

Conclusion: John Dewey and the Enduring Need to De-Mythologize the Hegelian/Straußian Reading of Kant

Chapter Overview

A reading of John Dewey's *German Philosophy and German Politics* demonstrates that those who take truth claims to be limited to consequentialist effects and/or who take understanding to be a self-correcting open-ended process succumb to the third-rail of hermeneutic, three-fold mimesis. Dewey's reading of 'German philosophy' perpetuates the pre-figured anti-Kantian and anti-Enlightenment narrative that shaped Strauß' mis-understanding of Kant. This Kant narrative is as much in need of de-mythologization as the gospels were for Strauß. The *genetic mythical principle* also applies to this Kant narrative. Here its focus is on the Kant-narrative talking points that make up a mere aggregate of disparate prototypical impressions which Kant 'must have' meant. The *genetic mythical principle* (*genetic narrative principle*) identifies in Kant's work the 'prototypes' and their architectonic that stimulated the misrepresentation of Kant analogously to the 'First' Testament prototypes that were gleaned by the gospel authors to record their (and their communities') impressions of what Jesus of Nazareth 'must have' meant. Furthermore, the third-rail of hermeneutical three-fold mimesis is identified as the ever present possibility of systematic distortion, which is the 'blind spot' of Dewey's 'empirical philosophy' and 20th C hermeneutics. This third-rail is the weakest link in the chain of Dewey's epistemology, which only appears to turn the 'vice' of the 'correspondence theory of truth' (open-endedness) into a virtue. A return to Kant identifies universal requirements (but not causal determinations) of consciousness that both make three-fold mimesis possible and offers a strategy of de-mythologization and *genetic mythical principle* to 'correct' narrative distortions albeit on a foundation of *necessary, non-epistemic 'faith'* (*Fürwahrhalten*). As the capstone of the "Confession as Conclusion," de-mythologization of both the gospels and Kant makes possible, the retrieval of 'pure' religion that is grounded not in anthropomorphic projections and eternal self-interest but the required conditions of possibility and capacities as well as the 'culture that promotes the moral will,' which make understanding and responsible agency in the world possible. Our self-understanding and nature hang in the balance.

It is impossible to know just what David Friedrich Strauß thought, or any other person thinks. There is even a truly profound ambiguity when it comes to the individual's own thought. What appears to be certain, though, is that no one can experience, think, or act for someone else. When it comes to giving an account of the experience, thought, and actions of another, then, one is limited to the appearances that they produce *and to the imperceptible elements of finite consciousness that make possible those appearances*.

When I have asserted that Hegel, Baur, Schleiermacher, and/or Strauß have misrepresented or distorted Kant, my claim is not that I know the 'true' Kant. A reading of *pre-figured* sources is not 'true' or 'false.' I invoke Paul Ricoeur's formulation of a 'bad' and a 'good' reading. A 'bad' reading is 'narrow and far-fetched,' whereas a 'good' reading is 'coherent and offers a plenitude.'¹ Those 'bad' or 'poor' *con-figurations* of Kant are those that violate Kant's methodology articulated at the conclusion of the *Critique of Pure Reason*., especially the call for an architectonic. Rather, they have

1. See Chapter 2 "Strauß Who? What? Why does it Matter?:" 188 and footnote 88.

focused narrowly on individual themes as if Kant presented merely an aggregate of philosophical issues among which one can cherry pick *to criticize* (*by no means offer a critique* of) him, or they have anachronistically insisted that Kant ‘had to have meant’ what the interpreter takes him to have meant. I make every effort possible to demonstrate how Kant’s reflections are always embedded in a coherent whole and are no merely capricious aggregation. My reader, of course, can doubt the success of my efforts, but should s/he do so s/he is obligated to present more ‘coherent and plenitude’ reading of Kant.

On the Value of Engaging Strauß: Gospel Criticism and Metaphysics

In Strauß’ case the reader is unquestionably rewarded by reading his work, and no summary, not even this project, can serve as a substitute for reading him. This is not because he is an ‘oracle of truth.’ Rather, given the rigor and breadth of his scholarship, one acquires a treasure trove of information and insight and saves precious time because he identifies the crucial issues at issue in Christianity as well as their conundrums. Yet, the significance of his work is neither limited merely to his gospel criticism nor as a case study in Christianity.

His portrayal of the narrative character of the gospels does illuminate what is required on the part of the reader for understanding, generally, not just for understanding of the gospels themselves. Furthermore, his insight into the generation of the gospel narratives by their respective authors anticipates 20th C conclusions about the ‘gospel writer as creative author,’ not as objective historian.

In addition, though, Strauß provides the reader with beneficial resources to evaluate the anti-Enlightenment and anti-Kantian movement that developed already at the beginning of the 19th C. The reader is also rewarded by carefully following the trajectory of his metaphysical reflections not only by what Strauß ‘got right’ but also by Strauß’ requiring the reader’s wrestling with the issues that he ‘got wrong.’ His claims, ruminations, and, especially, his identification of what he took to be wrong or problematic in Kant, Hegel, and Schleiermacher not only present a valuable, insightful profile of their work but also highlighted where his reading requires correction. In other words, Strauß’ corpus saves the reader valuable time by its portrayal of the metaphysics of his day but also by challenging the reader to work through the open metaphysical conundrums of Strauß’ own reflections.

Last but no means least, Strauß’ corpus raises the inescapable question: If understanding precedes perception, then what guarantees ‘correct’ understanding? Stated in the terms of Strauß’ theological world: What is the ‘correct’ theological understanding that one must ‘necessarily’ bring to all experience, generally, and to the scriptures, particularly?

Dewey's Kant Reading Requires De-mythologizing. Just as the Gospels do for Strauß

This project has sought to present D.F. Strauß's gospel criticism and metaphysics by not only examining his own writings but also by examining the writings of those who influenced him. I have applied Paul Ricoeur's thesis of "three-fold mimesis"² that views all understanding as a process that always and already begins with a pre-figured 'narrative,' which is then con-figured by an 'author' and is followed by the reader's re-figuring of that author's narrative. Strauß' Kant understanding both illuminates the validity of the thesis of three-fold mimesis but also illuminates the danger of systematic distortion³ once distortion enters into the trajectory of narrative construction.

Strauß and Dewey share both the same two aspects of the mythic reading of inherited narratives and a dependence upon the distorting, Hegelian reading of Kant. The two aspects of the mythic reading that Strauß shares with Dewey are de-mythologization of narratives (the husk/kernel reading of narratives) and the *genetic mythic principle* (the generation of narratives on the basis of pre-figured prototypes or *genetic narrative principle*). Although with respect to narratives (*mythoi*), the *genetic narrative principle* anticipates three-fold mimesis, Ricoeur extends the principle to factual, historical accounts (*logoi*), which calls into question Strauß' conviction that there is an unequivocal distinction to be made between *mythoi* and *logoi*.⁴ This theme becomes particularly relevant when it comes to ferreting out systematic distortion in understanding.

Whereas Strauß applied his mythic reading to the gospels, he never directly engaged Kant sufficiently to recognize that the Hegelian reading of Kant itself was a distorted, mythic reading. Dewey's text and his reception among some is shaped by the same Hegelian pre-figuration of Kant that influenced Strauß and has persisted over 200 years. As with the gospels, then, the same hermeneutic of de-mythologization to identify 'kernels' at the core of 'husks' and identification of the '*genetic mythical principle*' that accounts for the writing of inherited narratives is required to address persistent distortions of Kant.

By de-mythologizing Kant, we can see that, unlike the gospel narratives, which are theological 'all-the-way-down' given that the gospel authors are theologians, not historians, we must heed Kant's call to identify, and grasp the ramifications of, the universal, finite, transcendental conditions of conscious experience, understanding, and agency generally, that are required in order for (finite, transcendental) consciousness to be able to understand phenomena and act responsibly *in the world*. In other

2. See in Chapter 1 "Methodology" the section "On Understanding as Three-fold Mimesis:" 104.

3. See Jürgen Habermas, "On Systematically Distorted Communication." *Inquiry*, 13 (1970): 205–18).

4. See Ricoeur, Paul, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 3, by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988): 148–156 and, especially, Chapter 8, as well as, Ricoeur, "History as Narrative and Practice" in *Philosophy Today*, XXIX (3/4): 213–221.

words, this examination of Dewey is no knee-jerk Kantian apologetic that seeks to defend one, among the many, particular, Kantian narratives. Rather, it seeks to identify the universal, conditions and capacities of consciousness, which themselves constitute a larger, coherent 'architectonic' that applies to all experience, understanding, and responsible agency. These universal conditions and capacities constitute the key kernels of Kant's philosophical reflections.

Kantian kernels are no more true just because he says them than the biblical contents are true because they are in the bible. As Lessing pointed out,⁵ truth is in the bible because it is true, not merely because it is in the bible. What Kant allows us to see, though, is that we have 'truth' to the degree we can identify the necessities of finite, eminent transcendental consciousness.

Although Kant calls his philosophy 'empirical' because it commences with, and returns to, phenomena,⁶ he emphasizes that there are two ways that concepts arise in experience: 1) constructively (*a posteriori* 'empirical' judgments) and 2) synthetically (*a priori* assumptions *added to* the phenomena).⁷ However, the required *a priori* synthetic conditions and capacities that finite consciousness adds to empirical phenomena are neither merely capricious constructions of individual consciousness, nor merely abstractions of logic (a canon without an organon), nor merely empirically perceived⁸ by merely opening one's eyes, nor only the grasp of the hypothetical imperatives of particular, technical skills, nor certainly not any pre-determination of the individual. Rather, the required conditions and capacities of Critical Idealism are those *universal* conditions and capacities, which make possible any and all experience and require cultivation *by each individual* in order for her/him to develop her/his talents and to make her/his valuable creative and responsible contribution to our vulnerable, physical world.

Dewey's calls his philosophy 'empirical philosophy.' Its strategy for the acquisition of 'proper' understanding is an American, sociological theory of truth; what he calls:

[...] the American method of back-and-forth give-and-take discussion until final decision represented a workable consensus of the ideas of all who took part [...]
I [...] believe] that the method of achieving community by processes of free and open communication, which is the heart and the strength of the American democratic way of living and that the weaknesses of our democracy all represent expressions of failure to live up to the demands imposed by this method. Prejudices of economic status, of race, of

5. See Lessing's "The Education of the Human Race" in *Lessing's Theological Writings* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967): 83.

6. See Kant, *Prolegomena* AA IV: 293.

7. See Kant, *Logic* AA IX: 141.

8. On logic as a canon without an organon (merely abstraction) and mathematics (as embedded in causality and perception) as the trenchant example of a canon with an organon, see Kant's "The Concept of Logic" in *Logic* AA IX: 11–16. See as well, in Chapter 1: 49.

religion, imperil democracy because they set up barriers to communication, or deflect and distort its operation.⁹

It takes little reflection to see, though, that, especially when it comes to non-technical endeavors, the danger of distorted understanding is by no means avoided by 'free and open communication.' Jürgen Habermas, author of the theory of 'communicative action'¹⁰ and 'non-hierarchical discourse,'¹¹ acknowledges the danger of 'systematic distortion' of understanding that can and does occur among social groups.

On Dewey's Proposal of Kant's Prophetic Role in the Rise of Hitler and National Socialism

Dewey's *German Philosophy and German Politics* illustrates both the lurking distortions and dangers of 'sociological truths' established by the conclusions of social, 'proper' understanding. In the second, 1942 edition of the work, originally published in 1915, Dewey's new 'Introduction' continues the core thread of Dewey's analysis of German 'culture' to claim¹² that *there is a direct connection from German Idealism of the late 18th and 19th C to Hitler*.¹³

When it comes to German philosophy, though, Dewey's capriciously drawn line in the sand is Kant (he ignores earlier 'German' philosophy, e.g., Leibniz' dualism). Dewey recognizes that Kant is difficult reading,¹⁴ and he is self-conscious enough

9. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 46.

10. See Jürgen Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science, and Politics* (1968), Jeremy Shapiro trans. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970): 91–94.

11. See Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1981).

12. For a rigorous and thorough rejection of Dewey's reading of German philosophy and politics, see Georg Geismann, "John Dewey's 'Deutsche Philosophie und deutsche Politik' in *Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, II (2001), 631–638.

13. Manfred Voigts takes a claim by Honneth as the guiding thread for his embracing Dewey's thesis of a direct line from Kant to Hitler as a consequence, among other themes discussed below, of Kant's purported 'Two-World Thesis,' which, as a consequence of Kant's categorical imperative being a merely subjective, empty abstraction, threw the barn doors open to the State as the legitimate implementer of 'duty' on its citizens. Voigts writes: "[...] Axel Honneth writes in his Preface [to Honneth's German edition of Dewey's *Deutsche Philosophie und deutsche Politik*] that Kant's rationality was independent of experience' (*erfahrungsunabhängig*)." (Voigts, "Immanuel Kant, John Dewey und die deutschen Juden: Ein Beitrag zum Zusammenhang von Idealismus, Nationalsozialismus und Judentum" in *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, 53/4 [2001]: 359.) Dewey claims that Kant's theoretical and practical reason are dualistic realms of concrete experience and abstract intellect (what Honneth calls Kant's dualistic "Two-World Thesis" – see below).

14. See Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 63. Whereas Kant directly suffered under the religious censorship of the state, he knew from the example of Hermann Samuel Reimarus that ideas can be so socially inflammatory that they can lead to social unrest rather than the calm engagement of thought. No one more illustrates the powder keg of ideas than David Friedrich Strauß. Kant's and Strauß' difference with Reimarus, though, is that they did not hesitate to publish their work that

about his reading in that he acknowledges that it is fortunate that "[...] few who read my attempt [at portraying Kant's thought] will have sufficient acquaintance with the tomes of Kantian interpretation and exposition to appreciate the full enormity of my offense¹⁵" against Kant. Yet, given that Dewey offers no corrections to his Kant reading, *his confession only enhances the offence because it turns the offence into deception*. Documenting how Dewey's portrayal of Kant is a scion of the intellectual 'tissues,' 'organs,' and 'blood'¹⁶ formulated by the (predominantly Hegelian) anti-Kantian and anti-Enlightenment at the beginning of the 19th C illustrates the enduring power of systematic distortions of Kant and the need for their de-mythologization and an account of the *genetic mythical principle* that shaped those distortions.

However, Dewey emphasizes Kant's role in the rise of National Socialism¹⁷ *not as a philosopher or social strategist but as a 'prophet'*.¹⁸ Yet, it is only by assuming (!) the capricious, *a priori* synthetic judgment that Hegel's reading of Kant is correct (and everything I've written in this project that precedes, as well as is found in, this

shook the foundations of the academic and, eventually (!), social status quo. Unlike Reimarus, both Kant and Strauß published their reflections but did so in a style of writing that was accessible to those who were truly interested in its revolutionary significance. In Strauß' case, it was the 'professional academics' who distorted his work and inflamed the passions of those who never read him. However, when it comes to inflammatory ideas, one ought never to overlook the self-interest that motivates an author's non-publication or turgid academic language.

15. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 63.

16. See below the text cited on 937 as n. 19.

17. Among those who read Dewey as maintaining that there is a direct philosophical basis in Kant for the rise of Hitler is Axel Honneth., for example, Honneth, "Logik des Fanatismus:" 59, 66–67. Honneth himself acknowledges that there is a 'debate' over the degree to which Kant aided and abetted the rise of National Socialism in a footnote: *Ibid.*: 67, 23. Honneth, though, chooses not to examine the accuracy of Dewey's claims about Kant in part with the side comment that it is not entirely clear whether Dewey is defending a continuity in the history of ideas or the 'perversion of a *Wirkungsgeschichte*'. See *Ibid.*: 58. Honneth appears to excuse any limitations in Dewey's argument by saying: "His interpretation of Kant conceals [...] neither [...] the great thought [...] nor the many theoretical mediation steps that were necessary in the first place in order to derive the conclusion of a national leadership claim from the original program of Finite, transcendental Idealism [i.e. Kant]." Honneth, "Logik des Fanatismus:" 66.

18. The closest Dewey comes to claim that Kant is the ultimate source of National Socialism is his statement: "Surely the chief mark of distinctively German civilization is its combination of self-conscious idealism with unsurpassed technical efficiency and organization in the varied fields of action. If this is not a realization in fact of what is found in Kant, I am totally at loss for a name by which to characterize it. *I do not mean that conscious adherence to the philosophy of Kant has been the cause of the marvelous advances made in Germany in the natural sciences and in the systematic application of the fruits of intelligence to industry, trade, commerce, military affairs, education, civic administration and industrial organization. Such a claim would be absurd. But [sic.] I do mean*, primarily, that Kant detected and formulated the direction in which the German genius was moving, so that his philosophy is of immense prophetic significance; and, secondarily, *that his formulation has furnished a banner and a conscious creed which in solid and definite fashion has intensified and deepened the work actually undertaken*." (emphasis added) Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 69–70. In other words, it is not correct to claim a direct line from Kant to Hitler, but it is correct to say that his vocabulary encouraged a trajectory of reflection that led to Hitler. This is guilt by association, not by evidence!

"Conclusion" argues that it is not!), which remotely justifies a legitimate inclusion of a 'prophetic,' 'Hegelian Kant' in the trajectory of German philosophy that led to Hitler. The Hegelian Kant is not Kant. The de-mythologized Kant narrative contradicts Dewey's and his interpreters' thesis of a remote connection between Kant and Hitler not only as a philosophy or social strategist but also even as a 'prophet.'

A Blind Spot in Dewey's Hermeneutics The Unrecognized & Dangerous 'Third Rail'

Dewey's embracing of an enduring systematic distortion of Kant constitutes a deeper implication for the nature of 'thought' than nationalism, authoritarianism, racism, and the 'professionalization' of philosophy. It illustrates the dangers of distortion that can, and does, enter into any and all discourse, and it calls for an answer that is not subject to systematic distortion. The appropriate strategy Without an understanding of 'pure' religion for identifying and addressing philosophical, systematic distortions is not the determination of a set of 'true' claims about the empirical content of experience but to examine all of experience (not merely the 'normal' and the 'anomalous') from the perspective of the universal conditions and capacities of finite, transcendental consciousness that make possible any experience of empirical content, in the first place.

Dewey, though, describes the effects of inherited narratives upon reflection, but he does not address strategies for avoiding the systematic, pre-determination of the individual's imagination and behavior that can, and does, occur because of the past development of 'experimental' understanding:

Above all, men [*sic.*] take the particular general ideas which happen to affect their own conduct of life as normal and inevitable. Pray what other ideas would any sensible man have? They forget the extent to which *these ideas originated as parts of a remote and technical theoretical system, which by multitudes of nonreflective channels has infiltrated into their habits of imagination and behavior.* An expert intellectual anatomist, my friends, might dissect you and find Platonic and Aristotelian tissues, organs from St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, Locke and Descartes, in the make-up of the ideas by which you are habitually swayed, and find, indeed, that they and other thinkers of whose names you have never heard constitute a larger part of your mental structure than does the Calvin or Kant, Darwin or Spencer, Hegel or Emerson, Bergson or Browning to whom you yield conscious allegiance.¹⁹ (emphasis added)

Dewey acknowledges the embedded errors that accompany the 'pre-determination of the imagination and behavior, but his perception of the errors depends upon their

19. John Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 56.

achieving the status of an anomaly that a community is called to address, just how the 'errors' are identifiable as an anomaly is left unclear.²⁰

Time heals physical ravages, but it may only accentuate the evils of *an intellectual catastrophe*--for by no lesser name can we call a systematic intellectual error. To one who is professionally preoccupied with philosophy there is much in its history which is profoundly depressing. He [*sic.*] sees ideas which were not only natural but useful in their native time and place, figuring in foreign contexts so as to formulate defects as virtues and to give rational sanction to brute facts, and to oppose alleged eternal truths to progress. He sees movements which might have passed away with change of circumstance as casually as they arose, acquire persistence and dignity because thought has taken cognizance of them and given them intellectual names.²¹ (emphasis added)

Dewey has ignored *the third-rail of "three-fold mimesis"* expressed by the aphorism: "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link." The weakest link of Dewey's 'chain' of 'empirical philosophy' is the lack of a strategy to expose systematic distortion in the 'habits of imagination and behavior' that make up the 'mental structure' of a community.

'Truth' judgments require strategies not only of 'criticism,' but also the strategy of 'transcendental critique.'²² Kant, however, was aware of (and offered a solution to) the dangers of the 'third rail.'

Today, one says that it is not good that everyone is allowed to think and to write what s/he wishes when it comes to theology. [However,] making one's thoughts public is a desire (*Trieb*) by nature. How should truth be identified when we hold our opinions to ourselves? This desire of nature, obviously, intends that the human species establish truth through public (*gemeinschaftlich*) discussion [the key to Kant's 'common sense']. A judgment is improved by the other. From this comes the inclination to have our judgments examined by others, which is a strategy that those who are wise never dismiss. Granted, general applause does not determine truth. Such applause is 'universal' only for a certain time and, shortly, that which was praised by all is determined to be in error. For that reason, the longevity of general agreement among different nations and ages is a greater touchstone of truth [...] Granted, as well, it is no advantage that the ancients maintained things that need to be tested and investigated. However, when something openly shared by all ethical (*gesittete*) nations at all times, this criterion is to be embraced as a more advantageous

20. On the significance of the 'anomalous' for challenging a cultural paradigm, see, Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970): 52–53 and 57.

21. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 57–58.

22. In addition to 'criticism,' which is, frequently, erroneously taken to mean merely destructive skepticism, a theory of self-correcting truth needs a commitment to 'transcendental critique'. Transcendental 'critique' turns the spy glass of critical reflection around to examine the structures of subjective consciousness that must be in place before one can formulate a judgment about external phenomena. It examines the conditions of possibility and capacities of finite, eminent, transcendental consciousness to identify what is *required* in order for there to be anything like an experience of the 'correspondence theory of truth,' in the first place.

touchstone of truth.²³ [Note: the tip to 'critique' is to 'practical reason,' the crown of Kant's 'critique' of reason.]

[...] [E]rror is worse than ignorance because ignorance is to be regarded as the *tabula rasa* of Aristotle [De Anima 420b 29 – 430a],²⁴ where one finds no knowledge at all, *but nevertheless capacities to attain such knowledge* [NOTE: the tip to 'critique' is the focus on 'capacities' (universal *Anlagen*) possessed by all transcendental consciousness]. There is no obstacle here [when it comes to these capacities], but in error there is a double inconvenience. First of all, I have to oppose error, and thereby bring the individual to ignorance, and, only after I have thus artificially brought her/him/them to ignorance, can I begin to establish truth. Nevertheless, universal providence has so arranged human nature that we can only arrive at truth by the path of error. We arrive at the truth through fantasies, delusions and errors, through prejudices, and by groping in the dark, where we are often persuaded, through imaginary deceptions that, only later, turn into nothingness, and never the same way as claimed in ignorance.²⁵ (emphasis added)

Yet, Dewey is too sanguine when it comes to 'criticism,' and his dogmatic 'empirical philosophy' eliminates from the get-go 'transcendental critique.' If a community only depends upon anomalous phenomena to shake its members out of the complacency of its systematic distortions, were there never to be an encounter with, or engagement of, anomalous data, it would never be compelled to engage in 'self-correction.' A commu-

23. Kant, *Menschenkunde*: AA XXV,2: 881–882; Olms ed.: 35.

24. According to the footnote in *Menschenkunde*: AA XXV,2: 878, n. 022, "γραμματεῖον ['that on which one writes'] was first translated as 'tabula rasa' by Aegidius" [Aegidius Romanus/Giles of Rome?; Ægidius Viterbensis/Giles of Viterbo?].

NOTE. Neither Aristotle, Kant, nor Locke take this *tabula rasa* to be literally 'blank'. However, from Locke comes the 'anthropological argument' for God, which depends upon the 'Principle of Sufficient Reason:' Something cannot come from nothing or else there would be only chaos. The 'anthropological argument' claims that the 'blank slate' of the mind is 'spirit' in contrast to 'matter'. Because something cannot come from nothing, matter cannot create 'spirit'. Hence, Spirit must be from God (Spirit) as ultimate eminent cause (see footnote below) of Personhood.

The 'anthropological argument's' 'antinomy' (dialectic) claims that God is either absolute mind or finite mind. The conclusion of the 'anthropological argument' for God is an *a posteriori* synthesis of analytical 'criticism' that is grounded in empirical evidence not an *a priori* synthesis of 'critique' that is grounded in necessary and sufficient conditions. Analytical criticism is grounded in a claim that maintains it can identify the cause of things-in-themselves. Kant called such a claim 'subreption' because we not only do not have access, directly, to appearances, not things-in-themselves, but also, and especially, because 'causal' explanations can only be a deduction from their effects, again, because we don't have direct access to things-in-themselves. In contrast, the resolution of the antinomy by 'critique' identifies the necessary and sufficient conditions for finite experience of appearances. These necessary and sufficient conditions for finite experience is that there must be an ultimate, eminent cause that initiates a sequence, which is to be distinguished from a finite, eminent cause that arises within a sequence (see the footnote below). However, in contrast to Locke, 'critique' does not allow for any literal anthropomorphic predicates that claim God to be a Person/Spirit.

25. Kant, *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 878–879; Olms ed.: 31–32.

nity's commitment to a merely dogmatic conviction to the exclusion of consideration of all options is the surest way to remain trapped in systematic distortion.²⁶

26. The open-endedness of ever-new theological insight in itself is no guarantee that it will not simply perpetuate systematic distortions. The historian may be satisfied with merely describing the disparate elements of a doctrinal narrative without ever feeling compelled or obligated to look beyond the distorting husks of history to identify their kernels. Nonetheless, in the 21st C to present a doctrinal teaching of any kind without criticism (not to mention the need for transcendental critique) is to engage in apologetics and is an abnegation of the responsibility of scholarship to inform its readers of the issues at issue.

A classic case is Brian Gerrish's *Thinking with the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010). Gerrish has every right to present a description of the historical 'husks' of church doctrine without de-mythologizing and/or exposing their theological kernels for the 'hows' and 'whys' of the doctrines. However, his book is no 'objective,' indifferent investigation of church doctrine and not simply because Gerrish's doctrinal preferences are obvious.

Gerrish declares doctrinal doctrines that he opposes as 'not well founded' without any accounting of the criteria to be employed for his claim. For example, on his way to Calvin's 'mediating' position on the Eucharist, Gerrish concludes with respect to both Zwingli and Luther that their positions were 'not well founded' *without a whiff of what would be a well-founded teaching of the Eucharist.* (*Ibid.*: 243)

In addition, Gerrish appears to be satisfied with Calvin's privileging mystery in experience over understanding, but he leaves the reader with no criteria for adjudicating among what he takes to be 'the' legitimate and illegitimate mysteries. Rather than present the metaphysical options for the 'how' of how Christ was present in the Eucharistic ritual, Gerrish states that Calvin "[...] was not greatly concerned to explain *how* Christ is present in the Supper, any more than Luther had been. Gerrish quotes Calvin: "I [Calvin] rather experience than understand it' [...]. He [Calvin] was prepared to marvel at what he could not comprehend. But [*sic.*] from Romans 8:9–11 [which equates life with 'spirit,' not the body] he did infer that participation in Christ must be the work of the Holy Spirit [...]" (*Ibid.*: 245–246). Yet, later Gerrish underscores that Calvin did have an understanding, not merely an experience: "Calvin [...] rejected transubstantiation as a novelty, agreed with the ancient writers [without giving an explanation *how*] who spoke of a 'conversion' of the bread: they meant not that its substance is annihilated, but that it is no longer common bread [...]. But [*sic.*] this understanding of the eucharistic conversion [...] was foreign to the thinking of the Tridentine fathers." (*Ibid.*: 256). When Gerrish refers to Calvin's "favorite expression" ("We become [...] flesh of his [Christ's] flesh and bone of his bone."), Gerrish stresses that this is because (this is a causal 'because') the union is wholly mysterious, it can only be represented by images and metaphors." (*Ibid.*: 246–247). Yet in his ironic, pejorative criticism of the conclusions of the Council of Trent, Gerrish writes: "The Mass is declared to be a truly propitiatory sacrifice by which the Lord is appeased [...]. *In this awe-inspiring mystery, the victim by which we are reconciled to God the father is daily immolated on the altar by the church through the priests.*" (emphasis added) (*Ibid.*: 256–257) By what criteria does one distinguish between 'wholly mysterious' and 'awe-inspiring mysterious'? Without addressing the issue of the ambiguity of causal explanations and providing criteria for adjudicating between and among 'mysteries,' the reader is left in pseudo-Dionysian mist wondering which mystery trumps understanding.

It is not as if there was no questioning of the 'mystery' of the Eucharist between Trent and 2010. Strauß critically addresses the Lutheran, Swiss, and Reformed doctrines behind the ritual (§94 and §95) in his *Glaubenslehre*: Vol. II: 558–602 – granted, Strauß only 'criticizes' them as an exercise of *diairesis*, not transcendental 'critique'. (On 'criticism' (*diairesis*) and transcendental 'critique,' see Chapter 3: "Academic Controversy and Reaction to Strauß' *Life of Jesus*" the section "Academic Controversy Based on Criticism (*diairesis*):" 178 ff..)

Rather than mere 'criticism,' Critical Idealism demonstrates the inadequacy of the assumption that experience alone is sufficient for understanding, not to speak of truth claims. Experience presupposes the imperceptible conditions that make it possible for consciousness to have any experience, in the first

Dewey dependence solely upon the anomalous in 'experiential philosophy's²⁷ 'open-ended' understanding to 'correct' the errors²⁸ is a version of the 'correspon-

place, not to speak of understanding and responsible agency. A transcendental critique of the Eucharist *cannot, and would not, deny* either the gift of grace or the sacrifice/gift of the Eucharist. Such a denial is as questionable as any unequivocal affirmation of grace or the sacrifice/gift purportedly present in the ritual.

In addition to the epistemological limits to experience as a truth criterion, the fact that experience, grace, and sacrifice are so contaminated with anthropomorphic projection, that their teleological goal in Christian doctrine is so driven by personal self-interest of 'eternal life,' and that the causal efficacy of a sacrament is nothing provable (or disprovable) in phenomena but a judgment that finite, eminent, transcendental consciousness can only *add to* phenomena all allow question that we have an 'objective' account of the history of the Eucharist in Gerrish's work.

Alone, the ubiquitousness of anthropomorphic projection in Christianity and religions, generally, should give one serious pause. As I have frequently pointed out, anthropomorphic projection in religion is, at the least, an exercise in extraordinary hubris, and it involves the likelihood that humanity is worshipping itself. To be sure, Karl Barth formulated a popular claim that the 'Enlightenment' was an attempt to place human 'reason' on the throne of God. See Barth, *Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert. Ihre Vorgeschichte und ihre Geschichte* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1981): 40, 53–56, 85 100 ff. However, humanity has placed itself on the divine throne for as long as it has been concerned with infinite, 'eminent' causality. On this side of the history of religions, 20th C Process Theology's Dipolar Theism based on 'Reformed Subjectivist Principle' is an anthropomorphic 'explanation' of God. Anthropomorphism profoundly shapes the dualism of *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* of the Scholastic Intellectualists and Occasionalists, and is older than the Quran, shapes and is older than the Christian Platonism of Augustine and the Church Fathers, shapes and is older than the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος (inner Word) and λόγος προφορικὸς (spoken Word) of Christian theology, older than the narrative 'Covenants' of the Judeo-Christian Testaments, shapes and is older than the Veil of Isis, shapes and is older than Euhemerus, shapes and is older than Plato's heliotrope of the Simile of the Sun, shapes and is older than Classical Greek Mythology, shapes and is older than the Bhagavad Gita, shapes and is older than Zoroastrian dualism, shapes and is older than Egyptian religion, shapes and is older than Perusha of the oldest known scriptures, the Vedas.

Causes are never experienced directly in the phenomena, which are only effects of their causes. The criteria for Critical Idealism, therefore, cannot be objective truth claims based on the scriptures (God's spoken Word in contrast to God's internal Word) or what God has objectively accomplished in, and through, Christ but the required conditions of possibility and capacities for there to be a *finite*, eminent causality in the world, which are the sole conditions for there to be anything like responsibility for agency. To be sure, the conditions of possibility for responsible agency *require* that the assumption of responsibility can be ignored in an individual's choice among the principle employed to give her-/himself permission to act.

Nonetheless, there is a place in Critical Idealism for the two core rituals of Christianity, baptism and the Eucharist, without their doctrinal burdens. See Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 199–200. The meaning of the Eucharist is appreciated by Critical Idealism as a ritual celebrating cosmopolitan (not sectarian) dignity of all humanity by a symbolic meal that is a mutual support structure that encourages (but is no in-your-face-finger-wagging) the 'culture that promotes the moral will' in the midst of the 'culture of skills' (see Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 431–432).

27. On Dewey's notion of 'experiential philosophy,' see Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 54 and 140–143. Dewey's 'experimental' philosophy makes a virtue out of the vice that no empirical knowledge is absolute. Rather than focus on the enduring errors and destruction of experimental philosophy, he emphasizes the possibility of 'correction'.

28. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 46

dence-theory of truth,²⁹ which takes ‘truth’ to be merely a matter of the correct correspondence between mental judgment and empirical phenomena. Although Dewey recognizes that, in light of the limits to consciousness, truth depends upon a commitment to self-correction on the part of individuals and communities, he overlooks the significance of the longevity of a conviction, which dulls the cutting edge of self-correction and can perpetrate systematic distortion. If one is satisfied with one’s truth, then there is no need for ‘correction.’

Dewey’s strategy for correcting the catastrophes requires that they, first, be identified. Yet, when it comes to a systematic distortion of social conviction, it is precisely its non-recognition that perpetuates its influence. However, if we only wait for anomalous data to shake us out of the complacency of systematic distortion, there may no longer be sufficient time for the human species to make the necessary corrections.

In contrast to a strategy of self-correction that depends upon the anomalous, an inescapable motivation for self-correction even without the anomalous is the consideration of the *a priori* synthetic judgments of theoretical and practical (not simply pragmatic) reason ‘grounded’ in the regulative, ‘pure’ ideas of reason. Although easily ignored, this motivation is inescapable because it is concerned with universal conditions and capacities for any and all conscious experience, understanding, and responsible agency in the world. To be sure, as with moral principles, so too with transcendental consciousness. Humanity (or any other species of finite, transcendental consciousness) is ‘free’ to ignore moral principles because the condition for there to be moral principles is *autonomous freedom* or the ability to cause things to happen that, left on its own, nature could never accomplish. Transcendental consciousness is all-too readily ignored because its conditions and capacities are ubiquitous wherever it occurs. Transcendental consciousness is always silently and unobtrusively functioning in the background of truth claims devoted to the open-endedness of the correspondence theory of truth.

On the Role of Nationalism in Dewey’s Reflections

A second, trenchant example of his perpetuation of systematic distortion is Dewey’s insistence on the ‘national’ character of the ‘movements’ that acquire ‘persistence and dignity’ in society. It doesn’t occur to him that the ‘movements’ that he identifies are anchored in distortions and require de-mythologizing.

Dewey’s *German Philosophy and German Politics* is a document that claims a ‘nationalist’ character to understanding. His stereotypical, philosophical, nationalistic

29. See the chapter “How Can We Distinguish Truth from Error?” by the ‘Boston Personalist,’ Edgar S. Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935): 31–66.

reductionism (American: Pragmatism;³⁰ English: Utilitarianism;³¹ French: Rights of 'Man';³² and German: Duty owed to the State and commitment to Technical Reason³³) and reading of Kant through Hegelian and Fichtean lenses are profoundly superficial, disturbing, and distorting. Such stereotypes are a classic confirmation of Habermas' notion of susceptibility to, and dangers of, 'systematic distortion,' which can lead to the destructiveness of so-called national, social and political self-interests governing policy.

The destructiveness that occurs when nationalist fervor snuffs out what Kant called 'cosmopolitanism' is no better illustrated than by the rise of nationalism in Europe and particularly in Germany as it sought unification in the second half of the 19th C. Without ever criticizing Dewey's 'Two-Kingdom' reading of Kant and true to his Hegelian convictions,³⁴ Axel Honneth suggests that Kant's 'Two-Kingdom' philosophy meant that the (capricious) *a priori* (formal) dominated over (concrete) sense perception and nature, which resulted in a *merely subjective*, 'cult of inwardness.'³⁵ From this set of assumptions (*a priori* synthetic judgments), Kant's notion of 'cosmopolitanism,' which is based on universal, human dignity because each finite, transcendental consciousness is grounded in imperceptible, *a priori* of autonomous, creative freedom, is easily reduced to the simplistic embracing of the equal worth of all (today, we call it uncritical pluralism and the 'feeling of being at home' everywhere in the world). In the second half of the 19th C in Europe, the 'Reality Politics' (*Real Politik*), which resulted in Bismark's Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871 and established the German Nation under Prussian dominance, eclipsed and ridiculed the notion of human equality. In the name of 'nationalism,' the Franco-Prussian War was a slamming of the brakes on Enlightenment-inspired, Kantian 'cosmopolitanism.' Here we have a classic example itself of the power of a distorted, pre-figured understanding over the understanding of subsequent generations that can be perpetuated in perpetuity. Kant's 'cosmopolitanism' needs de-mythologizing that its originality can be grasped in a new age of nationalist-focused self-interest.

Dewey singles out particularly the Germans as products of their 'tissues' and 'organs' because of the crucial role philosophy plays in shaping 'their' national character.

30. See, for example, John Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed. (1st ed. 1915) (Freeport New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1942): 45–47, 140, 142–143, 145.

31. See, for example, Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 58–59, 117.

32. See, for example, Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 90–91.

33. See, for example, Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 17, 37, 59, 69, 86–87, 96.

34. Honneth is a Hegelian who reads Kant as a philosophy of subjective understanding whose ideas are merely 'empty abstractions,' because Kant fails to grasp the significance of monistic, Absolute Spirit and its dialectical logic of top-down causality as the originating source for all 'that is'. Hegel and Strauß overlook that Kant had already rejected the adequacy of dialectic to establish the ultimate ground of all 'that is'. On Kant's rejection of dialectic for grounding the ultimate, causal ground of 'what is,' see *Critique of Pure Reason* B 697 and Chapter 6: 670.

35. See Axel Honneth, "Logik des Fanatismus:": 56.

He writes: "Above all, the Germans, as we say, have philosophy in their blood. Such phrases generally mean something not about hereditary qualities but about the social conditions under which ideas propagate and circulate."³⁶

On the Distorting Narrative 'Prototypes' in Dewey's Kant Reading

What follows is a presentation of the distorting husks in Dewey's Kant narrative. Each philosophical 'pericope' is de-mythologized to identify its original philosophical kernel in Kant's writing. To be sure, the original 'prototypes' (the separate philosophical themes without awareness of their architectonic coherence) are found in Kant, but their distortions illustrate the role of the '*genetic mythical principle*' (the *genetic narrative principle*) that shaped Kantian interpretations. As inherited pre-figured prototypes, new authors write their new, con-figured narratives. The distortion here is that the new philosophical narrative is merely asserted to be 'Kant's 'original' philosophy.

I stress, though, that I am not claiming to know Kant's, Hegel's, Strauß', Dewey's, or anyone else's 'intention.' In addition, the claim that Kant's original philosophy has been distorted does not involve a claim that Kant's philosophy establishes the 'true, empirical facts.' A claim to know authorial intent is a violation of the 'intentional fallacy.'³⁷ Rather, I have made a 'reading' of these authors' texts, and what I claim is the conclusion required by the content and architectonic of those writings. Both the *in situ* of Kant's original, textual 'prototypes' and their meaning can only be recognized in the context of the architectonic of his investigation not merely of empirical 'facts' but far more importantly of finite, eminent, transcendental consciousness, which makes possible the experience of empirical facts. Dewey's Kant reflections, which come not from Kant's texts but from the anti-Kantian and anti-Enlightenment con-figuration already at the beginning of the 19th C, have *replaced a coherent architectonic with an aggregate of disparate, contradictory elements*, which are claimed to be Kant's philosophy. Here are some examples:

1) On Kant's purported "Two-Kingdom Thesis"

The Kant-distorting husk: In his opening sentence, Dewey presents a dualism that, obviously, is far older than Kant: "Mind dislikes to find itself a pilgrim in an alien world."³⁸ He proceeds to say that *this temperament results in the generating of 'ideas.'* In short, experience of imperceptible 'ideas' by the self in a perceptible world leads to

36. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 59.

37. See the section, "On Understanding as Three-fold Mimesis" in Chapter I: 107.

38. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 51.

dualism. Perception and concepts/ideas are taken to be related as ‘husks’ to ‘kernels’ to mean two different and independent dimensions of experience: body and mind. Dewey proceeds to offer only two alternatives: Either ideas are Platonic Realism’s *archetypal* ideas independent of the material world, or ideas are Nominalism’s *ectypal* abstractions (Critical Realism),³⁹ what he calls ‘experiential philosophy.’

Consequently, Dewey flips the traditional, Platonic prioritizing of abstraction over empiricism with his Nominalist claim that abstractions are just ‘names’ created by finite consciousness. Consequently, he presupposes and overlooks all of the imperceptible conditions and capacities of finite, transcendental consciousness that make possible the experience of phenomena from which all reflection arises and returns.

In other words, Dewey clearly has no grasp of the Kantian, third option that takes ‘concepts’⁴⁰ to be ‘given,’ imperceptible relationalities (neither innate essences nor subjective, abstract constructions) intentionally graspable by consciousness in order to make sense of experience. Without appearances there can be no concepts/ideas or even understanding of concepts/ideas. Yet, concepts/ideas are not an imperceptible perception (*sinnliche Anschauung*) of ‘eternal essences’ independent of appearances. Rather, concepts/ideas are relationalities within appearances identified by a temporal experience of consciousness out of the flow of appearances.⁴¹ Temporal experience of appearances begins with confusion and, out of the effort to ‘make sense’ of the confusion, consciousness processes for itself (but does not create) the imperceptible relationalities that structure the appearances.⁴²

39. On the accounting for the origin of universals as *archetypal* (Platonism) or *ectypal* (Nominalism/Critical Realism), see: “Foreword,” 20, n. 3 and the discussion of archetypal and ectypal ideas: 78. The former is radical dualism whereas the latter is radical monism. Nominalism/Critical Realism believes that it ‘explains’ ideas/concepts when it calls them human constructions of abstraction. Overlooked is that the phenomenal realm must already be structured by ideas/concepts in order for them to be abstracted out of the phenomena. Both radical dualism and radical monism fail to grasp the *necessity* (requirement) of *a priori* synthetic judgments (assumptions) in order for finite, eminent transcendental consciousness to experience the world as it does.

40. Kant distinguishes between ‘concepts’ of the understanding and ‘ideas’ of pure reason. Dewey collapses the two and, as an empiricist, rejects their finite, transcendental status, by definition not experiential deduction.

41. Kant points out that *a priori* synthetic judgments of causality (as well as all of the categories of the understanding) are nothing that we invent, only deduce: “We can only trace the connection of certain present constitutions of natural things with their causes in earlier times according to laws of action, which we do not invent, but deduce from the forces of nature as it now presents itself to us, only as far back as analogy permits [...]” *On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy* AA VIII: 161–162.

42. Ernst Cassirer’s career long investigation of epistemology describes in rich detail the presence of Kant’s notion of reflecting judgment that grasps the relationalities in appearances, not enduring conceptual entities. See for example, *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff* (1910): “[...] concepts are valid, not insofar as they depict a given rigid being, but insofar as they include a draft of possible unities that can be [...] progressively tested. 428. See, as well, *Ibid.*: 11–12, 17–18, 194–196, 445. Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit* (1906), 5 Vols. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994): 316–317, 391–392. “Zur Frage nach der Methode der Erkenntniskritik. Eine Entgegnung” in *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie und Soziologie*, 31,

Ignoring the ancient mind/body dualism even older than Plato, the dualism of *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* of the Scholastic Intellectualists and Occasionalists, Luther's 'Two Kingdom Doctrine,' and the arch-dualist Leibniz, Dewey claims that the 'root idea' of German philosophy is the dualism of spirit/world or mind/body and is the prophetic, "decisive contribution"⁴³ *made by Kant*:

My conviction is that we have [...] the root idea [of German philosophy] in the doctrine of Kant concerning the two realms, one outer, physical and necessary, the other inner, ideal and free [...] [I]n spite of their separateness and independence, the primacy always lies with the inner.⁴⁴ (emphasis added)

In light of Kant's purported dualism between nature and freedom, what Dewey takes to be the *a priori* Kantian notions of autonomous freedom and its moral principles are by definition a 'trafficking in formal absolutes' that can only be heteronomously imposed on society: "[...] [W]hat [...] is at issue between a theory which is pinned to a belief in an Absolute beyond history and behind experience and one which is frankly experimental" is as follows: "[...] [A]ny philosophy which is not consistently experimental will always traffic in absolutes no matter in how disguised a form."⁴⁵ (emphasis added)

Kant's philosophical kernel: However, Kant explicitly rejects both dualism and heteronomous duty. Kant's explicit rejection of dualism comes already in the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 311–315!⁴⁶ In short, Dewey replaces Kant's autonomous duty with heteronomous duty.⁴⁷ As I point out below, the 'two worlds' of nature and freedom constitute the distinct, ontological realms of 'science' and 'morals' for Hegel's (!) "The Moral View of the World" in the *Phenomenology*, not Kant.⁴⁸

Dewey presents Hegel's reading of Kant, again, when he writes that duty is "empty and formal."⁴⁹ Hegel calls Kant's entire philosophy 'empty abstraction' because it is trapped in finite understanding without embracing Absolute Spirit.⁵⁰ Dewey adds that, according to Kant, the noumenal, "in spite of its sublimity," had only "the bare form of an empty law of duty" in contrast to finite reason's discovery of "the causal law

Neue Folge VI (1907): 458. Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. Dritter Teil: Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis* (1923–1929) (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002): 402–403.

43. See Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 63.

44. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 69.

45. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 113.

46. On Kant's purported dualism, see the "Preface," as well: 59, n. 71. On Kant's discussion of the rational and empirical as 'two stems' of knowledge, see the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 863.

47. See the "Addendum on Duty" to "Was Kant Anti-Semitic" at <https://criticalidealism.org/was-kant-anti-semitic-with-an-addendum-on-duty-36-pages-5-february-2020/> (4 April 2024).

48. See, for example, Hegel, *Phenomenology* GW III: 450–451 [Baillie trans.: 624–625]].

49. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 86.

50. See, for example, Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* GW XX: 346).

in external nature.⁵¹ Kant spent "his time gazing into a blank void."⁵² Dewey writes: "Kant's [...] logic compels him to insist that the concept of duty is empty and formal. It tells men [sic.] that to do their duty is their supreme law of action, but is silent as to what men's duties specifically are."⁵³

2) On Kant and the Protestant Reformation

The Kant-distorting husk: Dewey claims that Kant "[...] brought to consciousness the true meaning of the Lutheran reformation [...]."⁵⁴ This includes, according to Dewey, the claim that Kant embraced 'original sin.' According to Dewey, Kant claims that humanity is by nature evil, which Dewey says is Kant's "rendering of the doctrine of

51. See Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 137. Dewey implies here that humanity actually perceives in the phenomena the causal laws that govern phenomena. For Kant that is subreption and fails to recognize that causal explanations are *a priori* synthetic judgments (*a priori* assumptions) that one must add to the phenomena because finite consciousness can only directly experience effects, not causes themselves.

52. See Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 137.

53. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 86. This is a ridiculous assertion: Kant provides three criteria when applying a categorical imperative (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* AA IV: 421, 429, and 431): universality, treat self and others as ends and not mere means, and acknowledge that the other, also, is a self-selector (not self-creator) of moral principles to govern her/his agency ("harmonize into a possible kingdom of ends as a kingdom of nature" [*ibid.*: AA IV: 336 – see, especially, the footnote on 336*]). Usually, only the first form of the categorical imperative is mentioned, and it is frequently distorted. Rather than categorical imperatives being self-declared 'universals' that merely serve the individual's self-interest, as for example Hegel claimed, categorical imperatives are independent of the individual and required for the responsible exercise of autonomous freedom.

In the *Groundwork*, he provides four examples of categorical duties: don't lie (*Groundwork* AA IV: 422, don't commit suicide out of melancholy (*Groundwork* AA IV: 421–422; on 'melancholy', see Kant, *Menschenkunde* AA XXV,2: 1160–1163; Olms ed.: 340–342 and *Anweisung* Olms ed.: 44–45), develop one's talents (*Groundwork* AA IV: 423 and 429), and respond to the suffering of the other (*Groundwork* AA IV: 423 and 429–430).

In the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* V: 293–294, he also speaks of three maxims of the understanding (Kant,): 1) think for oneself (unprejudiced), 2) think from the perspective of the other (broadminded), and 3) not to act in a way that contradicts one's highest capacity (absolute freedom, consistent) In his lectures on philosophical anthropology delivered in 1790/1791 at the time of his writing of the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*, he called these three 1) thoroughness, enlightenment (*Anweisung*, Olms ed.: 25–26), 2) expanded (*Anweisung*, Olms ed.: 26), and 3) consistent (*Anweisung*, Olms ed.: 26)). Already in his 'pre-critical' *Lecture on Moral Philosophy*, he had stressed that this consistency was with respect to one's highest capacity that is creative freedom (autonomy). See *Lecture on Moral Philosophy*: 180. In the *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 390–39, Kant distinguishes between 'wide' moral duties and 'narrow' obligations of 'duties of right' (civic law, technical skill).

54. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 62.

original sin.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Dewey writes that Kant rejects the Enlightenment notion that humanity is good by nature.⁵⁶

Kant's philosophical kernel: However, Kant thoroughly rejects the notion of 'original sin'.⁵⁷ It is the case that, according to Kant, both good and evil are 'radical' options for the individual. Nonetheless, no individual is determined ontologically in advance to be merely 'good' or merely 'evil, which is the meaning of 'original sin.' Rather, according to Kant, humanity is always 'in a state of innocence,⁵⁸' and autonomous, creative freedom is an indelible and ineradicable, *amoral* good. It is 'good' that a species can exercise autonomous, creative freedom because without it we cannot be the species that we experience ourselves to be. Yet, this *amoral* good is no predetermination of the individual. Whenever the individual exercises agency, it is confronted anew with the choice between a good and evil maxim to guide its behavior. It is in this sense that Kant speaks of *radical evil* and (!) *radical good*.⁵⁹ Furthermore, Kant is no Pelagian because the issue for Kant is not 'how to get to heaven.' The issue is how to be a human being *in the world*.

3) On Dewey's Anti-Intellectualism

The Kant-distorting husk: Dewey defends a form of anti-intellectualism that denies *universal*, abstract reflection. However, he is an anti-intellectual not because he denies what he calls 'pure' ideas but because he dogmatically insists that anything that can be called a 'pure' idea must mean Platonic Realism.

Dewey's 'empirical/experiential philosophy' requires him to dismisses the notion of Platonic 'pure' ideas and Hegelian 'pure' reason. Not explicitly naming Kant but surely implying the notion of Kant's 'pure' reason as well as Hegel's own version of Absolute Reason, Dewey writes:

"I do not believe [...] that ideas, or pure thought, ever exercised any pure influence upon human action. I believe that very much of what has been presented as philosophic reflection is in effect simply an idealization, for the sake of emotional satisfaction, of the brutally given state of affairs [...]"⁶⁰

55. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 92.

56. See Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 92.

57. F.C. Baur pre-figures this claim that Kant embraced the notion of original sin. For both Baur's reading and Kant's rejection of original sin, see 79, n. 11.

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

59. See Kant, See "Part One – Concerning the Indwelling of the Evil Principle *Alongside the Good* or *Of the Radical Evil in Human Nature*" (emphasis added) in *Religion* AA VI: 19 ff.

60. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 54.

"[...] there are no such things as *pure* ideas or *pure* reason. Every living thought represents a gesture made toward the world, an attitude taken to some practical situation in which we are implicated.⁶¹"

"Not all ideas perish with the momentary response. They are voiced and others hear; they are written and others read. Education, formal and informal, embodies them not so much in other men's minds as in their permanent dispositions of action. They are in the blood, and afford sustenance to conduct; they are in the muscles and men strike or retire.⁶²"

The Witness of history is that to think in general and abstract terms is dangerous; it elevates ideas beyond the situations in which they were born and charges them with we know not what menace for the future. And in the past the danger has been the greater because philosophers have so largely purported to be concerned not with contemporary problems of living, but with essential Truth and Reality viewed under the form of eternity.⁶³

As I pointed out above, Dewey's opening thesis statement is: "Mind dislikes to find itself a pilgrim in an alien world."⁶⁴ He proceeds to say that *this temperament results in the generating of 'ideas,'* which are either Nominalism's/Critical Realism's *ectypal* abstractions or Platonic Realism's *archetypal* ideas.

Kant's philosophical kernel: According to Kant, 'pure' ideas are not absolute, Platonic metaphysical entities independent of the world. Dewey's Platonic, pure ideas presuppose the dualistic, 'Two-Kingdom Thesis,' which Kant explicitly rejects. Rather than elements of a parallel universe, for Kant 'pure' ideas (and there are only three⁶⁵) are the ultimate, *entirely imperceptible, a priori* synthetic judgments (assumptions) required (not capriciously invoked) for theoretical and practical reason to be able to apply *a priori* synthetic judgments (assumptions) in order to make sense of, and to act responsibly in, a *perceptible world of appearances*.⁶⁶ The 'concepts' of the understanding (required assumptions identified through the twelve categories of the understanding) and the 'pure ideas' of reason only can be experienced, and grasped, as relationalities (not eternal and innate essences) only because finite, transcendental consciousness is *in the world* of appearances.⁶⁷

61. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 54.

62. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 55.

63. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 58.

64. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 51.

65. Dewey appears to be unaware that Kant's theoretical reason is concerned with 'categories' (not ideas!) of the understanding and does not recognize that in Kant's system there are only three 'pure' ideas of reason (God, the identity of the self, and the complementarity between autonomous freedom and the cosmos. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 700 and their heuristic value in *ibid.*, B 671–672.

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

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

Dewey clearly has no grasp of the Kantian, third option that takes ‘concepts’⁶⁸ to be *necessary*, imperceptible relationalities intentionally graspable by consciousness (not innate) in order to make sense of experience. Consequently, Dewey’s empiricism presupposes and overlooks all of the imperceptible conditions and capacities of finite, transcendental consciousness that make possible the experience of phenomena from which all reflection arises and returns.

4) On Kant’s Thing-in-itself

The Kant-distorting husk: Kant’s embracing of the ‘thing-in-itself’ is taken by Dewey to prefer mystery to the ‘distinctness of earthly things.’ Quoting first the theologian, Otto Pflieger, that the German characteristic of ‘inwardness’ “[...] scorns to drag down the sublime mystery of the unknowable to the vulgar distinctness of earthly things,”⁶⁹ led some to take this characteristic to be a “prophetic anticipation of the Kantian thing-in-itself”⁷⁰ According to Dewey, Kant champions the mystical ‘thing-in-itself’ rather than grasping earthly things as they are.

Dewey writes: “[...] [A]ny philosophy which is not consistently experimental will always traffic in absolutes no matter in how disguised a form.”⁷¹ Given that there is no direct access to things-in-themselves and without acknowledgement of the inescapability of *a priori* synthetic judgments, which demand the strictest of criteria for their adequacy,⁷² this claim reduces all presuppositions (even Dewey’s) to absolutes without distinguishing among them with respect to their legitimacy, if any.

Kant’s philosophical kernel: By insisting that we should take ‘earthly things as they are,’ Dewey succumbs to *objective subreption* that claims to grasp objective, empirical reality merely by opening one’s eyes.⁷³ This conclusion couldn’t be more antithetical to Kant, but that does not result in Kant valuing ‘mystery’ over appearances in the world.⁷⁴ There can be no awareness of the *a priori*, imperceptible conditions of

68. Kant distinguishes between ‘concepts’ of the understanding and ‘ideas’ of pure reason. Dewey collapses the two and, as an empiricist, rejects their finite, transcendental status, by definition not experiential deduction.

69. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 125.

70. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 125.

71. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 113.

72. See Kant’s ‘methodology’ of the discipline, canon, and architectonic of pure reason at the conclusion of the *Critique of Pure Reason* B 735–879.

73. On the notion of ‘subreption,’ see the “Foreword:” 64, n. 84.

74. Kant specifically defined ‘mystery’ in the General Remark of Part III of *Religion* (AA VI: 137 ff) as something unknowable and unable to be “communicated.” In contrast, *creative freedom*, itself, is not a “mystery” because it can be communicated to everyone. “[...] we will not be allowed to count among the sacred mysteries the reasons for the moral that are inscrutable to us, which can be communicated publicly but for which the cause is not given to us, but only that which is given to us for knowledge but is incapable of public communication. Thus freedom, a property that becomes known to man from the

possibility and capacities of finite, transcendental consciousness were there to be no experience of a world of appearances. Yet, the very fact that we can only experience appearances is the denial of dualism! Appearances are what require that we search for the imperceptible, *a priori* conditions of possibility of finite, transcendental consciousness that make any and all experience of appearances possible. Kant wrote: "My idealism concerns not the existence of things (the doubting of which, however, constitutes idealism in the ordinary sense) because *it never occurred to me to doubt the existence of things, only the mere perceptible representation of things [...]*"⁷⁵ (emphasis added)

5) On Hegel's influence on Dewey's Kant Interpretation

Dewey shares with Strauß two elements in common when it comes to his reading of Hegel. As did Strauß, Dewey rejects Hegel's metanarrative of Absolute Spirit as the alpha and omega of history that turns the particularities of 'empirical philosophy' into indifferent meaninglessness, and Dewey takes Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" to apply to Kant, and he reads Kant, generally, through a Hegelian lens that thoroughly distorts Kant. However, unlike Strauß, Dewey adds to his reading of Hegel the Fichtean notion of the State⁷⁶ as 'filling the empty void' of Kant's categorical imperative through its role of imposing duty on its citizens.

The Kant-distorting husk: Dewey's reading of Kant is clearly shaped by Hegel's anti-Kantianism ('subjectivism,' which for Hegel means 'without Absolute Reason') and anti-Enlightenment sentiment (that takes the Enlightenment injunction 'think for oneself' to mean pursue one's 'self-interests'). Hegel, who rejects Kant as 'limiting phi-

determinability of his will through the unconditional moral law, is not a secret because its knowledge can be communicated to everyone; but the cause of this property, which is inscrutable to us, is a secret because it is not given to us for knowledge." Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 138

Furthermore, Kant emphatically rejected mysticism, as well. Already in his *Vorlesung über die philosophische Religionslehre* (1774/1775), ed. by Werner Stark and Manfred Kühn (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004): 97, Kant spoke of mysticism as "self- annihilation"; see as well, Kant's discussion of Plato's mysticism in *Metaphysik Mrongovius* (XXIX: 950). In *Conflict of the Faculties* (AA VII: 54–58), he dismissively compared pietism and mysticism. In *The End of All Things* (AA VIII: 335–336), he called mysticism the "end of all understanding"; in *On a Recently Prominent Tone of Superiority in Philosophy* (AA VIII: 390), he called the mystical "the end of philosophy"; and in *What Real Progress Has Metaphysics Made in Germany since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff?* (AA XX: 310), he had warned of three dangers: turning theology into Theosophy; moral teleology into mysticism; and psychology into "pneumatics". See as well, Bernhard Jachmann's *Prüfung der Kantischen Religionsphilosophie in Hinsicht auf die ihr beygelegte Aehnlichkeit mit dem reinen Mystizism. Mit einer Einleitung von Immanuel Kant* (1800) (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1999).

75. Kant, *Prolegomena* AA IV: 293.

76. See Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 136.

losophy merely to understanding,' declares Kant's notion of reason to be 'barbarous' and "weak"⁷⁷ because Kant purportedly rejects Absolute Spirit.

According to Hegel, Absolute Spirit is ultimate cause required by dialectical logic and the Principle of Sufficient Reason (which claims that 'something cannot come from nothing'). Absolute Spirit is an ultimate, eminent causality that can create things that the natural order on its own cannot create by itself.⁷⁸ According to Hegel, Absolute Spirit is not only the ultimate cause of reality, it is a substitution for Divine grace as the silent, unrecognized 'cunning of reason'⁷⁹ guiding history to achieve the ultimate end of history as a 'hidden hand' despite all human and worldly failure, suffering, oppression, persecution, and exploitation.

Kant's philosophical kernel: However, Kant doesn't reject the Noumenon,⁸⁰ he merely warns against ignoring the 'limits to reason' to emulate the dove that 'dreams of flying in a vacuum.'⁸¹ Kant's reticence to speak of the Noumenon is not because he took it to be an 'indeterminate concept' but because such predicates, unless relevant to what can be known as *necessary* for the functioning of finite, transcendental consciousness, are dangerous flights of fantasy. Kant's reticence, then, is to avoid illusions.⁸²

The Kant-distorting husk: As with Strauß, Dewey does not grasp the significance of *a priori* synthetic judgment as *adding elements to* phenomena that cannot be perceived directly in the phenomena. For Hegel, Strauß, and Dewey, synthesis is only *a posteriori* as the conclusion of dialectic⁸³ so that, as Dewey stresses, all *a priori* synthetic judgment *must be* an authoritarian, top-down imposition on experience in contrast to Dewey's bottom-up 'empirical philosophy.'

Kant's philosophical kernel: As with Strauß, Dewey fails to grasp the significance of Kant's insight that logic is *a canon without an organon*.⁸⁴ Logic is a descriptive system, not a causal system. However, Kant's 'metaphysics'⁸⁵ of transcendental consciousness' finite, eminent causality that are *required*, *a priori* synthetic judgments because only

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

78. When applied to Absolute Spirit, eminent causality is an anthropomorphic projection because the only place where we ever experience eminent causality is in the finite form of autonomous, creative freedom exercised by finite, finite, transcendental consciousness. See: 84, n. 23.

79. See Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (1837) "B" GW XII: 49 [Sibree trans.: 34]) and *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaft* (1830) GW X: 30–32.

80. Hegel knows that Kant doesn't reject the Noumenon. See "Glauben und Wissen" GW II: 323, but Hegel claims that Kant, inconsistently employs the concept only to deny its validity because it as "an indeterminate idea of the supersensible in us."

81. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 8–9 and *Groundwork* AA IV: 462–463.

82. See Kant, *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 461–462.

83. On Hegel/Strauß and a *a posteriori* judgment, see: 633, n. 277. On Dewey and a *a posteriori* judgment, see: 948.

84. On Kant's distinction between a 'canon without' and a 'canon with' an organon, see: 558, n. 36.

85. On Kant's notion of 'metaphysics,' see in Vol. II: "Introduction:" "Kant's Defense of Metaphysics:" 542 ff.

the effects of consciousness are perceivable,⁸⁶ is a *canon with an organon*. Especially, all accounts of *causal explanations* are *a priori* synthetic judgments that must be *added* to phenomena because we do not perceive causes directly in phenomena, only indirectly.

Nonetheless, Dewey is no Hegelian despite his apparent drawing of pre-figured Hegelian criticisms of Kant. The strongest indicator of Dewey's rejection of Hegel is Hegel's emphasis on the spiritual escape from nature. Whereas Dewey plots Kant's moral theory on Hegel's "The Moral View of the World, Dewey thoroughly rejects Hegel's distinction

[...] between reason or *Vernunft* and *Verstand* or understanding. Reflection, inquiry, observation and experimentation to test ideas and theories, all that we of the lesser breeds call intelligence, belongs in the Hegelian scheme to mere 'understanding,' which reason scorns and leaves behind in its sublime flight.⁸⁷

"Understanding is the mode of mind which seeks precision and insists upon distinctions which are fixed' Accordingly it is at home in science (*mere* science as the Hegelian would say) [Dewey's parenthetical insert] and in all matters of calculation.⁸⁸

Ignoring Spinoza's substance 'Monism,' Dewey's view of Hegel is applicable, just as well, to Spinoza although Dewey ignores Spinoza in his narrative of German philosophy. Dewey writes of Hegel, 'the' Monist, as one who understands "[h]istory [... as] the manifestation of [...] [Absolute Spirit's] creative reason.⁸⁹ "Beneath and above" [finite] understanding is *reason* "[...] which *penetrates below distinctions to identities and rises above differences to unity*⁹⁰" (Absolute Spirit). (emphasis added) Although Hegel's Absolute Freedom and nature's freedom⁹¹ is analogous to Spinoza's adaptation of Scholasticism's *natura naturans* (substance's creativity) and *natura naturata* (nature's creativity) to substance,⁹² both Hegel and Spinoza are distinguishing between two kinds of causality: *eminent causality* ((a cause that is greater than its effects) and *formal causality* (a cause with as much 'reality' as its effects) .⁹³ which can only be distinguished as an *a priori* synthetic judgment because causes are only experienced

86. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*: B 106 ff.

87. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 42

88. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 42.

89. See Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 42.

90. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 42.

91. See in Chapter 6: "Grand Narratives of Theoretical Reason", section "d) Hegel and Kant on Nature and Freedom:" 697 ff.

92. See the Spinoza entry in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy on-line at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spinoza/> (March 4, 2024), and the following two pages on Spinoza on-line: <https://www.elkewehrs.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Natura-Artikel.pdf> (March 4, 2024) and https://www.schwabeonline.ch/schwabe-xaveropp/elibrary/start.xav?start=%2F%2F%5B%40attr_id%3D%27verw.nat.ura.naturansnaturata%27%5D (March, 2024).

93. On the distinction between *eminent* and *formal causality*, see 84, n. 23.

through their effects. Hegel grounds Absolute Freedom and nature's freedom in a dialectical logic when logic can only describe but not account for causality⁹⁴ – given that causality is always an *a priori* synthetic judgment (assumption) *added to* phenomena, which phenomena are only the effects of causality. If there is a distinction between Hegel and Spinoza, it is that Hegel is more a Scholastic Intellectualist and Spinoza is more a Scholastic Occasionalist although both have a *horizontal notion of reality* (not a top-down, causal hierarchy as with Plato). For Hegel, Absolute Spirit's 'creative reason' is the ultimate author, *natura naturans*, of history. Dewey doesn't use the term 'cunning of reason,' but that is the meaning here. Hegel's reason, not Dewey's experimental reason, functions in the background to achieve Absolute Spirit's ultimate objective of self-awareness as the Second Negation in finite consciousness.

6) On Dewey's Hegelian Kant Themes

a) Hegel's "The Moral View of the World"

The Kant-distorting husk: "The Moral View of the World" and Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" from the *Phenomenology*⁹⁵ (1807) serve as the pre-figured, moral theory that informs Dewey's con-figuration of Kant's moral theory. However, conveniently overlooked is that Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" applies to the Apostle Paul, Augustine, and Luther but not to Kant. In his earlier "Über die wissenschaftlichen Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts, seine Stelle in der praktischen Philosophie, und sein Verhältnis zu den positiven Rechtswissenschaften"⁹⁶ (1803), Hegel portrays Kant as a 'subjectivist' who creates her/his moral principles 'bottom up' as social constructions. However, four years later Hegel makes no direct mention of Kant and the notion of Moral Duty in "The Moral View of the World" insists that moral duties are absolutely *a priori* and, hence, top down.' It is Hegel's "The Moral View of the World," not Kant, who 'looks into an empty void' when it comes to moral duty. Hegel magnifies the void by pointing out that *the 'real' world (wirkliche Welt) of ethics prohibits the fulfilment of absolute, Moral Duty*. We can't be ethical, so we must depend on the cunning of reason to achieve the 'end of history.'⁹⁷

These accounts of Kant as a 'subjectivist' and as an authoritarian 'top-down' moralist⁹⁸ are contradictory: 1) A moral principle self-scribed by an individual can on-

94. See Vol. II: "Introduction:" "Kant's Defense of Metaphysics:" 542 ff.

95. See Hegel, *Phenomenology*: GW III: 442–452 (Baillie trans.: 615–627).

96. See Hegel, "Über die wissenschaftlichen Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts:" GW II: 516–517.

97. See "The Moral View of the World": 547 ff.

98. See Dewey's account of the categorical imperative as 'the drill sergeant' in Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 90.

ly be a relative individual or social construction,⁹⁹ and 2) a heteronomous imposition of moral principles 'from above' (metaphysical or theocratic) is 'empty and formal' because, according to Hegel, it is incapable of being adhered to in a finite world.¹⁰⁰ In fact, though, Kant is neither a bottom-up 'constructionist' nor a defender of top-down (theocratic) 'heteronomist.'

Kant's philosophical kernel: In stark contrast to these 'objective' attempts to ground morality either in social constructions or theocratic, authoritarian, heteronomous imposition, Kant's moral principles are 'metaphysically' necessary/required because they are 'given' with the *a priori* conditions of autonomous freedom that makes possible moral responsibility. Just as the causal order of nature is a 'given,' lawful order (physical, statistical, and algorithmic), so too, the causality of autonomous, creative freedom is a 'given,' lawful order (moral). The difference is that nature's lawful order functions 'blindly' whereas autonomous freedom's lawful order must be self-imposed. Moral principles are neither relative social constructions nor heteronomous principles 'from above' burdened with theocratic threat. They are the required canon of the causal agency of finite, transcendental consciousness just as the lawfulness of nature as a causal system required the canon of physical lawfulness. Finite, transcendental consciousness is the only species we've experienced on this planet that is capable of understanding these imperceptible canons of nature and morality anything close to the degree that finite, transcendental consciousness does.

Both Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" and Dewey's mapping of Kant's moral theory onto it are a blatant contradiction of what Kant means by the *autonomous* moral law that the individual embraces to give her-/himself permission to act. *Kant's criteria for categorical imperatives is not that they are (theocratic), heteronomous laws imposed from 'above reason' but that the individual evaluates her/his moral principle from the perspective of its universality, and not merely self-interest.*

b) Hegel's Reading of Kant as Freedom Conquering Nature & 'Personality'

The Kant-distorting husk: Furthermore, as I pointed out above, Dewey's conclusion that Kant's 'germinal idea' is a dualism that drives a wedge between Absolute Freedom and nature is found in Hegel, not Kant!¹⁰¹ Dewey writes that, according to Kant, morality seeks the conquest of nature.¹⁰²

99. See Hegel, "Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten" H" II: 460.

100. See Hegel, "The Moral View of the World" in the *Phenomenology* GW III: 442–452 [Baillie trans.: 615–627].

101. See Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen" GW II: 314, 322 and *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* GW XIII: 30–31; 34–35).

102. See Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 92. On the difference between Hegel and Kant on freedom and nature see: 694.

Kant's philosophical kernel: The case is, rather, that, according to Kant, practical reason (morality) is concerned not with the conquest of nature but with what 'ought to be,' not simply control over what 'is.' Only a species that can intentionally (and not merely instinctually) initiate sequences of events that nature, when left on its own, could never achieve is capable of taking responsibility for its agency. Of course, such *autonomous* freedom (not to be confused with the mere rejection of external authority) must have the liberty of choosing the moral principle that it invokes to 'give itself permission to act,' but every action is accompanied by such a selection (Kant calls it 'self-selection' – but not self-creation!¹⁰³). Only the individual can know what the moral principle was.

The Kant-distorting husk: Dewey writes about Kant's notion of 'Personality' that

[...] admirers of Kant [claim] that he first brought to recognition the true and infinite nature of the principle of Personality. On one side, the individual is *homo phenomenon*—a part of the scheme of nature, governed by its laws as much as any stone or plant. But [*sic.*] in virtue of his citizenship in the kingdom of supersensible Laws and Ends, he [*sic.*] is *elevated to true universality*. He is no longer a mere occurrence. *He is a Person*—one in whom the purpose of Humanity is incarnate.¹⁰⁴ (emphasis added)

Dewey writes further of Kant's notion of 'personality:'

Subjectivism means recognition of the principle of free personality: the self as creative, occupied not with an external world which limits it from without [the Hegelian notion of nature¹⁰⁵], but, through its own self-consciousness, finding a world within itself, and having found the universal within itself, setting to work to recreate itself in what had been the external world, and by its own creative expansion in industry, art and politics to transform what had been mere limiting material into a work of its own [...] Personality means that man as a rational being does not receive the end which forms the law of his action from without, whether from Nature, the State or from God, but from his own self. Morality is autonomous; man, humanity, is an end in itself. *Obedience to the self-imposed law will transform the sensible world [...] in a form appropriate to universal reason.*¹⁰⁶ (emphasis added)

Kant's philosophical kernel: This, also, is a Hegelian formulation of a Kantian theme. Kant's aim is not the transformation of nature according to capricious, subjective whims of 'free' humanity. His aim is to describe the conditions under which it is possible for humanity (or any other finite, transcendental consciousness) to intentionally create things and take responsibility for them that nature, left to its own devices, never could. Only because it experiences autonomous, creative freedom can (not

103. On the meaning of self-selection (*selbstgesetzgebend*), see Chapter 7: 765.

104. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 84.

105. See in Chapter 6: "Grand Narratives of Theoretical Reason" section "d) Hegel and Kant on Nature and Freedom:" 697 ff.

106. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 85.

merely may) humanity assume responsibility for its agency. No other species is held to account for its actions to the degree that humanity is capable of holding itself accountable.

Yes, Kant does place ‘personality’ at the pinnacle of a tripart structure of the self.¹⁰⁷ The fundamental element of the self is ‘animality,’ which is driven by merely physical appetites and instincts. Above ‘animality’ is what Kant calls ‘humanity,’ which is the pursuit of status and prestige in the eyes of others. Then comes ‘personality,’ which is to act on the basis of a moral principle without consideration of one’s or one’s social group’s merely self-interest.

Humanity’s dignity (absolute, not relative worth) comes precisely from its capacity to exercise autonomous freedom.¹⁰⁸ Respect for the individual is owed only to the degree that it is clear that the individual is acting on the basis of moral principles¹⁰⁹ – although certainty in that regard is something only that the individual can know. Respect, then, is a matter of ‘humanity’ (social status and prestige) whereas dignity is a matter of ‘personality (imperceptible, responsible exercising of autonomous freedom regardless of self-interest).¹¹⁰

c) On Humanity’s Moral Progress

The Kant-distorting husk: Dewey writes: “[...] [I]n Kant we find the idea of a single continuous development of humanity, as a progress from a reign of natural instinct to a final freedom won through adherence to the law of reason.¹¹¹” Dewey writes that, according to Kant, humanity’s actions are to be gradually permeated by rationality to achieve “[...] an equation between inner freedom of mind and outer freedom of action¹¹²”

Kant’s philosophical kernel: This is also Hegel, not Kant! Freedom is not a matter of being ‘won’ or ‘lost,’ according to Kant. According to Kant, freedom is an indelible and inalienable condition that can be neither ‘won’ nor ‘lost.’¹¹³ The ‘winning’ of

107. See Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 26 ff.

108. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 434–43, 449–450.

109. See page 662, n. 279: See the section “Kant’s Respect for the Law:” 797 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.

110. See Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* AA VI: 467–468; see *Critique of Practical Reason* AA V: 81 and 81*.

111. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 120–121.

112. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 101.

113. Otfried Höffe calls it the key to the ‘one right by birth.’ See Otfried Höffe, “14. Das eine angeborne Recht” in *Kants Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*: 236–251.

freedom¹¹⁴ is the issue for Hegel, and Absolute Freedom, and, according to Hegel, where it means to escape from nature's limitations on Absolute Spirit.

In the opening of "The Conflict with the Juridical Faculty" in the *Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant speaks of predicting the future as consisting of three options: decline (moral terrorism), progress (Eudaimonism or Chiliasm), or eternal stagnation (Abderitism¹¹⁵).¹¹⁶ *Kant himself draws a fourth conclusion. The only thing that is certain is change.* Given that the condition of autonomous freedom means that one is *always* confronted with a choice between good and evil principles when giving oneself permission to exercise creative freedom, all that we can be sure of is that there will be improvement *and* (!) setbacks. We can hope for 'progress' only with respect to the species¹¹⁷ although there are no guarantees. In light of the ambiguities of 'progress,' Kant stresses preference for evolution, not revolution.¹¹⁸

According to Kant, one does not acquire autonomous freedom or a moral attitude. Rather, there is no point in time that humanity's actions are not 'moral' because of the inescapable self-imposition of a maxim to govern one's agency. One can ignore morality by training, but one is never immoral. One's granting oneself permission to act always involves the application of a good or evil maxim to govern one's actions. Moral improvement is cultivating the habit of self-selecting good principles, but it is never a matter of either overcoming an ontological condition of 'evil' or of achieving 'perfection.' A finite consciousness cannot be perfect, but it can assume responsibility for its agency.

d) Hegel's Invoking Fichte, not Kant, on the State

The Kant-distorting husk: Drawing on the pre-figurations of Fichte and Hegel's agreement in this respect with Fichte,¹¹⁹ Dewey takes the 'empty abstract void' of Kant's categorical imperative to be filled-in by the State that demands the 'duty' of citizenship.

This mis-reading of Kant turns 'idealism' into a sociological imposition of state ideals on society. Embracing the reading of Kant as correct, Dewey quotes Fichte:

114. Dewey refers to 'winning freedom' at *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 33, as well.

115. Abderitismus is the German spelling of abderitism. Apparently, it is a Kantian neologism? However, there was a popular book, *Die Abderiten*, from Christoph Martin Wieland, published serially 1774–1780 in which the philosophy of the Greek Abderites is portrayed as stupid and foolish. Kant's *Conflict of the Faculties* was published in 1798.

116. See Kant, *Streit der Fakultäten* AA VII: 81.

117. See Kant, *Streit der Fakultäten* AA VII: 84.

118. See Kant, *Streit der Fakultäten* AA VII: 87.

119. On the strategies employed, generally by 'Romanticists' and 'Idealistic Philosophers' to 'fill the void' "between sense and reason," see Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 137–138. On Hegel's agreement with Fichte according to Dewey, see 128, 131–132, 136.

"The great promise of a kingdom of right reason and truth on earth must not become a vain and empty phantom [...],¹²⁰" which would be the case if duty was defined according to Kant's merely 'formal,' moral, 'empty abstractions.'

Dewey claims that Kant confronts us with only an empty, bland void when it comes to duty:

Kant bequeathed to the world an intellect devoted to the congenial task of discovering causal law in external nature [theoretical reason, but Dewey doesn't label it], and an inner intuition [apparently, not *intellektuelle Anschauung* but an inner sixth sense] which, in spite of its sublimity [Dewey nowhere addresses Kant's notion of the sublime much less aesthetic judgment, generally], had *nothing to look at except the bare form of an empty law of duty. Kant was kept busy in proving the existence¹²¹ of this supernal but empty region [...]* [H]e was not troubled by being obliged to engage in the [...] task of spending his time gazing into a blank void.¹²² (emphasis added)

Dewey emphasizes that Fichte is the philosopher who connects history and nationalism with the State,¹²³ but, once again, teachings by Hegel/Fichte are attributed to Kant.

Kant's philosophical kernel: By no means, though, does Kant claim (as does Fichte) that "[...] history is the realization of [...] absolute purpose [...]. History is the continuous life of a divine Ego by which it realizes in fact what it is in idea or destiny. Its phases are successive stages in the founding of the Kingdom of God on earth. It and it only is the revelation of the Absolute. Along with this growing deification of history is the increased significance attached to nationalism in general and the German nation in particular¹²⁴"

e) 'Ethics' as Adjudicating among merely Self-interests

The Kant-distorting husk: The notion that Kant's 'ethics' consists in adjudicating among self-interests can be itself seen as an echo of Dewey's dependence upon the pre-figured Hegelian reading of Kant cursing through Dewey's own philosophical 'tissues' and 'organs.' Not only does Dewey mis-represent categorical imperatives, he makes no distinction between categorical and hypothetical imperatives. He makes no distinction between what 'must' be done to achieve a technical end (a particular,

120. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 112.

121. Rather than 'proving the existence' of infinite, eminent causality as the ultimate ground of finite, eminent causality, Kant calls into question the legitimacy of the traditional proofs for God: cosmological, teleological, and ontological. Furthermore, Kant's deductions of *a priori* synthetic truths are not 'proofs' but identification of inescapable elements that a *finite* (!) consciousness must possess in order to experience a world of appearances (*sinnliche Anschauung*)

122. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 137.

123. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 121.

124. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 121.

'hypothetical' imperative) and what 'ought' to be done (a universal, 'categorical' imperative). Dewey collapses what Kant calls 'hypothetical' and 'categorical' imperatives. He writes that Kant's categorical imperative "[...] proceeds in man from a source *above reason*.¹²⁵" He takes Kant's idea of freedom to be "[...] *an absolute stranger to the natural and sensible world*¹²⁶[...] [In contrast,] science works by the law of causal necessity with respect to what is, ignorant of any law of freedom referring to what should be.¹²⁷"

Dewey writes: "Kant bequeathed to the world an intellect devoted to the congenial task of discovering causal law in external nature, and an inner intuition¹²⁸ which [*sic.*], in spite of its sublimity, had nothing to look at except the bare form of an empty law of duty. Kant [...] was not troubled by being obliged to engage in the unremunerative task of spending his time gazing into a bland void.¹²⁹" Dewey adds: "[...] [T]he *categorical imperative calls up the drill sergeant. Trafficking ethics, in which each gives up something which he wants to get something which he wants more, is not the noblest kind of morals*, but at least it is socially responsible as far as it goes.¹³⁰" (emphasis added)

The narrative that Kant's notion of 'freedom,' which is supposed to ground morality, is anchored in capricious 'empty abstractions' to which attribution of their status as categorical imperatives is a claim made by Hegel.¹³¹ Hegel's claim resulted in the Hegelian assertion that the Kantian promotion of freedom (as well as of Kantian Enlightenment as self-thinking) only means to pursue self interest. It is found in Carl

125. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 67. Note that Dewey claims that Kant's notion of the *categorical* (for Dewey, the 'dogmatic authoritarian *a priori*') comes from a source "*above reason*." There is nowhere to my knowledge where Kant makes a claim for a source of the categorical above reason. The three 'pure' ideas of reason *above understanding* are God, the enduring identity of the individual, and the complementarity of freedom and cosmology. Were Kant to have claimed a source for the categorical 'above reason,' he would have been making a claim that the source is above 'God'.

126. This claim for freedom's foreignness to nature is 'half' Hegelian, perhaps, but it completely ignores the significance of Kant's claim for the complementarity of freedom and cosmology as a 'pure' idea of reason that is among the ultimate conditions of possibility necessary for there to be anything like understanding in the world.

127. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 67–68. Kant's practical reason that is concerned with 'what ought to be' is also concerned with a 'law of causality'. However, it is not a law of causal necessity as the case with nature. It is a law compatible with the finite causality that is *autonomous* freedom. Every causal system is 'lawful,' but not every causal system is reducible to nature's causality. The 'necessity' that applies to the causality that is *autonomous* is not a *determining* necessity as in nature. Rather, it's a necessary requirement (condition, not prior determination from 'above' finite, *autonomous* freedom) for *autonomous* freedom to be free.

128. This is a misleading statement at the least to the extent that Dewey makes no distinction here between 'intellectual intuition' (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) and 'sensible intuition' (*sinnliche Anschauung*). He appears to be using the term 'intuition' as a form of sixth sense that one has innately of 'ultimate claims'.

129. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*: 137.

130. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*: 90–91.

131. On Hegel's claim that Kant's morality is capriciously constructivist, see 727; see as well, 657.

Daub's 1816 reading of Kant.¹³² Although unknown today, Daub was a key Hegelian, and he played a central role in Hegel's joining Daub in Heidelberg for two years prior to Hegel's call to Berlin.

Kant's philosophical kernel: Dewey's language here with respect to the 'authoritarian character' of Kant's categorical imperative's source *above reason* treats moral 'duty' as (theocratically) *heteronomous* in line with Hegel's "The Moral View of the World" in the *Phenomenology*. Dewey's and Hegel's language has nothing to do with what Kant means by *autonomous*, categorical imperatives.

7) On Ignoring of Kant's 'Culture that Promotes the Moral Will'

The Kant-distorting husk: With his failure to distinguish between 'categorical' and 'hypothetical' imperatives, Dewey only takes culture to be 'the culture of skills' and ignores Kant's notion of the 'culture that promotes the will.'¹³³ As a consequence of his distorted dualistic reading of Kant, Dewey has an inaccurate view of the notion of 'culture' in Kant. According to Dewey, "*Kultur* is sharply antithetical to civilization [...] Civilization is a natural and largely unconscious or involuntary growth [...] Culture [...] is deliberate and conscious [...] [C]ivilization meant simply social decencies and elegancies and outward proprieties, while morality, that is, the rule of the end of Reason, is necessary to culture. And [*sic.*] the real significance of the term 'culture' becomes more obvious when [Kant] adds that it involves the slow toil of education of the Inner Life and [...] depends upon long effort by the community to which he [*sic.*] belongs. It is not primarily an individual trait or possession, but a conquest of the community won through devolution to 'duty.'¹³⁴"

Kant's philosophical kernel: This portrayal of the meaning of 'culture' has nothing to do with what Kant says of the distinction between the 'culture of skills' (that is, learning of technical, hypothetical imperatives to achieve particular ends) and the 'culture that promotes the moral will' (that is, encouraging the individual to self-select moral principles in giving her-/himself permission to act).

8) On 'Ideas' and 'Categorical Imperatives' as Absolutes, Not arising out of Experience

The Kant-distorting husk: According to Dewey and as the case with 'ideas' and 'categorical imperatives,' *a priori* judgments that don't arise out of experience don't exist.

132. See Chapter 8: "Strauß' Kant Reading over His Career, section "Autonomous Freedom is Egocentric Desire and Self-Interest:" 855 ff.

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

134. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 94.

Yet, Dewey claims that the only legitimate notion of an *a priori* arise out of experiential history!¹³⁵ Dewey is saying, then, that there is no such thing as a legitimate *a priori* judgment because all judgments that are legitimate are *a posteriori*.

Kant's philosophical kernel: This is clearly not Kant's notion of an *a priori* synthetic judgment (assumption). An *a posteriori* synthetic judgment is an 'analytical,' elucidating (*erläuternd*) judgment with respect to a set of 'given' phenomena whereas an *a priori* 'synthetic' judgment is supplementing (*erweiternd*) of the 'given' phenomena with imperceptible, mental elements that cannot be directly given with the phenomena.¹³⁶ *A priori* synthetic judgments are concerned with the set of *imperceptible* conditions and capacities that make it possible for (historical) agency in a world of perception in the first place, as well as much more, what make it possible for (historical) agency to improve on its efforts at moral excellence.

9) On Consequentialism as the 'Work of Reason'

The Kant-distorting husk: Dewey calls consequentialism the 'work of reason' and succumbs to the 'is'/'ought' fallacy because he doesn't acknowledge that one cannot get from 'what is' to 'what ought to be' any more than his insistence that one can get from particulars to universals. He writes: "A gospel of duty separated from empirical purposes and results tends to gag intelligence. It substitutes for the work of reason displayed in a wide and distributed survey of consequences in order to determine where duty lies an inner consciousness, empty of content, which closes with the form of rationality the demands of existing social authorities."¹³⁷

Yet his own socially relative pragmatism does the same. He assumes in a remarkably naïve way that 'what is, is what ought to be' without ever raising the issue of criteria for what 'ought to be.' Yet, other than in an immediate short term, one can never get from 'what is' to 'what ought to be' merely by measuring pragmatic consequences because one has no control over the consequences.¹³⁸ Here are a few examples of Dewey's claims:

"[...] [I]ntelligence must, with us, devote itself [...] to *construction of the ends* to be acted upon."¹³⁹ (emphasis added)

"We must have [...] a method checked up at each turn by *results achieved*."¹⁴⁰

135. See Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 140–143.

136. On the difference between an *a priori* synthetic judgment as supplementary (*erweiternd*) and elucidating analytic judgment (*erläuternd*) See in the "Preface:" 60, n. 77.

137. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 88.

138. See "§ 11 Practical Consequences as Criterion" in Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy*: 50–58.

139. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 142.

140. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 143.

Dewey raises the issue of criteria as follows: "[...] America means opportunity: we must now begin to ask: Opportunity for what, and how shall the opportunity be achieved?¹⁴¹"

He answers: "[...] [P]hilosophy [...] should *articulate and consolidate the ideas to which our social practice commits us* [to] clarify and guide our future endeavors.¹⁴²" (emphasis added)

Yet, his criteria amount to declaring particularities to be universal (precisely the absolutism that he claims to reject): "We must make the accident of our internal composition into an idea, an idea upon which we may conduct our foreign as well as our domestic policy.¹⁴³"

Kant's philosophical kernel: However, to ground moral criteria in social practice is to declare morality to be a matter of relative 'social construction.' To make the criteria of what is 'right' merely pragmatic success turns morality into a matter of accident and power. Most importantly, to turn the notion of the *a priori* into merely a matter of cultural, historical contingency¹⁴⁴ is to restrict the *a priori* to relative, social construction AND to declare all those *a priori* presuppositions that are not a matter of historical contingency to be dogma. For example, space and time, which one can never experience directly in perception but which one must presuppose as the imperceptible condition required for any and all perceptual experience are silently presupposed as the focus is on action and accomplishment.

10) Dewey suggest that "[a]n international judicial tribunal will break in the end upon the principle of national sovereignty.¹⁴⁵"

Kant also acknowledges that a World government will never be successful.¹⁴⁶ Nonetheless, he viewed the conditions and capacities of finite, transcendental consciousness to always strive for 'cosmopolitanism' in the sense of humanity everywhere possessing the same dignity given that its conditions of possibility and capacities of finite, transcendental consciousness are universal.

141. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 143. Missing here, obviously, is the question of 'what ought' to be achieved?

142. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 143.

143. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 144.

144. See Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 143.

145. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 144.

146. See Kant, *Streit der Fakultäten* AA VII: 85, 88. See, as well, Kant, "The Second Defining Article for Perpetual Peace" in *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project* AA VIII: 354–357.

11) On Kant's Influence as Professional, Not Human

Dewey, however, makes a curious observation about Kant's influence: "[...] its importance has been professional rather than human."¹⁴⁷

Who is to blame for the 'professionalization' of Kant rather than there being a 'human' reception of his project? The final paragraph of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 864) is a call to aid in broadening the awareness of the universal conditions and capacities of finite, transcendental consciousness without which there can be no experience, understanding, or responsible agency in the world: "As regards those who adopt a scientific method, they have the choice of proceeding either dogmatically or skeptically, but in any case they are under obligation to proceed systematically. [He calls Wolff dogmatic and Hume skeptical.] The [third] critical path alone is still open. If the reader has had the courtesy and patience to accompany me along this path, he [*sic.*] may now judge for [her-/]himself whether, if [s/]he cares to lend [her-/]his aid in making this path into a high-road, it may not be possible to achieve before the end of the present century what many centuries have not been able to accomplish; namely, to secure for human reason complete satisfaction in regard to that with which it has all along so eagerly occupied itself, though hitherto in vain."

Dewey himself chose not to 'lend his aid' and to present his remarks *before an audience of academic 'professionals'* at the University of North Carolina, not before a 'lay' audience.

He (sarcastically) acknowledge that "[n]o position unlike [... Kant's] should be taken up till Kant has been reverently disposed of, and the new position evaluated in his terms."¹⁴⁸ He then proceeds to reduce Kant down to a "single, germinal idea," which he takes to be the *dualism of* "[...] the world of sense, the world of phenomena in space and time in which science is at home [...] and] the supersensible,[...] noumenal world, the world of moral duty and moral freedom."¹⁴⁹

Yet, whereas Kant rejects this dualism and emphasizes the inseparable, if irreducible, complementarity of the natural order and humanity's creative freedom to bring about things that nature on its own cannot bring about, Dewey insists upon a gap between nature and freedom (just as did Hegel). Having ignored the 'pure' idea of the Noumenal and, consequently, in order to avoid the 'irrational, self-contradictory' consequence that freedom, independent of nature, can 'come from nothing' (in violation of the Principle of Sufficient Reason), Dewey, as Hegel does in "The Moral View of the World" of the *Phenomenology*, maintains that Kant anchors freedom in 'the unqualified [heteronomous] demand of duty:'

147. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 138 (see 139, as well).

148. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 63.

149. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 63.

The moral law, the law of obligation, thus proceeds from a source in man above reason [this is Hegelian language]. It is token of his membership as a moral being in a kingdom of absolute ends above nature. But [*sic.*] it is also directed to *something in man which is equally above nature* [again, this is Hegelian 'Absolute Freedom,' not Kant's autonomous freedom inseparable from nature]: [... the moral kingdom of absolute ends above nature] appeals to and demands freedom. *Reason is incapable of anything so irrational, so self-contradictory, as imposing a law of action to which no faculty of action corresponds.*¹⁵⁰ The freedom of the moral will is the answer to the unqualified demand of duty [above nature].¹⁵¹ (emphasis added)

In short, Dewey is saying 'Kant' and thinking 'Hegel.' What Dewey leaves unsaid is Hegel's acknowledgement that such a 'kingdom of absolute ends above nature' is incapable of fulfilment, which is the segue for Hegel to invoke the 'cunning of reason' as a substitute for 'divine grace.'

Kant formulates the relationship between 'moral principles' and autonomous freedom as complementary, not a top-down relationship with moral duty demanding free will act in a certain fashion. The capacity to grasp moral principles is within. It is analogous to the capacity to grasp the lawfulness of nature within. However, this 'within' is no subjective constructivism. It is a matter of grasping what is 'given' by the Noumenon as the condition of possibility for there to be finite, eminent, transcendental consciousness in a world. Rather, by means of the Copernican Turn, Kant shifts the focus of morality from *absolute knowledge* of moral principles to emphasis the *experientially necessary* (but not causally necessary) *a priori* conditions of possibility not given directly in perception that are required in order for there to be autonomous, creative freedom in a world.

Dewey's, like Hegel's, reading of Kant on morality is contradictory. *Either moral principles being empty, subjective abstractions or they are the rational ground of an absolute freedom 'above nature.'*

According to Kant, *freedom's agency in the world makes moral principles a necessary assumption (a priori synthetic judgment).* Whereas as a causality, autonomous

150. This is precisely the crucial point that confirms that Dewey has not grasped the *Critique of Pure Reason's* central question or its answer. How are *a priori* synthetic judgments (assumptions) possible? Kant's answer is neither Hegel's Absolute Spirit, which Hegel substitutes for Kant's Noumenon, nor Hegel's/Dewey's notion of Absolute Duty 'above reason' that requires finite freedom of the will (free choice) to ground what, otherwise, would be merely abstract duty without action. A *a priori* synthetic judgments of theoretical reason (pure intuition and the twelve categories of the understanding), which understands 'what is,' and of practical reason (categorical imperatives that are invoked by autonomous freedom to assume responsibility for its agency), which alone can grasp of 'ought to be,' all require three ideas of 'pure' reason, which Dewey dogmatically assert don't exist. Nonetheless, without the 'ideas' of God/Noumenon, the enduring identity of the self, and the complementarity between creative freedom and the physical universe, Dewey himself would be unable to experience, understand, or exercise responsible agency.

151. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics*, 2nd ed.: 67.

freedom is incapable of empirical proof,¹⁵² it is capable of ‘defense’ because without its assumption finite, transcendental consciousness can’t be the creativity that it is in the world. As with Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum*, whereby conscious denying that one is conscious presupposes one is conscious, so too, with finite, eminent causality: its denial is a form of confirmation – even though, as a category of the understanding, causal explanations are always something that must be *added to phenomena*, not empirically derived from the phenomena.

Kant speaks of a complementary relationship between creative freedom (which is not the mere choice of ‘free will’ but, rather, autonomous, creativity) and moral duty in that he calls autonomous, creative freedom the *rational essence* (the very reason) for morality whereas moral principles are what raise *rational awareness* of responsible, creative freedom in the world.¹⁵³

In other words, contrary to Dewey and Hegel’s “The Moral View of the World,” it is not that absolute, moral principles (duty above reason) ground an absolute freedom above nature and demand that the finite will act in a certain way, which would turn morality into a set of heteronomous imperatives, but that even a single moral principle requires recognition of creative freedom because there is no other purpose of a moral principle than to guide the exercise of autonomous freedom. In short, Dewey (and Hegel’s “The Moral View of the World”) insist that absolute moral principles precede freedom whereas, according to Kant, without freedom there would be no need for moral principles.

I have employed Dewey’s *German Philosophy and German Politics* to engage a pre-figured narrative of Kant to lay bare the genuine Kantian kernels at the core of a distorted set of narrative husks. However, Dewey’s reading is anything but new, and I have shown how the con-figured reading by the anti-Kantians and anti-Enlightenment movement at the the beginning of the 19th C provides enduring prototypes for portraying an aggregate of items that are supposedly Kant but have only metaphors in common with Kant. Absent a grasp of the inseparability of theoretical reason (understanding ‘what is’) and practical reason (determining ‘what *ought* to be’), which arises only in a world of phenomena as far as finite, eminent causality has ever experienced, philosophy (and humanity!) is merely a raft on a vast, open ocean being blown about by (popular) winds and ocean currents without a rudder. Kant himself writes:

We have [...] not merely explored the land of pure understanding, and carefully surveyed every part of it, but have also measured its extent, and assigned to everything in it its

152. Kant emphasizes in the *Groundwork* what he had already affirmed in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that freedom is incapable of proof/disproof because it is an *a priori* synthetic judgment, not an empirical fact. We only experience the effects of causes, not the causes directly in phenomena. In the *Groundwork* he adds, though, that autonomous freedom is capable of defense. See Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 459.

153. See Kant, *Critique Practical Reason* AA V: 4*: “[...] freedom is, after all, the *ratio essendi* of the moral law; however, the moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom.”

rightful place. This land is an island, enclosed by nature itself within unalterable limits. It is the land of truth (enchanted name) surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the native location of illusion, where many a fog bank and many a swiftly melting iceberg give the deceptive appearance of new lands, which ceaselessly deceive the romanticizing seafarer around them with ever new with empty hopes that engage him [*sic.*] in enterprises which he can never abandon and yet is unable to carry to completion. Before we venture out into this ocean in order to explore it in all directions and to obtain assurance whether there be any ground for such hopes, it will be well to begin by casting a glance upon the map of the land which we are about to leave, and to enquire, first, whether we cannot in any case be satisfied with what it contains or even must be satisfied with out of necessity should there be nowhere else land on which we can build; second, by what title we possess even this land and can be secure in the face of all opposing claims.¹⁵⁴

[...][M]etaphysics [...] is a shoreless sea [because the mind has no measurable limits], in which progress leaves no trace, and whose horizon contains no visible goal by which the extent to which it has been approached could be perceived. – In regard to this science, which has itself almost always been only in the idea, the task presented is very difficult, almost to despair of the possibility of its resolution, and, should it succeed, the prescribed condition of presenting the progress it has made in a short speech increases this difficulty. This is because *metaphysics is, in its essence and final intention, a complete whole; either nothing, or everything. What is necessary for its final purpose cannot therefore be dealt with in fragments, like mathematics or empirical natural science, which always progress without end.* – Nevertheless, we will try.¹⁵⁵

12) On Kant's 'Pure' Religion

According to Strauß, 'limits' to reason are a capricious restriction of reason. He views limits to reason as drawing a line beyond which all 'rational' understanding ceases and one takes a kneel to ignorance (doctrine) or where one insists that all understanding is a subjective construction (Strauß' Kant). Such limits to reason in the name of 'faith' in things beyond reason (doctrine) by definition *weaken reason*. This is to view any and all claims beyond the 'limits' to reason as *epistemic* faith claims to know things that reason cannot know 'by itself'.

When it comes to the 'limits to reason' and religion, Strauß considers the options represented by the English Deists and German Leibniz-Wolffians, which contrast with his 'Hegelian' Kant. Whereas epistemology for the English Deists (Nominalism) and the Germans (Idealism) and are diametrically opposed, their systems depend upon the same lawfulness of reason but embrace limits to reason when it comes to religious doctrine. Although their epistemologies are so different (Idealism's innate

154. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 295. In the course of the next five pages, Kant presents the conclusions of the land survey up to this point in his text.; Search "Vorrede" to *Welches sind die wirkliche Fortschritte* AA XX: 259.

155. Kant, *Welches sind die wirklichen Fortschritte* AA XX: 259.

ideas in contrast to Nominalism's ideas as abstractions), both the English Deists and Leibniz-Wolffians limit reason to *strengthen* religion as they *weaken* reason.

If Locke himself, like Leibnitz and Wolf [*sic.*], had made an application of his philosophical principles to theology, which included the validity of revelation within certain limits, but by no means abolished it [...], it could [...] make little difference whether the laws and first principles of human thought were derived from innate ideas [Leibniz-Wolffian Idealism] or abstracted from facts of external experience [English Deist Empiricism/Nominalism] as long as one only took their application to biblical history and church doctrine seriously and did not stop at an arbitrarily set limit. The contradictions in the doctrine of the Trinity or in the story of the resurrection remained the same, whether the Laws of Identity or of Difference¹⁵⁶ [*Gesetz der Eistimmung und des Widerspruchs*: the Law of Excluded Middle that something cannot simultaneously be itself and not itself¹⁵⁷] was justified dogmatically [Leibniz-Wolff] or empirically [British Deists].¹⁵⁸

In contrast to the attempt by the English Deists and German Leibnitz/Wolffian s to *strengthen* religion empirically and/or dogmatically by *limiting* reason, Strauß, erroneously (as do many others), takes Kant's notion of religion 'within the mere limits to reason' to be a *weakening* of religion by *strengthening* reason in that Kant

156. Strauß calls this law one of the universally presupposed, 'fundamental rules of reason.' See Hermann Samuel Reimarus: 260–261.

157. See Strauß, Hermann Samuel Reimarus: 402.

158. Strauß, Hermann Samuel Reimarus: 260–261. At the conclusion of *Reimarus*, Strauß rejects the options with respect to the gospels presented by Reimarus: 1) Church doctrine grounded in miracles and 2) the Deist option that the apostles were deceivers and liars, and 3) the Rationalist claim that Jesus only appeared to be dead. See Strauß, Hermann Samuel Reimarus: 405. Having long since rejected the miracles as the foundation for Christian faith and rather than take the disciples to be liars or to deny the death of Jesus, in 1862 Strauß turns to the Romantic (Herder) notion of 'fantasy' to account for heartfelt belief – even if wrong. See Strauß, Hermann Samuel Reimarus: 404. However, he criticizes the error of Romanticism and Hegelianism for, ultimately, ignoring the natural, lawful order upon which they both depend. See Strauß, Hermann Samuel Reimarus: 405–407. He invokes the 'mythic' reading of perceptible 'husks' and imperceptible 'kernels' (appearances and truth) to embrace the rational order (for example, the Law of Excluded Middle) upon which both Idealism (Christian Platonism) and Nominalism (Deism) depend. See Strauß, Hermann Samuel Reimarus: 408–409. This is reminiscent of his "Ueber Vergängliches und Bleibendes im Christenthum." (1838). See Chapter 5: 1838 "On the Transient and Permanent in Christianity" 216 ff. Not yet having reached the Feuerbachian Materialism of *The Old Faith and the New Faith* (1872), his final statement at the end of Hermann Samuel Reimarus leaves open the task of uniting Romanticism and history: "The nineteenth century deprived itself from the outset of the fruit of great and glorious efforts, among other things also on the part of romantic effusiveness/enthusiasm with which it had broken away from the eighteenth [century options between miracle, falsehood, and a merely apparent death of Jesus]. The more [... the 19th C] ties in with the eighteenth, the more it recognizes itself called not to eliminate it, but to continue and supplement it, the more it can be assumed that it has grasped its task [to unite abstraction and particularities], the more confident we can hope that it will solve it." Strauß, Hermann Samuel Reimarus: 409 In 1872 the 'solution' was materialistic reductionism in which consciousness is explained as a material process, despite the fact that there are huge gaps in the explanation and ignoring Kant's insight that all causal explanations are *a priori* synthetic judgments that must be added to (material) events.

supposedly squeezes religion into the, capriciously subjective, limits of mere human understanding.¹⁵⁹

Yet, Strauß nowhere addresses Kant's epistemological, 'third way' in contrast to Idealism and Nominalism. Kant understands 'universals' to be schemas of categories of the understanding drawn from relationalities in appearances that consciousness, in turn, employs to understand appearances as more than a mere aggregate of particularities. Universals are neither formal, 'objective' ideas/concepts as with Idealism nor subjective abstractions as with Nominalism), and his three 'ideas' of pure reason (God, the enduring identity of the 'soul,' and the complementarity of freedom and nature) are necessary transcendental assumptions incapable of direct experience in phenomena that are *required in order to make sense of, and appropriately act in, a world of appearances*.

In contrast, in *Reimarus*, Strauß even appears to be testing the waters of Romanticism's creative fantasy providing an alternative to treating the scriptures as simply 'true' or 'false'/facts or lies. However, his apparent conclusion with respect to fantasy is that, although it has the advantage of avoiding reducing reality to cold, calculating factuality, in the end as in the case of Hegel, Romanticism's abstractions ignore their dependence upon empirical grounding – both Hegel and Romanticism ignore any enduring significance to factual particularities for reining in their 'empty abstractions.'¹⁶⁰

Rather than embrace an Absolute Reason above understanding's limits or embrace an ultimate, eminent, non-empirical cause of the world (including consciousness), Strauß rejects all limits to reason by turning to Materialism. In other words, although his *The Old and the New Faith* rejects the conscious, ultimate, eminent causality of the Leibnitz/Wolffian s, his version of Nominalism, unlike the doctrinal limits placed on Nominalism by the English Deists, *places no limits on rational Nominalism except time. In time, humanity will grasp exhaustively the material reality that causally explains all of experience and understanding*. Strauß rejects any limits to reason's eventual grasp of 'reality.' His *unlimited Nominalism is reason's strength*.

In contrast, *Kant turns limits into reason's strength*. The limitation that we have only appearances of, not direct access to, the perceptible world paradoxically confirms that there are *some imperceptible elements of experience and understanding that cannot be capricious and subjective*. The finite, eminent, imperceptible elements of conscious experience are *universally necessary* in order for there to be any experience of, much less understanding and responsible agency in, a world of appearances. These elements constitute an entire system of imperceptible relationalities and are not reducible to merely the status of universal ideas/concepts as Idealism or Nominalism/Empiricism.

159. On the reading of Kant as a 'subjectivist', who limits reason to human 'understanding see in the "Preface:" 36, n. 7, 51, n. 47, and 305, n. 208. On Strauß' reading of Kant as a subjectivist, see 168, n. 209 and in Chapter 8: "3) Religion is morality that is 'grounded' only in 'empty ideas':" 820 ff. On Hegel's reading of Kant as a subjective constructivist, see 727. On Baur's reading of Kant as a subjectivist, see 656, n. 20.

160. See Strauß' conclusion to *Hermann Samuel Reimarus*: 408–409.

These elements do not deny an ultimate, efficient cause, but require that we know only those predicates of such an infinite, eminent causality that are *necessary* for us to experience a world of appearances as we do.

Ideas/concepts are experienced neither as separate from a world of appearances nor as independent singularities themselves. In short, *as far as we have ever experienced*, an idea/concept is inseparable from a world of appearances, never as an absolute singularity by itself alone although they are not directly given in perception. Their *imperceptible relationalities* are 'drawn out' of perceptions and applied to perceptions as *a priori* synthetic judgments that can only be grasped by, and in, finite, imperceptible consciousness. In other words, ideas/concepts can only be experienced and invoked in understanding as *schemas* that represent the relationalities inescapably present in particular sets of appearances. As a relational totality of appearances and relationalities, they constitute (but themselves by no means create) an *a priori* synthetic, causal system of understanding with two inseparable and irreducible, yet complementary, lawful orders: 'blind' nature and creative, autonomous freedom. Even without direct access to, hence, without being able to prove or disprove either lawful order, they are not capricious, subjective assumptions that 'limited' reason imposes upon appearances. Rather, they are universally necessary for there to be any rational engagement of appearances given the 'limits' to reason. The *strength* of reason's limits is the degree to which they are necessary (that is, required, not pre-determined) for finite consciousness to experience, understand, and exercise responsible agency *in the world*.

Six years before publication of *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason*, Kant wrote in the preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "[...] I have [...] found it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith.¹⁶¹" Faith that grounds religion is by no means limited to doctrinal religion but is at the core of human experience and understanding in theoretical reason (the grasping of 'what is'), in practical reason (the determination of 'what ought to be'), and in the exercising of reflecting judgment. In contrast to *epistemic* faith, here one is concerned with *non-epistemic* faith (*Fürwahrhalten*), which means commitment to assumptions that one cannot prove because of the limits to reason. In contrast, *epistemic* faith claims to know things beyond the limits to reason.

The question driving the *Critique of Pure Reason* is: How are *a priori* synthetic judgments possible? The answer is a classic articulation of *non-epistemic* faith: *A priori* synthetic judgment is possible because there are three regulative ideas (assumptions) of 'pure' reason: God, the enduring identity of the self, and the complementarity between freedom and nature. Without these three, necessary assumptions, there can be

161. Kant, "Second Preface" of the *Critique of Pure Reason* B xxx.

no experience much less understanding. The three regulative ideas of ‘pure’ reason are a matter of *non-epistemic* faith as a ‘holding something to be truth’ (*Fürwahrhalten*).¹⁶²

Furthermore, Kant distinguishes between two forms of justification when it comes to the difference between rational defense of a notion and a dogmatic claim. A rational defense he calls judgments *κατ’ ἄνθρωπον* (according to a finite, human judgment) that are demanded by appearances. These judgments *κατ’ ἄνθρωπον* are *necessary assumptions* in order to experience those appearances. A dogmatic claim he calls *κατ’ ἀλήθειαν* (according to a dogmatic, truth claim). In other words, the entire edifice of ‘Reason’ is based on *necessary assumptions of ‘pure’ reason κατ’ ἄνθρωπον*. However, this is no foundation constructed on sand. It is a foundation based on what is necessary for there to be anything like a finite, eminent, transcendental consciousness. When one tries to deny the faith of *Fürwahrhalten κατ’ ἄνθρωπον*, then one demonstrates their necessity because one cannot deny them without believing in them.

According to Kant, then, faith and religion are by no means reducible ‘merely to morality.’ Life itself, experience, understanding, and the exercising of responsible agency are ultimately a matter of faith. Kant’s notion of religion, then, is not tied to institutions, leadership hierarchies, creeds, and social traditions. Religion is not something one does as a *part* of life by participating in particular communities or performing specific rituals. Rather, ‘religion’ is concerned with be(com)ing human (finite, eminent, transcendental consciousness).

In the second “Preface” to *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason*, Kant calls ‘pure’ that religion ‘within the limits of reason.’ This is not an insistence that finite reason determines what religion is, and the ‘purity’ here is not a value judgment or a reduction of religion to morality. Rather, ‘pure’ is an epistemological judgment. ‘Pure’ religion, like ‘pure’ reason, is concerned with those transcendental elements that are not directly given with phenomena,¹⁶³ which are required for finite, eminent, transcendental consciousness to experience a world. Although Kant’s ‘pure’ religion is concerned with transcendental elements not given directly in phenomena, this is no call to mysticism as a call to escape from the sensible world into the ‘pure’ realm of Absolute Spirit as the case with Hegel and the early Strauß.

Kant’s ‘pure’ religion is also not concerned with the afterlife, *per se*, which is a dimension beyond the limits of reason. Neither does it deny or ignore the afterlife, though. To do so would be an exercise in hubris. Rather, the function of the afterlife

162. On Kant’s notion of *Fürwahrhalten*, see *Critique of Pure Reason* B 848–859. On the difference between *κατ’ ἀλήθειαν* and *κατ’ ἄνθρωπον*, see Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 767–768 and *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* AA V: 462–463. Strauß speaks of the distinction between an argument *κατ’ ἄνθρωπον* and *κατ’ ἀλήθειαν* and without reference to the importance of the distinction in Kant. See Strauß, *Streitschriften* II: 52.

163. On the notion of ‘pure’ in Kant, see 558, n. 109 and 928, n. 189.

in 'pure' religion is with respect to its role in encouraging the proper exercising of the finite, eminent capacities in this life.¹⁶⁴

As with the three 'pure' ideas of reason (God, the enduring identity of the self, and the complementarity of freedom and nature), 'pure' religion is never experienced outside of the limits of finite reason in a world, but neither reason nor 'pure' religion are human creations. Although recognizing that the predicates for ultimate cause are inescapably anthropomorphic, they are not literal human predicates applied to the Noumenon/God but *symbolically* anthropomorphic. The ultimate 'cause' of reason, religion, and nature is itself only indirectly experienced as its effects and, hence, a human judgment.

Kant's 'pure' religion is concerned with the entirety of the ingredients of experience that make possible reason and the exercising of reason in the world. In other words, it is inseparable from theoretical reason, practical reason, and aesthetic, reflecting judgment. 'Religion,' of course, is concerned with 'what ought to be,' but its practical reason is inseparable from the task of theoretical reason that seeks to understand 'what is.' That means that, just as reason does not create itself, God, or nature, other than to discern them as conditions for exercising a set of capacities, religion is nothing innate that ontologically determines whether an individual is 'good' or 'evil.'

No one can experience, understand, give oneself permission to act, or exercise agency for someone else. Understanding of experience, etc., is a project, not a condition, of finite, eminent, transcendental consciousness, and its product is the result of the individual's exercising *reflecting judgment* for her-/himself. In other words, religion adds 'belief' to those elements of the human condition that the individual must do for her-/himself.

Although only the individual can exercise her/his capacities, the individual is never in isolation. Even the eremite needs a supporting infrastructure that encourages her/his removal from daily life. Kant distinguishes between two forms of culture: the 'culture of technical skills' (Rousseau's 'Second Nature') and 'culture that promotes the (moral) will'.¹⁶⁵ 'Culture that promotes the (moral) will' consists of those who understand that both theoretical and practical reason have to be learned and practiced

164. On the issue of the notion of afterlife in Kant, see in Chapter 8: 837.

165. Kant presents the distinction between the 'culture of skill' and 'culture that promotes the (moral) will' in the *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*: AA V:431–432. See the discussion of culture that promotes the will in Vol. II Introduction: 539. The 'culture of skills' (*Kultur der Geschicklichkeit*) "is insufficient to promote the will in determining and selecting its goals" (in the sense of *what it ought to do*). (*Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*: AA V: 432) In contrast to the "culture of skills, 'culture that promotes the (moral) will' consists in "[...] liberation of the will from the despotism of the appetites whereby we [...] become incapable of personal choice because we allow ourselves to be chained by animal instincts [...]" (*Critique of the Capacity of Judgment*: AA V: 432) In *On Pedagogy* (AA IX: 470, 480), Kant formulated the distinction as the difference between "physical" and "practical" culture and called for the development of moral culture above physical culture. See, as well, his comments on culture in the *Metaphysics of Morals* (AA VI: 391–393) and *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (AA VII: 329–330).

in a social context, not by removal from society. The ‘culture that promotes the (moral) will’ is not a culture separate from the ‘culture of skills’ but the dimension of practical reason within the ‘culture of skills’ that makes possible the determination of what ‘ought to be.’ Above all systems of particular, hypothetical imperatives (which include the civic law) are the broad, categorical imperatives that allow determination of what is ‘proper.’ Simply because one can do something technically does not mean that it ought to be done.

Kant’s definition of the church is an invisible entity:

An ethically communal existence under divine moral legislation is a church, which, to the extent it is not possible of direct experience, is called the invisible church [...] The visible church is the actual union of humanity as a whole that is committed to this ideal [...] The true (visible) church is one that displays the (moral) [democratic] Commonweal of God¹⁶⁶ (*Reich Gottes*) on earth to the extent that it is capable of being attained by humanity.¹⁶⁷ (parentheses from Kant; block parentheses from McG)

As an invisible, universal ‘church’ without division among institutions, guided by no other incentives than self-imposed categorical imperatives (without superstitions), grounded in autonomous, creative freedom (without social hierarchy and Illuminationism), is committed to universal lawfulness (not capricious and changing creeds), the Commonweal of God’s aim is the supporting of those who understand and seek to act on the basis of the invisible lawful order that governs all events.¹⁶⁸ This supporting infrastructure of the invisible church encourages the best, invisible efforts of its members to cultivate their talents and to assume responsibility for their agency while supporting them when they act on principles that are contrary to self- and communal-interests because the principles are ‘right.’ This ‘pure’ religion is at the core of all ‘historical,’¹⁶⁹ religious traditions and social orders so that it is a church universal.

The challenge that the de-mythologized Kant confronts his re-figuring reader ever anew is not a light challenge because the fogbanks of distorting mythic narration on the part of prior ‘clever’ Kant interpreters are as much a hindrance, if not more so, than Kant’s own presentation, which, if for nothing else, is, unfortunately, famous for its supposed turgidness. However, it is also not a frivolous challenge because our

166. Kant defines this Commonweal of God according to the four categories of the understanding: 1) Quantity: A numerical unity with no sectarian schisms; 2) Quality: a ‘pure’ union guided by no other incentives than moral ones (‘no nonsense of superstition and madness of enthusiasm’); 3) Relation: grounded in ‘freedom’ (with neither a social hierarchy nor Illuminationism) ‘as a kind of democracy through individual (creative) inspirations;’ and 4) Modality: possessing an unchangeable constitution of the universal, categorical imperatives of morality while recognizing that, as a public institution, it must conform to particular, hypothetical imperatives but with no arbitrary creeds, which lacking authority are ‘accidental’ (as opposed to ‘necessary’) and are subject to contradiction and change. See *Religion* AA VI: 101–102.

167. Kant, *Religion* AA VI: 101.

168. See *Religion* AA VI: 101–102.

169. See the “Preface to the Second Edition” of *Religion* AA VI: 12–14.

understanding of ourselves in ‘the order of things’ as well as the very survival of our species and preservation of this ‘land’ that we call home is at stake. Without an understanding of ‘pure’ religion, all ‘historical religion, which includes the cultural, institutional, and ritual manifestations of religion across the globe as well as internal mysticism, Hegel’s meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit, and the ‘reformed subjectivist principle of Process Theology, are merely humanity worshipping itself: an anthropomorphic fictionalized worship of ‘perfect’ humanity whose ‘experience’ and ‘final aim’ can only be ‘assumed’ and, hence, offer, perhaps, only the illusion of an absolute comfort and meaning in the face of the contingencies, ambiguities, oppression, persecution, and exploitation that is history.