that Kant offers no account of how 'abstract ideas' can come to be expressed in 'symbolic representations.'

When it comes to Strauß' criticism of Kant that he does not give an account of the origin of moral principles/laws, Hegel and Strauß have failed to notice that not only does Kant maintain that humanity only selects (under self-obligation) the laws of duty and only creates technical and pragmatic laws. Kant maintains that God (the Noumenon) is the 'creator' of laws but has no duty (obligation) to select among them.[140] According to Hegel/Strauß, the origin of the principles of abstract 'moral duty' as well as even the relative social rules that are generated by a community to govern its citizens are the consequence of an 'empty,' dialectical process of 'negation.' Hegel replaces the 'grace' of a Personal Deity with the 'cunning of reason'[141] as assurance of attainment of the ultimate goal of Absolute Knowledge with the consequence that all 'real' significance to 'actual' historical representations, which include ethical systems, is annulled.[142]

Cumulatively, Strauß' charges against Kant appear to be devastating. However, a careful examination of the presuppositions that drive Strauß criticism of Kant discloses that it is Strauß (and Hegel) who are grounding their meta-narrative in empty, abstract ideas and drawing anachronistic conclusions with respect to what Kant 'must

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138. Strauß, *LJ*: 51–52.

139. See Strauß, *LJ*: 777 where Strauß says of Kant: "[...] [T]he good principle did not descend from heaven merely at a particular time, [*sic*.] but had descended on mankind invisibly from the commencement of the human race [...]" but only "as a moral instinct."

140. Kant distinguishes between selection among laws/principles (obligation/duty) and creation of laws/principles with the creator (God/Noumenon) having 'rights' but no obligation/duty to select among them. See Chapter 7: 765

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

142. See Hegel, "Introduction" to *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: Heroic and great men know the nascent principles but don't control that the time was ripe GW XII: 45–46 (Sibree trans.: 31–32); "the world is as it ought to be" because "God is reason:" GW: XII: 53 (Sibree trans.: 38).

have meant.' These two criticisms turn out to be one and the same because Hegel and Strauß have no understanding of what Kant means by 'categorical imperatives,' which for them can only be 'empty abstractions.' Given that for Hegel and Strauß moral principles are taken to be merely ineffectual, 'empty abstractions,' it is they who can only speak of the relative construction of ethical norms as arising out of particular historical contexts which, in turn, can only be anachronistically applied to earlier ages.

A crucial key to understanding Strauß' criticism of Kant is found in 'The Moral View of the World' from Hegel's *Phenomenology* and F.C. Baur's *Gnosis* already in 1835 for which *'ethics' is measured by the consequences of agency* and *'moral principles' are 'merely empty,' abstract, ineffectual duties* that concrete 'ethical' agency cannot fulfil because of physical and social restrictions on the individual. The import of these presuppositions for Strauß is that there is no such thing as 'actual,' universal moral principles that apply to all times and all places. Such universal moral principles by definition, then, a 'merely empty ideas.' According to Strauß, ethical principles are social norms generated in each culture to govern the attainment of the teleological ends of agency. In short, ethical principles guide agency, according to the later Strauß, and they serve as the concrete criteria for adjudicating the degree of one's ethical accomplishments (or, more accurately, failures).

By reducing experience to merely the interface between abstractions (*Inhalt*) and representations (*Form*), Hegel/Strauß accomplish precisely that which they claim to deny. They drive a wedge between transcendental consciousness and the phenomenal world and close off any immediate connection by transcendental consciousness with the realm of agency. *A description grounded in a merely logical, meta-narrative of Double Negation of an interface between Spirit and matter/Freedom and nature is no causal explanation of their connectedness. To claim a causal relationship by means of description is a μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος (a substitution of one genus for another).* According to Hegel, 'pure thought' is synthetic abstraction whereas 'practical philosophy'[143] is the pursuit of analytical, pragmatic aims in the world. *They are united, according to Hegel, by Absolute Spirit, which is a dictum (Machtspruch) as dogmatic as anything in Traditional Personal Theism.*

However, Kant's anchoring of 'pure reason' in the world is achieved not merely by insisting that transcendental reason can only arrive at awareness of itself because the phenomenal world requires a set of *a priori* synthetic elements (God, the regulative idea of the Noumenon, not Hegel's Absolute Spirit) but also because 'practical reason' is only possible if transcendental consciousness exercises 'autonomous freedom' or the ability to initiate a finite sequence of events that nature on its own cannot. In other words, Kant's distinction within 'pure reason' between 'theoretical' and 'practical'

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143. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" GW II: 456, 463; see as well, Hegel's discussion of ‚practical reason' as analytic in contrast to 'theoretical reason' as synthetic in *ibid*. GW II: 457–458, 460, 463, 466.

reason is turned by Hegel/Strauß (following Fichte) into an ontological dualism[144] between abstraction and the phenomenal world. Rather than grasping the significance of Kant's autonomous freedom (*Wille*), which is a finite, eminent causality[145] embedded in, and inseparable from, the merely, mechanical, formal causality of nature, Hegel and Strauß take humanity to be subject to nature's 'freedom,' which is really nature's determinism,[146] that it is incapable of morality. For Hegel/Strauß, in the world there is at most only a finite freedom of 'spontaneous choice' (*Willkür*), which must be exercised within the restrictions of social institutions.[147] Absolute Freedom (Note: not finite, individual autonomous freedom!), is located, exclusively, in 'transcendental Reason' as a predicate of Absolute Spirit/Absolute Knowledge.[148]

Having turned off the ventilator to Kant's autonomous freedom, Hegel/Strauß take Kant's notion of 'wide,' categorical, moral principles to be 'mere abstractions' unrelated to concrete experience. On the contrary, for Kant moral principles are the strongest indicator that humanity exercises a extra-*ordinary* form of causality found to anything close to the same degree in no other species.[149]

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144. See Fichte's dualism in *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, Gesamtausgabe I,2, Reinhard Lauth and Hans Jacob, eds. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag (Günther Holzboog), 1965: 217.

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

146. See Hegel, *Phänomenologie* GW III: 450–451 [Baillie trans.: 624–625].

147. Kant makes a distinction between 'choice' (*Willkür*) and autonomous freedom (*Wille*) as follows. In *Reflections on Moral Philosophy*, Kant calls empirical knowledge '*pragmatic*' (AA XIX: 284) and *contrasts* it *with practical reason*. Kant speaks of the 'pragmatic' as concerned with 'teaching cleverness' (*Lehre der Klugheit*) and 'rules of cleverness' (*Klugheitsregeln*) (AA XIX: 104), which are the direct result of 'arbitrariness'/liberty (*freie Willkür*), not 'free will'/autonomous freedom (*Wille*) (AA XIX: 171). Free will (*Wille*) is the capacity (*Anlage*) of autonomous, creativity 'above' the mechanical causality of nature (*Critique of Pure Reason* B 580), which is not capricious choice but always subject to a moral principle (even if ignored) (*ibid.*: B xxviii-xxix). There are two kinds of freedom: according to nature and according to autonomy (B 560). Succinctly, 'pragmatic' cleverness constitutes imperatives that lead to 'welfare' (*Wohlfahrt*) whereas 'practical' reason is concerned with the application of a moral principle to one's agency. Hypothetical or 'pragmatic imperatives' apply to 'what everyone wants, not what s/he should do.' *Reflections on Moral Philosophy* AA XIX: 104

148. See Hegel, "Introduction: C" to the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* GW XII: 77: "The history of the world [...] represents the course of stages of the development of the principle, whose content is the consciousness of freedom. *The more detailed determination of these stages is logical* in its general nature, but in its more concrete nature it is given in the philosophy of mind. It is only to be mentioned here that the first stage is the sinking of the spirit into naturalness, as already mentioned above, and the second stage is its stepping out into the consciousness of its freedom. This first tearing away, however, is imperfect and partial *[...] The third stage is the elevation from this still special freedom into the pure generality of it, into the self-consciousness and self-feeling of the essence of spirituality*." (emphasis added) [McG translation; see Sibree trans.: 59]

149. This is the significance of Kant's statement that autonomous freedom is the *ratio essendi* of morality (the reason for the existence of the moral law) whereas the moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi* of autonomous freedom (the basis for knowing autonomous freedom). See Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 4*, 29–30. 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

As I stressed in Chapter 7, according to Kant not all imperatives are moral imperatives. Kant distinguishes between 'categorical' and 'hypothetical' imperatives.[150] The latter, '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 task (e.g., the building of a structure in conformity with a building code, rules for driving a car, mandatory vaccinations, civic legal system, etc.) 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.).[151] 'Categorical' imperatives are wide, universal, moral principles/laws 'above' hypothetical imperatives. Whereas 'hypothetical' imperatives establish the requirements for accomplishing a task, categorical imperatives govern the 'rightness' or 'wrongness' of the activity.[152] 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 'legal' (hypothetically) doesn't mean that it is 'right' (categorically).

There is nothing about categorical imperatives that makes them merely 'empty abstractions' for two crucial reasons: 1) Were there not to be a capacity of autonomous creativity that makes possible the initiating of sequences that nature on its own cannot accomplish, there could be no categorical imperatives. 2) Were there not a difference between what is 'legal' (external 'right') and what 'ought to be' (internal 'virtue'), there would be no difference between hypothetical and categorical imperatives.[153] Hegel/Strauß fail to understand the meaning and significance of universal, categorical

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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.

150. On 'hypothetical' and 'categorical' imperatives, see 738.

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

152. Strauß ignores not only 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, but he also ignores that there are two parts of Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals*, the "Doctrine of Virtue" ("*Tugendlehre*") and the "Doctrine of Right" ("*Rechtslehre*"). The "Doctrine of Virtue" is concerned with the individual's exercise of her/his internal, moral responsibility for her/his autonomous freedom. The "Doctrine of Virtue," then, is concerned with *categorical* imperatives that are self-selected by the individual. The "Doctrine of Right" is concerned with 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.).

153. The distinction between ‚what is legal' and 'what ought to be' is the focus of Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* with its two Parts: "The Doctrine of [Legal] Right" and "The Doctrine of Virtue."

principles ('moral duty') and reduce them to merely relative, hypothetical norms (socially constructed, 'ethical norms'). Consequently, Strauß and Hegel accuse Kant of anachronistically imposing 'ethical norms' on a prior cultural age. There could not be a more complete misunderstanding of Kant's moral teaching than this.

It is not Kant who anachronistically imposes an 'ethical order' of his day onto the scriptures, it is Hegel and Strauß, who impose an anachronistic reading onto Kant. They substitute a causal account of ultimate 'reality' for Kant's epistemological account of understanding and agency in the world within the limits of finite reason. On the basis of a system of logic, Hegel and Strauß proffer an absolute, *causal explanation* not only for 'why' there are abstract ideas but also for 'how' the phenomenal world has arisen from them as the sensuous condition for finite consciousness to 'think' ideas in the midst of phenomenal representations.[154]

9) Kant provides no accounting for the rise of religion and scriptures

In addition to these two anachronistic criticisms of Kant, Strauß faults Kant for not providing an account of the emergence of the religions and the writing of the scriptures. This criticism is far broader than that Kant merely anachronistically attributes the 'origin' of moral principles to the scriptures.

Kant's attitude toward the scriptures is far more nuanced than that 'moral principles' are historically derived from them. In fact, he claims that, when it comes to 'pure' religion that is concerned with the moral effort of humanity, no scriptures

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154. In his *Das Wesen der Religion* [Lectures 1848/1849] (Berlin: Deutsche Bibliothek, 1913), Ludwig Feuerbach attacks the 'new speculative philosophy' (Hegel) of the day. Feuerbach acknowledges that 'the' core issue for philosophy and theology has been (and remains) how universals are related to particulars (Lecture 13: 129–130). In agreement with Traditional Personal Theism but on the basis of a logical account, not the agency of a Personal Deity, Hegel derives particulars out of 'the' Absolute Idea/ideas (Lecture 19: 191–192) by means of a dialectical process of thesis and antithesis with the ultimate aim of the conscious thinking of Absolute Knowledge as an *a posteriori* synthesis. Feuerbach appropriately points out that this is no less an anthropological projection of how the human mind experiences and creates onto a divine mind (Lecture 13: 134–135) than is the case of Traditional Personal Theism's Personal Deity. Feuerbach's alternative account of the relationship between particulars and universals is that the latter are *a posteriori*, ectypal, abstract creations of finite minds (Lecture 13: 124–125, 128, Lecture 28: 289, see Lecture 19: 191, Lecture 20 203–204). From the Kantian perspective, Traditional Personal Theism, the 'new speculative philosophy,' and Feuerbach's materialism all succumb to a logical, μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος (a substitution of one genus for another) that takes a description to be a causal explanation. As Kant understood, finite consciousness has access only to effects, not directly to causes. Whereas Kant 'grounds' causal explanations in the *coherence and lawfulness* of appearances, not knowledge, the 'new speculative philosophy' takes representations to present '*things-in-themselves*' (*objective subreption*), although representations can be misleading and/or false, and fails to grasp the significance of coherent lawfulness for grounding understanding both of 'what is' (theoretical reason) and of 'what ought to be' (practical reason).

are necessary.[155] Yet, he also claims that religion requires no other 'norm' than the scriptures.[156] However, he is not claiming that moral 'principles' are derived from the scriptures, but, rather, given that the scriptures are properly understood only from the correct, moral perspective and, to the extent that there are moral principles (and not just heteronomous, social rules) in the scriptures, moral principles are the same for both experience, generally, and for the scriptures. Consequently, there is no difference between 'moral principles' in scripture and the 'moral principles' of practical reason.[157]

Furthermore, given that there is no difference among 'true' moral norms in scripture and in practical reason, then there is no need for more than one 'scripture' as "basis for ecclesiastical instruction,[158] but "universal human reason must be recognized and honored as the supreme commanding principle [...] whereas the doctrine of revelation, upon which a church is founded and which stands in need of scholars as interpreters and preserves, must be cherished and cultivated as a mere means [...]"[159] to the goal of 'moral character' – not as revelation/scripture serving as the end of religion.

Strauß' final criticism here is that Kant "omitted to show what was the relation between these [moral] thoughts and those symbolic representations [the biblical writings] and how it happened that the one came to be expressed by the other."[160] As a Hegelian, the early Strauß explains the generation of the "symbolic representations" of the scriptures to be mythic/narrative constructions by their authors, who portrayed as objective events a new con-*figuration* of meanings out of the pre-figured texts of the 'First Testament.' Strauß called this *the genetic mythical principle.* The gospels are 'representations' as the author's creative, objective "husk" of either a historical event, a philosophical idea, or a poetic element. Yet, given that Strauß never asks 'where the 'First' Testament prototypes themselves came from?', much less that he didn't grasp the significance of the 'genetic mythical principle' as indicator of the gospel writers as 'authors', not 'historians,' he assumed that religion and the scriptures, along with the

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155. See Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 133.
156. See Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 114.
157. Kant is carefully looking over his shoulder at the state's religious censors when he writes: "[...] history proves that never could a faith based on scripture be eradicated by even the most devastating political revolutions, whereas a faith based on tradition and ancient public observances meets its downfall as soon as the state breaks down. How fortunate, when one such book, fallen into human hands, contains complete, besides its statutes legislating faith [= 'historical' religion), also the purest moral doctrine of religion [that is, the 'ideal' of moral principles of 'pure' religion], and this doctrine can be brought into the strictest harmony with those statutes [of 'historical' religion] (which [in turn], contribute to its [the purest moral doctrine] introduction). In this event, both because of the end to be attained thereby and the difficulty of explaining by natural laws the origin of the enlightenment of the human race proceeding from it, the book can command an authority equal to that of a revelation." *Religion* AA VI: 107.
158. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 133.
159. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 165.
160. Strauß, *LJ*: 51–52.

entire cosmos, are the 'intentional' aim of Absolute Spirit seeking to become aware of Itself, that is, that *everything* is a product of the logic of Double Negation.

Having reduced moral principles/laws to the 'empty abstractions' of 'moral duty' and having misunderstood or intentionally cut the umbilical cord of Kant's notion of creative, autonomous freedom, Strauß failed in 1835 to understand the key significance of what Kant called practical reason. Having ignored the significance of autonomous freedom for understanding humanity's creative capacity that is a species marker, Strauß finds Kant unable to account for the generation of the scriptures out of "merely" abstract reason and moral principles. However, once one understands the significance of autonomous freedom, one can readily understand that the biblical authors are engaged in precisely that activity that is a species marker of humanity's transcendental consciousness: creativity. *As a product of autonomous freedom, their authors have a moral responsibility for their 'products', and the community who employs the 'product' has a moral responsibility for understanding how the 'product' was produced and how the 'product' is embraced.*

Unlike the Hegelians, though, this creative agency is not in the service of an Absolute Idea working its way through history by the *cunning of reason* to its "objective representation" in self-awareness in the individual, Jesus of Nazareth, to reach the teleological goal of divine self-awareness by the philosopher (Hegel) or the species (Strauß). *Rather than the goal of humanity consisting either in being 'reconciled with God' by divinization or by achieving objective, moral perfection, for Kant this creative agency is concerned precisely with what it means to be and to become human.* Being and becoming human requires recognition of the significance and power of *both theoretical and practical reason* in historical experience. That recognition is not achieved simply by the individual but requires what Kant calls moral *culture*:[161] a community aware of the internal, hence, imperceptible, rule-governed orders of physical laws (statistics and algorithms in those 'territories' where physical laws are indiscernible) of *theoretical* reason and self-selected moral laws of *practical* reason.

This community, however, possesses no objective list of moral laws capable of being found in any text (much less the two sets of "Ten Commandments" of Exodus

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161. Already in his so-called 'pre-critical' period, Kant spoke in this fashion of *das Reich Gottes* (the Commonweal of God) as the cultivation of moral culture. See Kant, *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie* (*Lecture on Moral Philosophy*): 356, 367–68, 367 n. 244. However, the theme is maintained throughout his "critical" writings. Kant distinguishes between a "culture of skills" and a "culture that promotes the [moral] will." See *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 431–432. Instead of a "culture of skills," Kant speaks of the "culture of mental agitations" (*Gemütskräfte*) in *On Pedagogy* AA IX: 475–476. See as well, *On Pedagogy* (AA IX: 449–450, 480), *Critique of Practical Reason* (AA V: 153) "Doctrine of Virtue" in the *Metaphysics of Morals* (AA VI: 386–387, 391–393: 444–445), *On the Common Saying: 'That may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice'* (*Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis*) (AA VIII: 308–309), *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (AA VII: 327–330), and *Vorlesungen über die philosophische Religionslehre*: AA PR: 137. Moral culture is equivalent to what Kant calls *das Reich Gottes* (the Commonweal of God) in Religion.

20 and 34),[162] and this community does not engage in an objective, heteronomous finger-wagging in the face of the individual. Rather, this community encourages the individual to recognize the significance, power, and responsibility that s/he has for her/his own creativity. That includes the creativity of writing and reading of texts.

For Kant, then, the scriptures serve as a paradigmatic example both of human creativity and, hence, of how important a responsible reading of them is. The scriptures are far more than "symbolic representations" or husks that have been used for the "objective" presentation of mythic elements whose concealed purpose is to bring about humanity's divinization. The scriptures are typical of human creativity, and, as a consequence, both their generation by their authors as well as their interpretation by their readers are subject to human moral responsibility – as the case with everything that humanity does that transforms nature in ways that nature is incapable of doing on its own.

There is no more clear witness to this failed responsibility than the destructive history on the part of the *historical* religion that is Christianity. To be sure, Christianity as a *historical* religion is not alone in employing its texts to justify physical and psychological destruction whether it be of nature or of the "God-less." Yet, there is an antidote to this destructiveness right at the core of all *historical* religions as well as at the core of unjust, social systems of "civic law." That antidote is the creative capacity that brought about them all. Only if humanity is capable intentionally of initiating sequences of events that nature cannot accomplish on its own is it possible for there to be any moral responsibility whatsoever. If there is to be moral responsibility, then, we must acknowledge the significance and power of that autonomous freedom, and we need to cultivate that invisible culture, which we can call the Commonweal of God, that recognizes the dignity of all and the sanctity of nature.

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162. The Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 are relativized by the Ten Commandments of Exodus 34. The two sets of Ten Commandments are "the same" only with respect to the fact that they illustrate that there can be no social order without "civic laws" (social norms) that govern the relationships of individuals in their external affairs. That is, these commandments are *hypothetical* imperatives, not *categorical* imperatives. In addition, the two sets Ten Commandments, though, apply to two very different external circumstances: nomadic and sedentary. For each "civic law" to be applied "properly" (as they *ought* to be applied), there must be a "higher" law to which each individual is accountable *internally*, and only the individual can know whether or not s/he has conformed to the "higher" law. Exodus 20 appears to be grounded in the *invisible* deity of Exodus 3:14 with its grammatical accounting for the Tetragrammaton (YHWH) as of Moses. Exodus 34 appears to be grounded by the distinction between visible form (representations) and invisible content (concepts) with the social order being called to accountability by its invisible content through a system of sacrifice. In short, 'civic' law govern visible practices. However, 'religious' law governs invisible practices that structure the visible. Both civic and religious law are *hypothetical* with their 'narrow' focus on successful attainment of goals in the world. The moral law, in contrast, is *categorical* with its 'wide' principles to which both the 'civic' and 'religious' law are answerable. In short, neither set of the Ten Commandments is a set of *categorical* imperatives of morality. They are *hypothetical* imperatives. Both require a moral citizenry for their *proper* application.

Nothing (!) is lost of the scriptures, religious ritual, or even institutional structure – not to speak of music and art – when *theoretical* reason and *historical* religion embrace the capacities and responsibilities of *practical* reason to formulate what Kant calls *pure* religion that is concerned with the faith that grounds both *theoretical and practical* reason as well as *pure* religion. What is 'pure' about religion[163] is not a claim to superiority or a justification for the destruction of anything and everything that is merely *historical* in religion. 'Pure' here refers to all of those spiritual or imperceptible elements, capacities, and responsibilities that make it possible for humanity to be and become the species that it is *in history*. To be sure, *pure* religion does require a shift from the *hypothetical* (the mere determinations of objective circumstances) to the *categorical* (the elements, capacities, and responsibilities that are "above" but never separate from objective circumstances).

Pure religion requires a Copernican Turn no different than the Copernican Revolution's. The solar system was not diminished in any way by Copernicus' insight that its proper understanding requires the denial of the senses. Furthermore, far from the significance of humanity being diminished by the Copernican Revolution's placing the sun at the center of the solar system, humanity was enhanced as it was displaced from the center of the *physical universe* to assume the position of the center of the *epistemological universe* (the *knowing* universe). No other species (although it is possible that there could be another) possesses the elements, capacities, and responsibilities (to the degree) of humanity. However, even the Copernican Revolution remains incomplete as it has not grasped the centrality (!) of *practical* reason, that is, creativity and moral responsibility, for what it means not only to be able to "do" science but also for the significance of science for our species to be and to become human.[164]

Far from having reduced moral principles to mere abstractions, anachronistically imposing ethical norms on a previous age, or failing to be able to account for the generation of the scriptures, Kant, as well, is the last one to quarrel with the natural sciences. *Pure* religion is anchored in the natural sciences to the degree that the natural sciences help us grasp by *theoretical* reason the rule-governed systems that make physical events possible and help us understand the material order that makes any and all *practical* reason and *pure* religion possible. Our successes with *theoretical* reason in identifying the invisible, lawful-order that governs physical causality, provide a heuristic analogy for our equal confidence in the invisible, lawful, moral order that governs autonomous freedom. In other words, Kant's Critical Idealism is far more complementary to the natural sciences than Strauß' insistence on the complementarity between the Hegelian Absolute Idea with the natural sciences. Rather than maintain-

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163. On Kant's notion of 'pure', see 558, n. 109, on Kant's notion of 'pure religion', see 928, n. 189 and Chapter 9: "Missing Aesthetic Judgment:" "928, n. 189.

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

ing the claim for science as Absolute Knowledge, understanding the natural order is crucial for humanity to be (and become) what it is (will be). The difference between Kant and Hegelianism is the Copernican Turn, which places humanity squarely in the historical world.[165]

II) Strauß' Presentation of Carl Daub's Reading of Kant

In January of 1839, two years after the appearance of Strauß' *Streitschriften* that include a burning criticism of Hegelianism originally published in *Die Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik*, two years after the initial, failed attempt to appoint Strauß to the theological faculty in Zurich (not insignificantly, in part out of the refusal of a Schleiermachian on the faculty to support the appointment) on the heals of "On the Transient and Permanent in Christianity" in which Strauß presented an initial formulation of religion independent of Hegel, and just as the Canton government of Zurich successfully named Strauß to the faculty of the University of Zurich, which led to the revolution in September, Strauß serially published a review article on Schleiermacher and the Hegelian, Carl Daub. I describe in Chapter 4, "Why Schleiermacher was not an Option" the bridge burning this publication represents with respect to Schleiermacher.

I have addressed Daub's criticisms of the arguments for God and his non-critical 'historical' reading of the scriptures in Chapter 5: "Traces of an Intellectual Crisis."[166] Here though, I address Daub's formulation of Kant's philosophy itself. Although originally a Kant enthusiast (in Kant's sense of enthusiasm),[167] Daub profoundly distorts Kant. Although Strauß expresses dissatisfaction with Daub when it comes to his rejection of the adequacy of his 'Hegelian' argument for God, biblical criticism, and the reduction of history to a 'dream,' Strauß at no point questions the inappropriateness of Daub's reading of Kant. Strauß' silence indicates acceptance, and, even in his writings as of the 1860s when he was 'leaning' Kantian, he never criticizes Daub's portrayal of Kant. In other words, Strauß' invoking of Kantian moral theory remains mediated across his career by his understanding of the human condition with respect to morali-

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165. Birgit Recki emphasizes this theme that for Kant humanity "belongs in the world" ("*Der Mensch in die Welt passe*"). It is the lesson of practical reason, reflective judgment, generally, as well as aesthetics. See Recki, *Ästhetik der Sitten*: 84–85, 93, 97, 131; 135 (!), 139, 140, 145, 147; 156!, 178, 184, 186, 212, 213; 214, 216–217,, 218, 219, 299, 301–2, 306, 316, 338 – even music and humor are reminders of humanity's place in the world (183). See also, Volker Gerhardt, *Immanuel Kant. Vernunft und Leben* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2007): 241, 272.

166. See Chapter 5: "Traces of an Intellectual Crisis:" the sections "Daub's 'Argument for God:'" 585 ff. and "Strauß' Criticism of Daub's 'Argument for God:'" 587 ff. On Daub's non-critical, historical reading of the scriptures, see 582, 77.

167. See Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 7; or was he more Fichtean?. See *ibid.*, 54. For Kant's understanding of enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) and rapture (*Schwärmerei*), see: 27, n. 10.

ty and ethics from Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" *and* Daub's dismissal of Kant's 'reason' and 'science.'

Whereas Strauß points out that Daub was a student of Kant's ethics in his early writings, it was Hegel who 'liberated' Daub from his Kantian slumbers. When it comes to the relationship between science and its individual disciplines, Daub sees the history of science to consist of three ages with each guided by its own principle: a) the Age of Contemplation, whose principle consists of the symbolic faith of contemplation *grasped not by knowledge but by faith*;[168] b) the Age of Reflection (Daub takes Kant critique to be the quintessential representation of the 'Age of Reflection'), whose principle consists, unconsciously or consciously, of critical distance that comes with the limits of spirit in possession of its own concept or feeling[169]; and c) the Age of Speculation (Schelling and Hegel), whose principle of knowledge consists of the inseparable relationship between divine and finite Spirit.[170] Daub recognizes, however, that these periods cannot be conceived as enclosed in definite boundaries of time as preceding purely divorced from the following or vice versa.[171] Nonetheless, "Daub recognized as the task of his life to help lead theology out of the long Babylonian captivity, which Daub calls the Age of Reflection, into the promised land of Speculation, or, insofar as theology has always been contemplation (θεωρία, theoria) to lead it back to itself – as had happened for philosophy through Schelling and Hegel [...].[172] It is clear in Daub's *Theologumena* that as of 1806 he takes himself to be an Hegelian.[173]

Strauß' presentation of Daub's reading of Kant is capacious, but I take the following three themes as sufficient for illustrating the degree of his distortions that make Kant unrecognizable, yet profoundly shaping of Strauß' grasp of Kant: According to Daub 1) Kant is a 'despiser of reason and science,' 2) Kant is concerned merely for subjective desire and self-interest;[174] and 3) Kant is riddled with internal contradictions:

1) Kant the Despiser of Reason and Science:

I proposed above,[175] that a helpful aid for grasping Hegel's charge that Kant's philosophy is merely 'subjective' is to take his meta-narrative of Double Negation that accounts for history and 'salvation' to be most easily grasped by treating Plato's Simile

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168. See Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 101–102.

169. See Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 102.

170. See Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 102.

171. See Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 102.

172. See Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 103.

173. See Strauß' discussion of the ,idea' of God in "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 82 ff.

174. This is not a contradiction of my claim in the "Preface" that the anti-Kantians at the beginning of the 19th C did anything other than insist that Kant *had to have meant* what they mean by freedom. See the Foreword: 30.

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

of the Line as horizontal rather than vertical. Plato divided the functions of the mind between 'understanding' and 'reason' with 'reason' above understanding because reason is concerned with the purely mental dialectic of contemplation (θεωρία, theoria) that enables the experience of the Good (in Hegel's case, Absolute Spirit), which is taken to be the causal source of all reality.

Daub (as well as Strauß) embraces Hegel's reading of Kant as limiting transcendental consciousness to the 'subjective' 'I' that is concerned only with the understanding of phenomena (Plato's lower segment of the mind in his Simile of the Line) that Daub speaks of as 'over against' (rather than 'below' according to Plato) the 'higher' consciousness that is reason. According to Daub, the ego, building itself up with a mass of experiences, all of which are other than itself – physical, historical, and similar notations – becomes more and more alienated from itself.

> The perceived is an 'other,' a stranger to perceiving consciousness [McG:; Note the dualism] thus, if the perceiver is 'the true,' that which is sensed is 'the untrue,' and, insofar as it feels determined by this 'other,' the perceiver is alienated from itself. Consequently, the 'other' is its untruth. To save itself from this contradiction, an animal is, in part, driven by its instincts to assimilate or negate what it senses; in part, driven by the constant flow of sensations to transform them into [subjective] representations.
> If now feeling and other sensing becomes thinking (that is, the 'I'), then feeling becomes self-consciousness, sensations become perceptions and experiences; and, as an animal seeks to prove its self-consciousness through sensation, so man seeks to prove his (*sic.*) self-consciousness through experience and to fill it with concrete content, which is the scientific principle of empiricism. In this way, though, the scientific principle of empiricism – as a*n endless progress of more and more experience – cannot reach the truth but only come closer and closer to it.* Rather, the ego, building itself up with a mass of experiences, all of which are other than itself – physical, historical, and so on – experiences everything possible as 'other;' only itself, the I as such, it does not experience.[176] (emphasis added)

Kant, supposedly, is concerned with establishing the 'value of all experience' as 'other' by a subjective attribution of space and time to perception and laws to nature because experience as well as God can only consist of appearances within the finite 'limits' of reason.

Furthermore, Kant is ridiculed for claiming to be 'presuppositionless' but *presupposing subjective consciousness* as a *sui generis* 'synthetic unity of apperception:'

> The self withdraws from experience into its pure thinking, and from this standpoint, in order to know the value of all experience, asks about the conditions of possibility of experience. These all have [...] their root in the self, its forms of perception and thinking: *the 'I' perceives space and time by projecting them into the world and thinks laws by projecting them into nature.* Because in this way it does not see purely, but always only with this subjective attribute, reality is not experienced directly at all but is only appearances. Yes, even the 'I' experiences itself only as an appearance. With this, however, experience

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176. Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 129–130.

is by no means annulled or reduced to worthlessness. Rather, it is only enclosed in its boundaries, in order to be valid within them all the more unchallenged. *Of the eternal, the sacred, the divine, no knowledge is possible, because they lie outside these limits.* Man hears the moral law alone in himself as a categorical imperative and from this derives a belief in God, which, however, can never have the status of knowledge. Thus, *criticism concludes with the knowledge that we can know nothing*, a contradiction that, by the way, is the necessary end point to that with which it began, in that it, which as criticism presumes to be presuppositionless, presupposes that: *I think, or the original synthetic unity of apperception, as something that is par excellence immediate and no longer requires any further derivation.*[177] (emphasis added)

Succinctly, Daub concludes: "*The self is no longer a slave of experience* [...] *but* [...] *is all the more the slave of itself.*"[178] (emphasis added)

   Daub here is not only making a pseudo-philosophical criticism (NOTE: not Kantian 'critique'!) with respect to Kant's 'subjectivity,' but he also is making an *ad hominem* attack: *Kant is absorbed in an egocentric solipsism.* According to Daub, especially 'criticism' (again, not 'critique') is an activity of subjective delusion and alienation that, in Kant's case supposedly, not only is alienated from the world as 'other' and alienated from its own selfishness but also, deludedly, seeks to overcome its alienation by a self-absorption in 'criticism.'

   Above all, Kant's exclusive submersion in 'critical understanding' of empirical phenomena denies 'reason', which Absolute Knowledge 'above' (or is it 'over against' on the reclined Platonic Simile of the Line?!) understanding. According to Daub/Hegel, Absolute Knowledge is the 'true' anchor of all 'science'/knowledge. In short, Kant is a 'despiser of reason and science.' "[...]. [*T*]*he truth* [supposedly *of 'critique'*, but only 'criticism'] *[is] the despair, which, admitting to itself the impossibility of knowing the truth, despises reason and science* [...]."[179] (emphasis added)

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   177. Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 132–133. Daub acknowledges that Kant's notion of apperception is finite, but, remaining true to his student Feuerbach's complaint that the Hegelians make the non-essential essential and the essential non-essential (see Chapter 5: "Traces of an Intellectual Crisis:" 605, n. 169, and 605, n. 166), Daub only views the *finitude* of Kant's notion of apperception as a non-essential subjectivity. Just as Hegel, who distinguishes between the absolute divisible-I over against the finite divisible non-I (see: 160) without recognition of the anthropomorphic conditions that provide the experience for the speculative claims for their Absolute correlates in Absolute Spirit, Daub doesn't recognize that Kant's finite apperception is the anthropomorphic basis for thinking of God as the Absolute Unity of Absolute Spirit beyond the world of perception. See Chapter 9: "Missing Aesthetic Judgment:" the section "Hegel on Apperception and Apprehension:" 865 ff.
   178. In Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 134.
   179. Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 134.

2) Autonomous Freedom is Egocentric Desire and Self-Interest:

Daub takes literally Kant's label for humanity's 'highest' capacity of 'reason' as 'the feeling of pleasure and displeasure" to mean the 'capacity for sensuous desire' (*Begehrungsvermögen*[180]) not only as self-absorption but inescapably and exhaustively governed by self-interest, which Daub calls 'sin.' As a consequence, he not only ignores Kant's notion of autonomous freedom-from and freedom-for (as did Hegel), but he distorts autonomous freedom into merely a pursuit of self-interest.

Having defined 'radical evil' as the 'freedom to invert' good and evil principles[181] (NOTE: *not* the causal capacity of 'freedom-for' to initiate sequences that nature on its own cannot), Daub faults Kant for leaving unexplained 'the evil in nature,' which humanity then takes as an excuse:

> [The excuse takes place] [...]when, by means of an inference proceeding from us, we conceive of nature as jointly guilty: equally, in regard to nature "we will judge that she, and every groaning creature, although they have nothing to regret, nevertheless [... like those groaning creatures], with all lack of justification, has its apology.". In short, that we are not innocent of the evil in us as well as nature is not innocent of the evil in her as soon as we begin to recognize ourselves and her. At the same time, however, we also recognize that we and she are not guilty. From this thought we immediately continue to judge in this way: *Something* that we (men, nature, and each of her creatures) do not have to answer for, it may feel it or not, bears the guilt that weighs on us, and without the same there would be neither a defensive venting in us nor a striving directed against nature and us in nature."[182] (emphasis added)

Daub claims that this '*something*' that accounts for evil in nature and humanity is 'Satan,' who "purely out of Himself, turned away from God" not in the sense of dualism, but "[...] his evil being arose entirely from within himself, out of his bottomless [*grundlosen*] liberty [*Willkür*] [...] Daub calls Satan 'his own creator, the most miraculous beast [*Scheusal*] in all of creation.'[183]

Strauß asks: Is sin nothing other than finitude and finitude always and already sin?

> By no means, according to Daub, but humanity is already null and void as far as it belongs merely to the appearance world. Humanity becomes evil only when the individual wants to be something for itself as this appearing individual being, when reflection is not at the same time a reflecting the absolute origin of her/his and all beings in God. *Not selfhood, but selfishness is sin.* Therefore, salvation for man is not, as for natural things, natural

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180. On Kant's label ‚*Begehrungsvermögen*‛, see:, n. 798, n. 308.

181. See Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 111.

182. Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 111.

183. Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 112.

death, as the dissolution of individuality into the general life, but the spiritual dying of individuality and surrender to the divine life.[184]

As with Hegel, salvation means divinization that escapes the self-absorption of humanity in sensuous desire for which humanity and nature are both guilty and innocent because neither can be perfect.

Daub's blind spots are startling. Not only is evil *sui generis* and inexplicably an act of creation independent of the 'one' God, not only is the blatant dualism between God and Satan flippantly denied, but all of humanity's teleological creativity is sinful because it is driven by desire. Finally, it all doesn't matter, though, because salvation consists in escaping 'finitude' and 'nature' to be absorbed into God's divinity.

3) Kant's Internal Contradictions according to Daub:

Strauß summarizes Daubs account of Kant's internal contradictions, which Strauß himself fails to see as truly ludicrous, as follows:

> Throughout its course, [Kantian] critique moves in a series of contradictions: Nature is independent of the ego [McG NOTE: dualism], and yet, because the ego receives its laws from nature [McG NOTE: subjective constructivism], it is dependent on nature; likewise, its ego is independent of and yet again dependent on nature; morality is free of pleasure and happiness, and yet again reckoning on the corresponding amount of the latter, is, therefore, dependent on happiness; finally a God who is independent of humanity, but, because God is postulated only for the purpose of balancing human happiness with human worthiness, dependent on humanity. This sequence of contradictions, this dissimulation among all relationships, in [Kantian] 'critique' constitutes the root that is the fundamental contradiction of its essence: namely, it asks how the self comes to experience but not also how it comes to be selfhood. Instead of proceeding from thought and existence/Being as such, it already presupposes thinking as that of the self, which thus theoretically frees itself from experience [McG NOTE: by dis-interested theoretical reason], and, practically at least, strives to free itself from drives and passions [McG NOTE: by practical reason]: but only in order to place itself in an all the more decisive dependence on itself as the thinker.[185]

The individual is a 'slave' to itself when it exercises its finite capacities, especially when it does so critically:

> '[…] the self is no longer a slave of experience; but it is all the more enslaved to itself as critical. *The dependence of itself on itself, called the synthetic unity of apperception, is*

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184. Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 94. On Kant's notion of ,desire' (*Begehrungsvermögen*) and reason, see 798, n. 308.

185. Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 133–134.

at the same time, the independence of itself from everything that would not be 'I,'[186] the most decisive dependence of itself on itself. No matter how much it is indignant about its selfishness in the feeling of its dependence on its feelings, desires, and the like, about this, its dependence on itself, which is nevertheless the principle of its selfishness, it is not scandalized as long as the self remains critical.'[187] (emphasis added)

III) Strauß' View of Kant in the *Life of Jesus Examined for the German People*

By the time of Strauß' second 'life of Jesus of 1864, Hegel is absent and a radically trimmed Kant has replaced even Strauß' 'Platonic Christian' understanding of religion in "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity."[188]

The overwhelming bulk of Strauß' second 'life of Jesus' seeks to identify what is "left-over historically" once the mythic husk of the gospels has been identified and removed. There's not a great deal. There are stories with a historical kernel (e.g., Jesus was conceived, born, and died), but other than those mundane elements that, to be sure, confirm legitimate awe in face of the incredible mystery that is life with all its limits and potential, there are no miracles in the sense of violations of the laws of nature. What Strauß identifies as historical in the LJEGP is a profound set of moral teachings that requires a distinction between "what is true and obligatory for all time" and "what is only grounded in transient beliefs and circumstances of a particular time."[189] Strauß then adds: "[…] and *that which remains valid and obligatory is no longer valid because it is proclaimed to be divine revelation by means of a messenger attested by miracles but because it is recognized by reason and experience to be true in itself as grounded in the laws of the human species and thought.*"[190] (emphasis added)

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186. This ‚Not-I' terminology is an indication (?!) that Daub's reading of Kant is pre-figured by Fichte.

187. Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 134.

188. See especially, "Concluding Remark" ("*Schlußbetrachtung*") of *LJEGP*: 621–627.
Although I agree with Robert B. Stewart that Strauß turns away from Hegelian to "moral categories" for understanding Christianity, Stewart leaves undiscussed what those "moral categories" involve, and his assertion in "From Reimarus to Dunn: Situating James D.G. Dunn in the History of Jesus Research" in Robert B. Stewart and Gary R. Habermas, eds., *Memories of Jesus: A Critical Appraisal of James D.G. Dunn's Jesus Revisited* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010): 8, who cites to R. Morgan's "Strauss, David Friedrich" in D.K. McKim, *Major Biblical Interpreters* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998): 367, that "Strauss died a committed materialist" is misleading if it means that he was a material reductionist and committed atheist.
It is one thing to acknowledge the necessity of, yet irreducibility to, the material world for any and all experience. It is quite another thing to assert that this recognition involves a rejection of theology. Granted, it involves calling into question any literal, anthropomorphic portrayal of God, but, even then, one must recognize the limits to reason and acknowledge that the value of a theological claim is not its *objective* truth but its significance for the *subjective*, conditions of possibility for experience, understanding, and the assumption of moral responsibility for one's decisions and actions.

189. Strauß, *LJEGP*: xvii.

190. Strauß, *LJEGP*: xvii.

> Indispensable and also inalienable is what remains to us of a Christianity in which humanity is elevated above, on the one hand, objective religion of a religion of the senses […] and elevated above, on the other hand, a religion of mere objective legalisms; in contrast to these, this is a faith that rules the world as spiritual and moral. Accordingly, […] the service to which we obligate ourselves, like this [spiritual and moral] power itself, is only a spiritual and moral service of the heart and mind […][191]

Realization of the "spiritual and moral power," which is not only Christianity but also at the core of all religions, involves what can be identified as the two steps realizable by a history *of theology* and a *theology of* history: 1) The first step, grasped by Strauß in 1864, is that the history *of theology* separates what is natural (knowable by the natural sciences) from the supernatural (miracles) and the objective, synchronic and diachronic description of doctrines, rituals, and institutional structures and 2) the second step, not achieved by Strauß but is the elephant in the room across his career, is the *theology of* history that consists of respect for and the project of scientific understanding of the material conditions of all life *and* the on-going process of the moral improvement of the individual encouraged by a corporate, *culture of rearing* (not simply a *culture of skills*) in light of the imperceptible Commonweal of God of imperceptible capacities and responsibilities that, in turn, guarantee the meaning, purpose and value of life for all, the conditions for democratic institutions and the pursuit of virtue, compassion, and justice grounded in the dignity of the individual, as well as international cooperation and a genuine cosmopolitanism.

   With respect to *the first step* or *the history of theology*, Strauß writes that Christianity is a historical religion not because its perfection was miraculously manifest in an historical individual at some point in the past but because this '*pure*' religion (by no means what Kant means by 'pure' religion[192] is itself a consequentialist, historical process toward perfection. This '*pure*' religion has not yet been achieved

> […] in its purity, at least, [… and] the reason is that what for our age is, correctly so, most offensive from the old religious belief is the delusion of the miraculous. As long as Christianity is viewed as coming to humanity externally, Christ as someone who has come down from heaven, whose church is the institution in which the sins of humanity are removed by his blood, Christianity remains non-spiritual […]. *Only when it is recognized that, in Christianity, humanity becomes aware of itself in a deeper sense than ever before, that Jesus is the person in whom this deeper consciousness first was realized as a determining power of his entire life and essence*, that the forgiveness of sins is found, precisely, only in accepting this attitude *by taking it on as one's own blood, only then is Christianity understood as really Christian.*[193] (emphasis added)

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191. Strauß, *LJEGP*: xvii-xviii.
192. On Kant's notion of ‚pure' religion, see: 928, n. 189. On Kant's notion of 'pure', see: 558, n. 109.
193. Strauß, *LJEGP*: xviii.

The historical nature of humanity in general and of Christianity in particular is what demands, in fact, that we move beyond the objectively miraculous for understanding religion to discern the difference between the non-essential (husk) and the essential (kernel), that is, deeper moral consciousness:

When just once the concept is grasped that humanity and everything about it, religion not excepted, develops historically, then the awareness necessarily also occurs that, within this developmental process, *there is no point that can be taken to be the absolute highest*, that the manner of portrayal by the scriptures that arose more than one-and-a-half thousand years ago under extremely poor educational conditions no longer can be our manner of portrayal but that, if the scriptures are to be relevant for us, they must be *subjected to the question of what is essential and what is not.*[194] (emphasis added)

The *second step* or the *theology of history* by Strauß' definition discerns what is essential and what is non-essential in religion. This consists in determining "the demarcation between that which is enduring in Christianity from that which is transient, the holy truths from the mere opinions of the time."[195] What is essential is concerned with the highest aim of humanity.

> [...] [S]o certain as the determination of the human being is universal and achievable by all [that leads to the bliss that accompanies the fulfilment of the individual], so must the conditions [of possibility for this fulfilment] also be universal, that is, in addition to and prior to the will that sets itself into motion to achieve a goal,[196] every person is given knowledge of the goal [of fulfilment] itself, which can't be accidental, coming from external historical knowledge [objective], but must be *a necessary knowledge of reason that everyone can find in [her-/]himself* [subjectively].[197]

Strauß cites directly here to Kant's *Religion*, Part Two, Section One: "Concerning the Rightful Claim of the Good Principle to Dominion Over the Human Being."

> [...] Kant [distinguished] the ideal of divinely, well-pleasing humanity from the historical individual, Jesus, or, [stated otherwise] as it is possible in a creature of nature, [Kant] distinguished the needs and inclinations of the individual from ethical disposition (*sittliche Gesinnung*)[198] in its entire purity. *Elevation to this ideal is the universal duty of humanity.* Although we cannot imagine this ideal otherwise than by means of an image of a perfect

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194. Strauß, *LJEGP*: xix.
195. Strauß, *LJEGP*: xviii.
196. Note: Strauß is subtly, yet no less decisively, rejecting 'Occasionalism'/'Voluntarism' here and embracing the priority of teleology, 'Intellectualism' over the will.
197. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 624.
198. It is not insignificant, in my opinion, that Strauß speaks here of ethical disposition rather than the propensity to self-select a good or moral principle by autonomous freedom to govern human agency. Note, especially, that Strauß equates his 'ethical disposition' with separation from the 'needs and inclinations of the individual'. In other words, Strauß is reading Kant but thinking Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" that separates 'moral duty' from 'ethical achievement.

human being and although it is not impossible that such a human being once existed, the fact that we should all be like this ideal means that *it's achievement doesn't depend upon our knowledge that such a perfect human being existed but only that we maintain this ideal for ourselves, recognizing it as obligatory and making it the aim of our efforts.*[199] (emphasis added)

Strauß adds: "*The idea of human perfection first is given*, as in the case of other ideas, *as a capacity*, which requires experience for its gradual [McG: objective] realization, and it allows us to see its progress in the course of history."[200] (emphasis added) In harmony with Kant's notion of 'moral worthiness' that is concerned with humanity's moral capacities, not its achievements, *moral perfection is a capacity* to develop morally *as a species*. In other words, although he continues to accept the notion of moral duty is ethically unachievable by the individual, moral perfection is no longer taken by Strauß to mean 'empty abstract moral duty' as in Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" because moral 'perfection' has to do with society's on-going discernment of the ethical rules required for successful, historical life.

However, moral duties/principles are not a 'given' in Strauß' perfect, moral capacity. They are social constructions that arise out of the needs and tasks of history, which allows Strauß to portray Jesus in 1864 as the 'highest achiever of moral teaching' in his day while acknowledging that crucial moral principles were absent because they were not part either of his personal context (nuclear family life) or their need hadn't yet arisen in history (economic life and politics). In other words, Strauß sidesteps the issue of "abstract moral principles" (*a priori* synthetic judgments, according to Kant) of Hegel's individual, 'moral duty', which would be 'empty ideas' according to the understanding of morality from the perspective of Hegel's "The Moral View of the World." Rather, moral principles are historical products of historical experience (*a posteriori* synthetic judgments in Kant's language).

This shift in the understanding of moral duty/principles, allows Strauß to accept that the Christ was not the first or the last to teach humanity of its inward moral duty, "[…] rather, as in Israel and Greece, on the Ganges and Oxus [of Central Asia], he had predecessors, so also he was not without successors. Far more, after him this example was advanced further, developed in all directions […]"[201]

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199. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 624–625. Note: Strauß is not arguing as did Kant in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (AA V: 4*; see also AA V: 29–30) that acknowledgment of a moral principle is the *ratio cognoscendi* of creative, autonomous freedom, which in turn is why morality is required of transcendental consciousness as *ratio essendi* of morality ('if I should, I can'). Strauß remains stuck in Hegel's notion of moral duty in "The Moral View of the World" in which sensuousness seductions are the *ratio cognoscendi* of morality that demand perfection of the individual by achieving sovereignty over desire ('I should, but I can't').

200. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 625.

201. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 626.

Strauß acknowledges, though, that in the case of these others, "although found in some parts complete, in them the pattern as it was presented in the teaching and life of Jesus in other respects is only weakly visible or not even addressed."[202] However,

> [o]ne finds completely developed [with Jesus] everything with respect to the purity of heart and life of the individual related to the love of God and of one's neighbor: although family life is pushed into the background by this teacher without a family; in contrast, his relationship to the state appears to have been passive; not only with respect to his career does he deflect economics, but he also demonstrably loathes it, and everything having to do with art and beauty with respect to the enjoyment of life remains completely beyond his horizon of concern. That these are essential gaps […] no one should deny […][203] (emphasis added)

In other words, Strauß emphasizes the extraordinary character of Jesus' moral teaching, but he views it as part of *a historical process of humanity's individual and corporate, moral development.* He underscores, explicitly, the error of a morality of "positive, divine commands" that repress the "moral grandness" of humanity's nature:

> Yes, given that, next to and above the moral ideal taught by Jesus, [and to the extent that] he himself remains as the [objective] God/Man in whom to believe is the duty of the individual and the condition for personal salvation although outside of and prior to the acknowledgement of this moral ideal within, that upon which everything depends is eclipsed, Jesus' moral grandness is stunted of its full effectiveness, and even moral duties that could only have value in that they lie in the nature of humanity's essence are transformed by the deceptive light of positive, divine commands.[204]

Strauß concludes that the task of the critic is

> […] *to reconstruct as much as possible the image of the historical Jesus in its plain, human features* [we can say, the history *of theology*], but when it comes to the healing of humanity *to draw attention to the ideal Christ, to the moral ideal to which the historical Jesus, surely in many major features, was the first to bring to light* but at the same time belongs as a capacity to our species as a universal endowment, *just as its further development and fulfilment can be only the task and the accomplishment of all of humanity.*[205] (emphasis added)

Clearly, when it comes to appreciating the 'healing' significance of Jesus' moral teaching, Strauß is aware that a theological context is required if the 'incomplete' historical elements of Jesus' teaching are to be properly viewed and developed.

As in 1835, the theological context here in 1864 involves a subjective turn as the key to overcoming the seductions of objective sensuousness. For Strauß, humanity's

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202. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 626.
203. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 626.
204. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 627.
205. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 627.

moral challenge remains the same as it was in his earlier writings although Strauß' subjective turn, is here centered in the religion capable of human achievement that Strauß calls "the religion of humanity" (*Humanitätsreligion*)[206] that *as a species* is ever more 'successful' in suppressing its sensualism.[207] However, this 'religion of humanity' is neither understood in the sense of Kant's *pure* religion of *practical* reason, nor to be equated with the *historical* religion of objective doctrines, rituals, and institutional structures. In contrast to Strauß, Kant's *pure* religion" is grounded in creative, absolute freedom as the *ratio cognoscendi* of morality, not merely the objective demands of moral duty as a heteronomous challenge to control sensuousness.[208] Kant's *pure* religion is also not individualistic. It requires the imperceptible, inward community that creates a culture of rearing (not simply an objective, culture of skills) upon which, Strauß fails to recognize, the very "religion of humanity" itself depends.

Even if Strauß has not embraced Kant's *pure* religion, there is no call here in 1864 to reconciliation with the divine to be accomplished by the inward, mystic, Second Negation of Hegelianism beyond history accomplished by the individual philosopher or the human species. Nonetheless, in light of all that he had erroneously maintained, ignored, or of which he was unaware about Kant in 1835, for Strauß personally this vision of the "religion of humanity" achievable by moral effort is a revolution.

IV) Kant's Aesthetic Judgment: Distorted by Hegel, Overlooked by Strauß

In order to understand just what Strauß did and did not (!) grasp of Kant, it is not only necessary to present a summary of key themes from Kant but also necessary to provide an account of, especially, Hegel's (mis-)reading of Kant. As I have frequently stressed, Strauß has his understanding of Kant primarily through the lens of Hegel/Hegelianism shared by F.C. Baur, which influenced profoundly what he took to be valuable in Kant in 1864. Unfortunately, Strauß never revised the Hegelian reading of Kant by means of his own careful reading of Kant. For Strauß Kant was *pre-figured* by Hegel, Baur, and Daub, and Schleiermacher.

Along with Feuerbach,[209] Strauß 'inherited' from the Hegelians, especially Carl Daub, the criticism of Schleiermacher's theology in which knowing and doing were grounded in the 'feeling of absolute dependence.' In contrast to Schleiermacher, reason

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206. Strauß, *LJEGP*: 625.

207. See Strauß, *LJEGP*: 626–627.

208. Neither sensuousness nor reason can be the source of evil according for Kant. Sensuous would be 'too little' and reason would be 'too much." See *Religion* AA VI: 35.

209. Strauß employs Feuerbach's framework of religion as 'feeling' and philosophy as 'reason' from Feuerbach's *Pierre Bayle nach seinen für die Geschichte der Philosophie und Menschheit interessantesten Momenten* (Ansbach: Verlag von C. Brügel, 1838).

and feeling, for Hegel/Daub, are subordinate to reason.[210] In "On the Transient and the Permanent in Christianity," as I presented in Chapter 5, Strauß first attempt at a theology after Hegel was a retrieval of the Scholastic, 'Intellectualist' tradition absent Hegel's narrative of Double Negation in which Strauß took religion to consist in unifying reason and feeling.[211] Strauß does not have in mind here, though, that religion unifies Hegelian Absolute Reason with Schleiermacher's "feeling of absolute dependence. Rather, religion here means the combination of external skill and internal harmony (feeling) that is embodied by the religious 'genius.'[212]

With Schleiermacher's 'feeling of absolute dependence' not an option for Strauß and in light of Feuerbach's eclipsing of reason as the core of religion because of the delusion of its anthropomorphism, the only obvious alternative to Feuerbach's materialism for Strauß because of his shadow across Strauß' entire corpus would have been Kant. However, given Hegel's pre-figuring of Kant as defender of a 'weak' and 'barbaric,' subjectivist reason as well as Daub's portrayal of Kant as a 'despiser' of reason and science, and the distinction between moral duty and unfulfilled ethics in "The Moral View of the World," *Kant also was no genuine option for Strauß.*

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210. To be sure, Strauß acknowledges that Hegel claims to 'unite' reason and feeling with his distinction between *actual* representations (*Form*) and *true* content (*Idea*). See Chapter 5, "Traces of an Intellectual Crisis:" the final paragraph of the section "1837 :" 562. However, Strauß emphasizes in "Schleiermacher und Daub:" "Admittedly, there is always an undeveloped form of feeling in play, but in a scientific presentation, who is satisfied with feeling rather than carefully developed thinking?" (Strauß, "Schleiermacher und Daub:" 164–165) See as well, Feuerbach's "On the Evaluation of *The Essence of Christianity*," Michael Kryluk, trans., available at https://brill.com/view/journals/hima/27 /1/article-p241_9.xml (21 February 2022): 242: "According to Hegel [...] sensation, feeling and heart are the *form* in which the content of religion, which comes from elsewhere, is supposed to immerse itself, so that it becomes the property of the human being. For me, the object, the content of religious feeling itself, is nothing other than the *essence of feeling*. This essential difference comes out in an extremely clear fashion already in the way that Hegel and I polemicize against Schleiermacher, the *last* theologian of Christianity. *I [Feuerbach] do not criticize Schleiermacher, as Hegel does, because he turned religion into a matter of feeling, but rather only for the reason that he, out of theological prejudice, did not and could not come to draw the necessary conclusions of his standpoint; that he did not have the courage to see and to admit that objectively God himself is nothing other than the essence of feeling, if subjectively feeling is the main point of religion. I am in this respect so little against Schleiermacher that on the contrary he is an essential support who actually confirms my claims derived from the nature of feeling.* For just this reason Hegel has not penetrated into the proper essence of religion, because as an abstract thinker he has not penetrated into the essence" of feeling. Let someone show me in all of Hegel's philosophy an idea or sentence from which, through explication or inference, the proposition of my book – indeed, one of its main premises – would follow: that Christ, i.e., the 'Christian' Christ, Christ *as* he was object of Christian sentiment [*Gemüt*], is the objective essence of the human heart (in distinction from the *historical* Christ, although this religious determinacy [*Bestimmtheit*] can, or rather must, also be treated as the reflection of an historical determinacy). Or [show me] an idea from which, for instance, the idea of my book could be inferred, that God, as the unlimitedly sensuous being, as the omnitemporal, that is, eternal, all-pervasive or omnipresent being, is nothing other than the essence of imagination [*das Wesen der Phantasie*]." (emphasis added)

211. See Strauß, "Über Vergängliches und Bleibendes in Christenthum:" 102–103.

212. See Strauß, "Über Vergängliches und Bleibendes in Christenthum:" 102–103.

Unfortunately, as well, the core themes of Kant's *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*, reflecting judgment, beauty, the sublime, and the role of teleological judgment for finite consciousness' understanding of nature, were distorted beyond recognizability by Hegel.[213] Although it is precisely here in the third *Critique* that the extra-*ordinary* capacities of transcendental consciousness are profiled, Strauß does not mention Kant's discussion of aesthetic judgment. Consequently, beauty as the *feeling*, not knowledge, *of harmonious unity of the 'play' of concepts* of the mind, the sublime's infinity and power of transcendental consciousness over against nature, and the capacity of transcendental consciousness to grasp the imperceptible 'top-down' order required for understanding nature – all of which confirm *the 'strength' of reason and Kant's commitment to open-ended scientific research, not to speak of the 'civility'* (far from barbarous) *of practical reason that anchors morality in autonomous, creative freedom, the dignity of all human beings, and a cosmopolitan vision of the future* – are ignored by both Hegel and Strauß as I address in Chapter 9: "Missing Aesthetic Judgment."

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213. Taking the 'new' Fichte to be a proponent of 'speculative science's' definition of religion as union with God beyond the senses, F.C. Baur points out that Fichte's philosophy shifted from Kantianism with the publication of his *Die Anweisung zum seligen Leben* in 1806. See Baur, *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung* II: 692–693. In fact, both Fichte and Hegel make a Platonic reading of the 'good' and the 'beautiful' (rather than Kant's understanding of beauty). For Fichte, God as the unity of 'spiritual light' (*ibid.*, 61) fragments itself into an endlessness that, in turn, is reflected by the world of objects (*ibid.*, 62). Outside of God, nothing exists (*ibid.*, 69) and true knowledge (science) is the insight that all multiplicity is grounded in a unity (*ibid.*, 71). Already in *Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* (1805), Fichte anchors his notion of 'the Idea' of "[...] the one, absolutely good, and eternally good, divine Being" ([Berlin: Volksverband der Bücherfreunde Wegweiser-Verlag, GmbH, 1924]: 300) otherwise than in the necessities of the Kantian Copernican Turn but in "healthy common sense, skepticism, and the struggle against rapturousness (*Schwärmerei*) and superstition" (*ibid.*, 308) as well as within the framework of Plato's heliotrope of the Simile of the Sun (*ibid.*, 311–312) that is confirmed by an inward "peace with the whole world, and joy [...]" (*ibid.*, 312). Furthermore, Fichte's understanding of the relationship between 'beauty' and 'genius'/'talents' comes from a Platonic perspective. See Fichte's *Die Anweisung zum seligen Leben* 1806). Hansjürgen Verweyen, ed. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2012)." Rather than Kant's notion of 'beauty' as the 'symbol of the moral' in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* (AA V: 351–354), Fichte clearly is reading 'beauty' and the 'Idea' of highest Being/God as the Absolute One (*ibid.*, 61) under the influence of Plato's accounting for the 'Good' by means of Simile of the Sun in Book VI of the *Republic* and the *Philebus* 66a-67a. Fichte turns Kant's discussion of beauty and genius into the issue of the possession of particular 'talents' that separate persons rather than treating beauty as a universal 'capacity' of all finite, transcendental consciousness.