Johnston, Adrian. "Meta-transcendentalism and Error-First Ontology: The Cases of Gilbert Simondon and Catherine Malabou." *New Realism and Contemporary Philosophy*. Ed. Gregor Kroupa and Jure Simoniti. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. 145–178. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350101791.ch-008>>.

Downloaded from Bloomsbury Collections, www.bloomsburycollections.com, 26 April 2023, 13:52 UTC.

Copyright © Gregor Kroupa and Jure Simoniti 2020. Released under a CC BY-NC-ND licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>). You may share this work for non-commercial purposes only, provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher, and provide a link to the Creative Commons licence.

Meta-transcendentalism and Error-First Ontology: The Cases of Gilbert Simondon and Catherine Malabou

Adrian Johnston

I The anatomy of the spiritual subject is the key to the anatomy of natural substance: transcendental materialism as critical-dialectical naturalism

For a number of years now, I have developed and defended a materialist theory of subjectivity under the heading of “transcendental materialism.” The present piece gets underway in its first section here with me explaining why I have come to consider the descriptive label “critical-dialectical naturalism” synonymous with, if not preferable to, this heading. Recasting transcendental materialism as (also) critical dialectical naturalism signals several things. Starting with the term “critical,” I embrace an idealist method (although not an idealist ontology) by beginning with spontaneous subjectivity. I do so with an eye to the sorts of epistemological requirements imposed by Kantian critique on any future metaphysics. Then, the term “dialectical” designates a procedure of moving beyond subjectivity taken as a starting point through delineating and mobilizing intra-subjective antagonisms, conflicts, and the like (i.e., dialectical dimensions of subjects identified by German idealism and psychoanalysis especially). In short, I dialectically reverse-engineer an ontology of pre/non-subjective nature out of a theory of more-than-natural subjectivity—this being the crux of critical-dialectical naturalism.

This chapter is a sequel to, and builds upon, another piece by me entitled “Whither the Transcendental?: Hegel, Analytic Philosophy, and the Prospects of a Realist Transcendentalism Today.”¹ This prior piece intervenes in long-running debates, ones arising already between Immanuel Kant and his contemporaries in the late-eighteenth century, about transcendentalism. Therein, I put into conversation three orientations deeply invested in controversies about the transcendental: German idealism and its critics (especially F. H. Jacobi, G. E. Schulze, J. G. Fichte, F. W. J. Schelling, and G. W. F. Hegel); Analytic epistemology, philosophy of science, and Kant scholarship from the mid-twentieth century through today (particularly P. F. Strawson, Barry Stroud, Quassim

Cassam, and Christopher Peacocke); and recent Continental metaphysics (as variously represented by, for instance, Gilles Deleuze, Alain Badiou, Slavoj Žižek, and the so-called “speculative realists”).

At this peculiar three-way intersection involving permutations of, to paraphrase Sigmund Freud, transcendentalism and its discontents, I plead for the feasibility and value of decoupling the transcendental from Kantian subjectivist transcendental idealism. Against contemporary European calls to abandon transcendentalism altogether, I forge an alliance between the superficially strange bedfellows of, on the one hand, Hegel as constructing a de-idealized, anti-subjectivist transcendental and, on the other hand, Strawson and his ilk as arguing for a promising, workable marriage between transcendentalism and realism. In the process, I address the forms of skepticism both Hegel and Strawson *et al.* are confronted with in their efforts to save the transcendental from transcendental idealism.

Most importantly for the present chapter, “Whither the Transcendental?” puts forward a necessary supplement to the philosophical sub-discipline of epistemology. To be more precise, I advance a meta-transcendental, genetic-diachronic “error-first ontology” (EFO) as a precursor of and condition for any transcendental, static-synchronic epistemology preoccupied with knowing truly. Before the issue of the thinking of minded subjects achieving knowledge of the being of worldly objects, there is the matter of how subjects susceptible to the false, the illusory, and the like come into existence in the first place. Put differently, the very fact that there is epistemology, that knowledge itself is a problem, presupposes something in need of positing, namely, an ontology containing within itself an account of what makes possible the problem of knowing as a problem to be overcome. Humans must first ontologically become alienated or detached from the pre/non-human Real in order to be faced with the epistemological challenge of, as subjects, bridging the chasm between themselves and objects.² The second section of this intervention situates EFO with respect to the critical-dialectical naturalism described in the first section here.

Yet, to clarify something not (or at least not sufficiently) clarified by me in “Whither the Transcendental?” there is a sense in which I remain faithful to a certain aspect of the spirit of Kantian transcendental idealism. Specifically, this would be what arguably amounts to this idealism’s proposal of epistemology as first philosophy. On the one hand, I obviously do not accept epistemology as first philosophy insofar as, in a Hegelian fashion, I place ontology/metaphysics prior to and beneath it as more foundational. But, on the other hand, the larger philosophical framework within which I operate—a transcendental materialism I have taken to equating with a critical-dialectical naturalism³—accepts at the procedural level the critical-epistemological imperative of Kantian idealism on beginning philosophical inquiries with and from the theoretical and practical spontaneity of *Cogito*-like transcendental subjectivity.

Karl Marx, in his mature critique of political economy, insists upon combining an idealist methodology (i.e., a Hegelian-style logical assembling process moving, within the ideal order of thinking, from abstract categories to ever-more concrete instances) with a materialist edifice (i.e., historical materialism’s insistence on the priority, within the real order of being, of concrete instances over abstract categories).⁴ For this Marx, a procedural/methodological idealism at the level of epistemology is anything but

incompatible with a materialist metaphysics at the level of ontology—so long as one remains careful to distinguish between the orders of ideal thinking and real being. As the first of the eleven 1845 “Theses on Feuerbach” already urges,⁵ a viable materialism (as historical and/or dialectical) is obligated to assimilate into itself core aspects of idealist theories of subjectivities.⁶

Following in Marx’s footsteps, transcendental materialism as critical-dialectical naturalism likewise sublates (as *aufhebt*) idealism (transcendental idealism in particular) within materialism. I can render this appreciable through unpacking the label “critical-dialectical naturalism.” The term “critical” signifies a couple of key dimensions of this position. First and quite obviously, it refers to Kantian critique. The critical side of Kant’s transcendental idealism epitomizes a modern epistemological demand, originating with René Descartes (although differently and to a lesser degree also with Francis Bacon), for grounding knowledge-claims on foundations resistant to various forms of skepticism (with Kant approving of Bacon’s methodology and its accompanying epistemology⁷). In the varying guises of Descartes’s *Cogito, ergo sum*, Kant’s “transcendental unity of apperception,” Fichte’s “self-positing I,” and Hegel’s logical “thinking about thinking,” the spirit of epistemological modernity is paradigmatically represented by critique in the form of a methodological necessity of embarking on philosophical inquiries beginning with and from inquiring subjectivity itself. A dictum along the lines of “no matter where you start, there you are” arguably holds even for the most radical of skeptics who might want, despite the performative contradiction involved, to deny even this.

Accordingly, transcendental materialism as critical-dialectical naturalism, in line with the modern epistemological spirit of critique, proceeds in its order of thinking from subject to substance (as Hegel would put it). Starting with the *Es gibt* or *Il y a* of subjectivity, I ask: Given this “there is,” how must pre/non-subjective being be such as to permit and make possible this subjective procedural starting point? Asked differently, what sort of ontology of nature does the positing of subjectivity presuppose? I raise these queries in tandem with three interlinked lines of argumentation (laid out by me on numerous other occasions): One, subjects, at the levels of natural history, phylogeny, and ontogeny, emerge out of pre/non-subjective being(s); Two, this pre/non-subjective ontological dimension should be identified as “nature”; And, three, emergent subjective dimensions are non-epiphenomenal, causally efficacious realities unto themselves not to be reduced to or eliminated in favor of a-subjective nature alone.

The second significance of the adjective “critical” for my stance is its association with Kant’s ban on any and every recourse to the suspect epistemological power of intellectual intuition. Amongst the “big four” of German idealism, this prohibition pits Kant and Hegel on one side against Fichte and Schelling on the other side. The latter two indeed help themselves, in the teeth of Kant’s critical prohibition, to versions of a purported direct and immediate insight into the Absolute itself. By contrast, Hegel’s philosophical maturation during his Jena period, culminating with the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, involves in no small part his abandonment of intellectual intuition and replacement of it with dialectics as first systematically deployed in the *Phenomenology*. These Hegelian moves are inspired specifically by Kant’s “Transcendental Dialectic” in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Earlier during Hegel's stay in Jena, in 1802, he writes that, "we need a roundabout way [*eines Umwegs*] to sneak the Absolute in [*um es einzuschwärzen*]"⁸ (although this line occurs in a text written in collaboration with Schelling, Hegel almost certainly is responsible for it). Of course, this "roundabout way" turns out to be, just a few years later, the historically and textually drawn-out "way of despair" (*der Weg des Verzweiflung*),⁹ the long and painful dialectical detour (*Umweg*), of the entirety of the *Phenomenology* itself. That said, the just-quoted line from Hegel's introduction to the *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie* he co-edits with Schelling can be interpreted as, among other things, Hegel "sneaking in" (*einzuschwärzen*) a criticism of Schelling's epistemology (or lack thereof) within the pages of their collaborative project. Only subsequently, in wounded reaction to the lines of the *Phenomenology's* preface about the "night in which all cows are black"¹⁰ and supposedly knowing the Absolute "like a shot from a pistol,"¹¹ does Schelling come to register the conflict between his and Hegel's *modi operandi*.

Yet, the 1802 statement above conveys Hegel's straddling of the epistemological divide between, on the one hand, Kantian critique and, on the other hand, Fichtean and Schellingian intellectual intuition. Like Fichte and Schelling, Hegel refuses to confine speculation within Kant's critical "limits of possible experience," to de-absolutize and deflate philosophy thusly. But, like Kant, Hegel repudiates as epistemologically dubitable any and every pretense to be able to instantaneously leap at will into the Absolute as an abruptly accessible starting point for speculative investigations.

Hence, as the *Phenomenology* first exhibits in excruciating detail, "absolute knowing" (*das absolute Wissen*) is arrived at solely in and through the protracted and arduous process of the philosopher "tarrying with the negative."¹² Specifically, this is the negativity of all not-yet-absolute figures/shapes of consciousness immanently critiquing themselves and thereby forming the "pathway of doubt" (*der Weg des Zweifels*)¹³ eventually leading to the beginning of dialectical-speculative Science *als Wissenschaft* ("To help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science [*Wissenschaft*], to the goal where it can lay aside the title 'love of knowing' [*der Liebe zum Wissen*] and be *actual* knowing [*wirkliches Wissen*]*—that is what I have set myself to do*"¹⁴). Hegelian dialectics is a means of conforming to the epistemological strictures of Kantian critique (in particular, its problematizations of and prohibitions on intellectual intuition) while rebelling against Kantian transcendental idealism's anti-realist, subjectivist barring of access to the absoluteness of *das Reale an sich*.

For me, following in Hegel's footsteps, post-critical philosophy likewise involves eschewing appeals to anything along the lines of intellectual intuition. Examples of what is being repudiated here would include: before Kant, the unmediated, instantaneous insights into the substantial-in-itself claimed by the rationalist metaphysicians of the European continent; and, after Kant, the epistemologically insouciant assertions about the a-subjective Real put forward by such current orientations as "new materialism" and speculative realism. These insights and assertions, in their differences with each other (for instance, those between Baruch Spinoza and G. W. Leibniz in the seventeenth century or between, for instance, Deleuzians, neo-Schellingians, speculative materialists, and/or object-oriented ontologists nowadays), are readily vulnerable to being played off against one another and thereby cast into

serious doubt. Such maneuvers of playing-off indeed are carried out by ancient equipollence skepticism, Humean modern empiricist skepticism, and both Kantian and Hegelian dialectics alike.

Moreover, inevitable and crucial questions can and should be raised about, first, from where the knowledge-claims of intellectual intuition are made as well as, second and relatedly, what ontologically/metaphysically makes possible the very locus of these same knowledge-claims. Failing to ask and answer the second line of questioning in particular more often than not results in lapsing into what Marx, again in the first of his “Theses on Feuerbach,” criticizes as purely “contemplative” stances. These are rendered incomplete by their inability to account for themselves, for how they have been arrived at within and out of the very reality they purport to describe.

Despite the preceding, the rationalist substance metaphysicians, Hegel, the new materialists, the speculative realists, and I nonetheless share in common certain anti-subjectivist ontological ambitions. So, what is the epistemologically conscientious, critique-meeting alternative to the “abracadabra!” magic and mystery of intellectually intuitive communing with the *an sich*? As I already underscored, Hegel replaces intellectual intuition with dialectics as the motor driving philosophical speculation. He all too frequently is wrongly accused of being the epitome of the arrogant, know-it-all philosopher legislating in an *a priori* manner over everything under the sun from the complacent comfort of his armchair. But, against this falsifying caricature, Hegel’s sprawling System shows his speculative dialectics to be bound up with, fed by and dependent upon, non-philosophical forms of knowledge, experience, and consciousness (as well as other philosophies). By sharp contrast with the cheap and easy instant gratifications of an intellectual intuition bypassing all things *a posteriori*, dialectical processes laboriously work in and through the more-than-philosophical materials also dealt with by the full range of human disciplines.

In this Hegelian spirit, the epistemology and methodology of critical-dialectical naturalism *qua* critical similarly places the philosophical, including itself, in a position of being parasitic upon (Badiou would say “conditioned by”) the extra-philosophical—albeit without simply collapsing the distinction between the philosophical and the extra-philosophical. The dialectical mill needs grist in order to produce anything. For me, this grist is provided by the empirical and/or experimental findings of bodies of knowledge ranging from the natural sciences through history, economics, and psychoanalysis, among other fields. Unlike intellectual intuition, these various bodies of knowledge implicitly and/or explicitly hold themselves accountable to defensible epistemological criteria. As critical, critical-dialectical naturalism prefers to pass through these disciplines, rather than sit back and indulge in undisciplined speculation. In so doing, its speculations are tempered by the frictions generated via its contacts with the evidence and facts divulged by its interdisciplinary partners.

Insofar as Kantian critique and Hegelian dialectics are closely related for Hegel himself, I already have provided some indications of the significance of the adjective “dialectical” in the label “critical-dialectical naturalism.” However, a few further clarifications are warranted at this juncture. To begin with, the dialectics deployed by my position are immanent-critical interpretations of the just-mentioned extra-philosophical disciplines.

Arguably, even the most empirical of extra-philosophical disciplines cannot avoid resting upon a set of presupposed or posited metaphysical commitments. Such commitments open these disciplines to philosophical interventions. As exemplified by the narrated recollections of the various *Gestalten* by Hegel in the 1807 *Phenomenology*, the dialectical philosopher can and does put to work the spontaneous philosophies of more-than-philosophical fields, theories, and practices.

The Hegelian philosopher makes explicit the implicit contradictions, inconsistencies, and the like both: one, between the categories and concepts of the spontaneous metaphysics necessarily accompanying each and every given non-philosophical body of knowledge; as well as, two, between the non-empirical (i.e., metaphysical) and empirical dimensions of these same bodies of knowledge. In so doing, the dialectical philosopher puts each extra-philosophical discipline in its appropriate place as contributing towards, but not monopolizing on its own, the building of a larger overarching metaphysical framework. This framework thereby arises from, while nonetheless remaining irreducible to, its ensemble of more *a posteriori* sources providing both epistemological legitimacy and inspiration for well-grounded (rather than capriciously arbitrary) speculation.

An additional aspect of the dialectics of critical-dialectical naturalism, one bound up with my above-mentioned idealist procedure of starting with/from subjectivity, is its role in reverse-engineering, within the order of ideal thinking (as distinct from that of real being), substance out of subject (with the order of real being exhibiting the opposite movement from substance to subject). Already in the mid-1790s, the trio of young friends Friedrich Hölderlin, Schelling, and Hegel raise fundamental questions and objections regarding the subjectivist transcendental idealisms of Kant and Fichte. In such texts as "On Judgment and Being" (Hölderlin) from 1795 and "The Earliest System-Program of German Idealism" (Hegel, Schelling, ...?) from 1796, an anti-subjectivist thesis, one putting ontology back before epistemology as first philosophy, crystallizes as a point of consensus for this trio: Even if one begins with subjectivity for compelling epistemological reasons, one cannot forever stay within subjectivity for ultimately unavoidable ontological reasons.

Of course, the fateful choices of names for and further determinations of whatever lies beneath and beyond the subject of Kant's and Fichte's transcendental idealisms (Being, Identity, Indifference, Nature, Spirit, Substance, etc.) mark significant intellectual differences between Hölderlin, Schelling, and Hegel. In the cases of the latter two, their post-1790s intellectual itineraries exhibit each of them undergoing changes of mind about the names and determinations of this Beneath/Beyond of subjectivity. That said, Hölderlin, Schelling, and Hegel concur, despite their differences, that the issue of real genesis is a major problem for the sort of static subjectivism championed by Kant and Fichte.

From the early 1800s onward, Hegel in particular elaborates and hones a post-Kantian dialectical reverse-engineering of the substantial out of the subjective in ways informing my critical-dialectical naturalism. Two features of Hegel's corpus exemplify this. First, the evolution of his mature thinking runs from the *Phenomenology of Spirit* through the *Science of Logic* and on into the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Setting aside scholarly exegetical debates about whether or how the *Phenomenology*

remains crucial to the mature Hegel after 1807, Hegel's philosophical trajectory, as a matter of history-of-philosophy fact, moves from the subjects of pre/non-philosophical figures/shapes of consciousness (*Phänomenologie*) to the trans-subjective dimensions of absolute idealism and the foundations of its *Realphilosophie* (*Logik* and *Naturphilosophie*) and back to the *Gestalten* of spiritual mindedness and like-mindedness (*Geistesphilosophie*).

What does the architectonic sequence of the Hegelian System indicate in relation to my endeavors? Answering this requires a bit of explanation. To begin with, both Phenomenology and Logic, as Hegel conceives these philosophical sub-disciplines, are designed to meet the epistemological demands of Kantian critique. Phenomenology clears the way for Logic (with the latter as the start of Hegel's System proper) by traversing the immanent (self-)critiques of all other perspectives that actually do or potentially could compete with the presuppositionless position from which Logic's pure "thinking about thinking" initiates itself.

This thus-initiated Logic then proceeds to unfurl a web of fundamental categories that themselves eventually prove to form not only epistemological conditions of possibility for thinking and knowing, but also ontological conditions of possibility for being and existing. The latter conditions get actualized only in and through the natural and spiritual Reals of the Philosophy of the Real, Reals in relation to which the logical categories are always-already immanent and inseparable (with Hegel strongly preferring Aristotle to Plato and correspondingly rejecting anything along the lines of classical metaphysical realism). At the Logic's end *qua* a closing of a circle returning to its opening, the category of Being at the opening of the Logic reveals itself to be, in truth and hindsight, something more than (just) thinking, namely, the being of pre/non-subjective Nature (first in the guise of the objectively real, rather than merely subjectively ideal as per Kant, categories of space and time).

The immediately preceding leads into the second feature of Hegel's corpus informing the dialectical aspects of critical-dialectical naturalism. At various points in the *Phenomenology*, *Science of Logic*, and *Encyclopedia*, Hegel deploys multifaceted (immanent) criticisms of Kant's theoretical and practical philosophies, including the anti-realist subjectivism of Kantian (as well as Fichtean) transcendental idealism. As regards Kant's and Fichte's subjective idealisms, Hegel, to cut a long story short, reveals their anti-realisms to be untenable by their own lights, to rely upon images and notions undoing or nullifying themselves by virtue of their inner inconsistencies and inadequacies.

But, in good post-critical fashion, Hegel introduces his robustly realist Philosophy of the Real only after both, within Phenomenology, eliminating all alternative presuppositions and posits as well as, within Logic, initially setting out to deduce non-dogmatically all categories with a transcendental status relative to thinking. However, in the logical process of thinking reflecting upon the categorial conditions for its own possibility, thinking discovers that it cannot reduce or confine everything to or within itself alone. Hegel's anti-subjectivism is the outcome of subjectivism's self-critique. Hence, his realism is post-, rather than pre-, critical.

The immanent criticisms of Kantian- and Fichtean-style subjective idealism in the Logic trigger a peeling apart of transcendentalism from such idealism. Through this

separation, a transcendental dimension (represented by Logic) compatible with a realism (represented by the Philosophy of the Real) comes into view. Additionally, the earliest and most basic levels of the Real are natural as per Philosophy of Nature.

Before finally explaining the particular naturalism of critical-dialectical naturalism, I should point out that the architectonic trajectory of Hegel's System, as I have just glossed it, involves not only the movement from subject to substance, but also the complementary reverse. More precisely, after passing through the "substances" formed by the logical and natural categories (as more-than-subjective and pre/non-subjective respectively), the third and final part of the *Encyclopedia*, the Philosophy of Spirit, returns to subjectivity, including circumnavigating to certain *Gestalten* from the *Phenomenology*.

In moving from subject to substance and back again, Hegel, on the one hand, rises to the modern epistemological requirements epitomized by Kantian critique (in moving from phenomenological subjects to the "substances" of logical and natural categories) while simultaneously, on the other hand, putting idealist epistemology in its circumscribed place by situating it within a wider set of de-idealized natural and cultural ontological conditions (in going back again to spiritual subjectivities both individual and collective, both mentally internal and extra-mentally external). Hegel thereby respects what critique commands within the ideal order of thinking while at the same time indicating, against the subjectivist transcendental idealism associated with critique, that the ideal order of thinking inverts the real order of being. This Hegelian lesson is taken to heart by critical-dialectical naturalism.

I at last come to the noun "naturalism" as modified by the hyphenated adjective "critical-dialectical." As I noted at the outset here, the label "critical-dialectical naturalism" is intended by me as a further clarification of what I have in mind with the phrase "transcendental materialism." And, as I have insisted on multiple occasions, any *bona fide* materialism also necessarily involves naturalism. In other words, an anti-naturalist materialism is a contradiction-in-terms.¹⁵

This insistence that materialism cannot be without some naturalism, combined with what I have spelled out above in connection with the adjectives "critical" and "dialectical," commits me to grounding a materialist theory of *Cogito*-like transcendental subjectivity in an ontology of nature. In this ontological sense, nature would be the name for being as both prior and irreducible to any and all subjects. It is the a-subjective Real out of which subjects happen to arise. However, as per the hybrid critical-dialectical sensibilities of my qualified naturalism, this ontology of nature must be, at the epistemological level, reverse-engineered out of (the theory of) subjectivity.

Furthermore, I deliberately retain the modern associations of the word "nature" with the natural sciences. This nature of modernity is the region, the set of domains, of the Real falling within the explanatory jurisdictions of such *a posteriori* disciplines as physics, chemistry, and biology. My gesture of tying fundamental ontology to such ontic disciplines not only deliberately defies anything in the vein of an insufficiently dialectical Heideggerian conception of ontological difference—it also dovetails, as does Hegelian dialectics, with Kantian critique's barring of intellectual intuitions of any sort whatsoever.

The natural sciences, specifically as empirical and/or experimental, place sobering checks on (without for all that stifling) philosophical speculation, up to and including

fundamental ontology. By tethering the ontological to the natural, with the latter as it reveals itself via *a posteriori* knowledge-practices capable of providing intersubjectively recognizable reasons for their claims, no *a priori* flights of intuitive fancy are allowed. The epistemological weight of such interdisciplinary anchoring prevents drifting off into dark mists imagined to cloak ineffable Being or beings.

By way of summary, the label “critical-dialectical naturalism” reflects, condensed into a single phrase, transcendental materialism’s combination of an idealist epistemological method/procedure (to which is tied an idealism-inspired conception of subjectivity) with a realist and materialist ontology of nature. Especially in the context of contemporary Continental metaphysics and political theory, the naturalistic dimension of transcendental materialism sets it apart from most of what presently passes itself off as materialist. What is more, the phrase “critical-dialectical naturalism” captures much of what I am after: a materialism, informed by the natural sciences, of an auto-denaturalizing (i.e., self-dialecticizing) nature dramatically transforming itself in and through its more-than-natural human offspring—a materialism whose objective ontology of pre- and non-subjective nature is arrived at through a reverse-engineering process beginning with(in) this nature’s immanently-generated denaturalized subjects (hence the adjective “critical”).

At this juncture, it would be appropriate to ask: How is transcendental materialism as critical-dialectical naturalism related to error-first ontology? In the next section of this intervention, I will address precisely this query.

II Being human is erring: better an ontology of stupidity than a stupid epistemology

In the fourth and final section of “Whither the Transcendental?” I delineate the core features of error-first ontology.¹⁶ The fundamental mystery, especially for a materialist or naturalist, is not how (if at all) human thinkers come to have true knowledge of things-in-themselves. Instead, if sentient and sapient subjectivity is immanent (even if also irreducible) to the a-subjective Real, then the genuine enigma is how subjects arise and persist in detaching themselves from their pre/non-subjective ontological grounds. From this perspective, the human capacity for falsity and ignorance unmoored from objectivities is at least as important to explain as the capacity for truth and knowledge somehow or other moored to them (this counter-emphasis runs as much against the industry of Analytic epistemology after Edmund Gettier as it does speculative realism). I even would go so far as to claim that it is more important to explain, since, arguably, without such loss, detachment, and the like, i.e., the fall into errancy, there simply is no subject to (re)connect with being(s) *an sich*.

In “Whither the Transcendental?” I focus on Analytic epistemology as the main foil for EFO. Here, apropos speculative realism, I can take Quentin Meillassoux’s approach as a foil. For Meillassoux, the top philosophical priority after the “Kantian catastrophe”¹⁷ is to figure out how to get from the idealist/anti-realist subjective *Innenwelt* back to the realist/materialist objective *Umwelt*. Meillassouxian speculation is obsessed with rejoining what he baptizes “the great outdoors.”¹⁸

Without diving into the details of Meillassoux's philosophy—I have done so at length on previous occasions¹⁹—suffice it for my present purposes to note that EFO involves an inversion of the Meillassouxian problematic, an inversion asserted as prior to (and even making possible) this problematic. That is to say, before asking how one moves from inside to outside, one must first ask, at least if one shares some of Meillassoux's own materialist commitments, how the outside produces out of itself this very inside in the first place. On one occasion, Meillassoux expresses astonishment at the possibility that the objective *an sich* might really resemble the subjective *für sich*—“We cannot go outside our skin to know what is out there. Maybe the irony would be that this world is in itself exactly as it is for us—wow!”²⁰ If this is the wonder in which Meillassoux's speculative philosophy begins, it is the exact opposite of what induces question-provoking wonderment for a genuinely materialist immanentism. The latter must inquire instead: How does pre-subjective material being come to erect within itself the prison of (transcendental) subjectivity from which someone like Meillassoux wishes to escape? In a way, figuring out how to reconstruct this prison in theory is already to escape it.

This sort of questioning lies at the heart of transcendental materialism as critical-dialectical naturalism with its error-first ontology. Likewise, certain of Jacques Lacan's turns to topology, in which the pure externality of a lone surface generates interior spaces through movements of folding, can be interpreted as addressing this topic. As will be seen in the third section below, Gilbert Simondon's philosophy of individuation has recourse to things topological for exactly these reasons.

As I argue in “Whither the Transcendental?” any non-idealistic, anti-subjectivist immanentist/monist philosophical project presupposing a subjectivity distinct from, and in need of a bridge to, objectivity must be led in the consequent end to posit the real genesis of this very subjectivity and, along with it, the gap between it and objectivity. Certain things must already have transpired at the level of being in order for knowing to be a problem for thinking. This can be connected to a thesis according to which it is impossible to have an epistemology entirely without a corresponding ontology.

More precisely, a static-synchronic epistemology of transcendental subjectivity must be embedded within a grounding genetic-diachronic ontology of meta-transcendental objectivity. In the case of critical-dialectical naturalism, this objectivity would be pre/non-subjective nature—specifically, a contingently self-denaturalizing nature just so happening to have eventuated in sentient and sapient human beings. For transcendental materialism as critical-dialectical naturalism, if the thinking subject is transcendental in the sense of instantiating conditions of possibility for knowing, then pre/non-thinking material nature is meta-transcendental in the sense of constituting in turn the conditions of possibility for the very existence of such a transcendental subject as emergent (and not, as per subjective idealisms, always-already given). One might characterize this as a meta-transcendentalism of anthropogenesis, of the becoming-transcendental-subject of the human animal (an account even Kant himself felt compelled to flirt with in his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*²¹).

In the final stretch of “Whither the Transcendental?” I invoke both Martin Heidegger and Deleuze. In particular, I make Heidegger's “ontological errancy” and Deleuze's “transcendental stupidity” cross-resonate with each other as recent historical precursors

of EFO. I will return to Deleuze as part of my treatment of Simondon in the next section. For now, I ought to underscore an important difference between EFO's and Heidegger's conceptions of what the latter calls "errancy" (*die Irre*). This difference has everything to do with my reliance upon psychoanalysis and corresponding rejection of core features of phenomenology. In addition, there is my above-mentioned Hegelian aversion to sharp distinctions between the ontological and the ontic. Heideggerian ontological difference seems to depend upon something akin to intellectual intuition (such as the supposed romantic genius of "poetic thinking") *vis-à-vis* Being apart from beings.

Heidegger's phenomenological ontology associates the fundamental being of humans with a "clearing" or "opening" for Being itself as ontological rather than merely ontic. *Dasein* is the site for the manifestation of Being, for the latter's self-disclosure. Of a piece with this, the discussion of errancy in "On the Essence of Truth" proposes that erring is essential to being human insofar as *Dasein* has an inherent, irresistible tendency to veer towards and fixate upon ontic beings. The non-empirical "error" here would be *Dasein*'s mistake of repeatedly turning away from ontological Being as it reveals itself in and through the light of its being-there. In its fallen, everyday inauthenticity, *Dasein* allows the ontic to obscure the ontological, beings to eclipse Being. It thereby drifts into existing in untruth, wandering away from Being's truth as its unconcealedness.²²

Although Heidegger elevates errancy into an intrinsic attribute of *Dasein*, he nonetheless holds onto a very traditional image of human thinking as, at its most essential core, openness to the world. For him, mindedness is, at root, receptivity to the truth of Being as *aletheia* (and only secondarily a deviant sealing off of this porosity and shutting down of this responsiveness). The phenomenological field of lived experience is expressive of this presumed underlying stance of embracing the outside, the ontological "great outdoors," with arms and eyes wide open. With reference to the cliché "to err is human," first there is the human, i.e., *Dasein* as ontological clearing, and then there is the erring, i.e., *das Man* as ontic closure.

In this respect, as in many others, Freud differs from someone like Heidegger and offers a strikingly non-traditional picture of the cognitive, affective, and motivational fundamentals of human subjectivity. At its ontogenetic, zero-level base, the psyche of Freudian metapsychology (as Freud's avowed alternative to metaphysics²³) is the exact opposite of a receptive openness to external realities. The psychical apparatus of analysis exhibits, at its genetic and structural basis, a recoiling from and being closed to any and every extra-psychical Real. Humans are born fighting against being. To combine words from Jean-Paul Sartre and Lacan, humanity is a passion for ignorance. If there really is also a love of wisdom, it must struggle mightily and ceaselessly against a countervailing and perhaps more primordial inclination. This might help explain epistemology as the problem(s) of knowledge, the problematic nature of knowing, being a central concern of *philia sophia* from Plato onwards.

By Freud's lights, human beings are thrown into the world wildly hallucinating at it, entangled in spectral cobwebs of fantasies and dreams (a thesis much recent neuroscientific research appears to corroborate). Only gradually and secondarily, after repeated slaps to the face by natural and social externalities, does the fiction-loving

psyche partially and grudgingly make concessions to what contradicts its impulses and illusions. Even in the wake of these half-hearted concessions, a lifelong tendency to erect barriers, dams, filters, screens, shields, and the like persists. On the analytic image of psychical life, first there is the erring, and then there is the human—namely, the humanization *qua* taming and domesticating subjection of this initial *Ur*-errancy.

Lacan's confrontations with Heidegger's depiction of truth as *aletheia* hint at some of what I am asserting. In his third seminar on the topic of the psychoses (1955–6), Lacan already discretely signals his divergence from the Heidegger who equates the essence of human beings (as *Dasein*) with openness.²⁴ Later, in *Seminar XIII on The Object of Psychoanalysis* (1965–6), Lacan maintains that analysts have more to say about *aletheia* than Heidegger himself.²⁵ He proceeds to specify that Freudian primal repression (*Urverdrängung*) is the “basis” (*le fond*) of *aletheia* (a claim also to be found in the *écrit* “Response to Jean Hyppolite's Commentary on Freud's ‘Verneinung’”²⁶). In other words, an originary closure (i.e., *Urverdrängung*), as the passionate ignorance of wanting not to know from the very beginning, precedes and enables (i.e., grounds *comme fond*) a secondary opening or clearing (i.e., Being's self-disclosure as the unconcealedness of *aletheia* within the ecstatic horizon of being-there).

Even later, in the twenty-second seminar (*R.S.I.* [1974–5]), Lacan begins another discussion of Heidegger by expressing a certain fondness for the German thinker based on their personal acquaintance. He then offers qualified praise for Heidegger, saying that, “[t]here is something in him like a presentiment” of psychoanalysis, “[b]ut, it is only a presentiment, because Freud does not interest him”²⁷ (a lack of interest painfully evident from Heidegger's *Zollikon Seminars*, the lone occasion when he reluctantly and uncharitably attempts to engage with a few snippets of Freud's thought). In this April 8, 1975 session of *Seminar XXII*, speaking (i.e., linguistic mediation) is said to be the errancy (*erre*) essential to the human animal as a speaking being (*parlêtre*) adrift along chains of signifiers.²⁸

Still in the same session of the twenty-second seminar, Lacan, describing Heidegger's ways of speaking to him in their private conversations, insinuates that Heidegger insists excessively (along the lines of “methinks thou doth protest too much”) on the worldliness, the *In-der-Welt-sein*, of a being-there involving both *Umwelt* and *Innenwelt*.²⁹ Lacan's contemporaneous appearance on French state television, with its explicit reference to Jakob von Uexküll (to whom Heidegger turns in his pivotal text *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* of 1929–30³⁰), warns that the worldly “reality” (*réalité*) constituted by von Uexküll's *Innenwelt-Umwelt* couple is a phantasmatic, fictionalizing distortion, namely, “a grimace of the real” (*grimace du réel*).³¹ This very well might be a subtle swipe at Heidegger. The likelihood of this is quite high given that the Lacan of this period pointedly derides philosophical efforts, Heidegger's included, to formulate fundamental ontologies.³² Indeed, in . . . *ou pire* (*Seminar XIX* [1971–2]), Lacan flirts with describing ontology as “the grimace of the One” (*le grimace de l'Un*),³³ a phrase with which his 1973 “grimace of the real” clearly resonates.

Similar critical glosses on von Uexküll (and, by implication, on Heidegger too) to the one occurring in *Television* crop up in other portions of the Lacanian corpus. Following Lacan's indications, it could be claimed, against Heidegger (but with Hegel and Freud), that the human animal is, in specific ways, even poorer in world than non-

human animals. As François Balmès, someone deeply invested in the stakes of Lacan's rapport with Heidegger, phrases things, "psychoanalysis leads" Freud "to forbid himself from admitting a spontaneous affinity of the human mind with the truth."³⁴ Balmès portrays this dimension of Freud's discovery as of even greater importance to Lacan.³⁵

Panning back to a broader perspective, for a quasi-naturalist materialism taking on board Freud's psychoanalytic insights into an ontogenetically primary passion for stupidity—I will address Deleuzian *bêtise* in the subsequent section on Simondon—if the mind is a mirror of the world, it is, more precisely, a funhouse mirror (or a darkened glass). Sentient and sapient humanity not only is nature reflecting upon itself—it is (also) nature's inability to reflect on itself accurately, faithfully, etc. Human beings are nature's auto-distorting self-reflections, its failure to be either, at one extreme, wholly non-reflective or, at the opposite extreme, fully transparent to itself.

Such a quasi-naturalism, with its EFO, perhaps could be called a materialism of stupidity. But, it definitely is not a stupid materialism, i.e., a mechanical, reductive, and/or eliminative one of the sort by comparison with which even V. I. Lenin prefers (intelligent) idealism.³⁶ What is more, in a suitably Hegelian-style convergence of opposites that Hegel himself subtly suggests in several manners, human *Ur-errancy* is a stupidity that nonetheless makes possible peculiarly human intelligence.

In Hegel's work, this shows up in such varied guises as the withdrawn "night of the world," the chaotic capriciousness of the human imagination, the sinking down to the automatic mechanics of habit, the dialectical *faux pas* of mistakes absolutely necessary for arriving at truth, and the essential roles violently inaccurate abstractions play in facilitating concepts' precise grips on thereby-known objectivities. Similarly, one might hypothesize that humans' sensory-perceptual capacities as blunted and diminished relative to many other sentient animals (i.e., the dumbness of human sentience) helps to permit the rise of more detached categorial and conceptual abstractions (i.e., the smartness of human sapience). To supplement a Hegel-inspired Kojévian one-liner beloved by the Lacan of the 1950s, the word is able to murder the thing only because the latter already is fatally weakened, vulnerable, and oblivious.

In "Whither the Transcendental?" I promised to engage specifically with Simondon and Catherine Malabou along the lines of critical-dialectical naturalism with its EFO. Both figures, not unrelated to each other (thanks to Deleuze as an intermediary), recast transcendentalism in relation to processes of genesis: Simondon through his accounts of individuation and Malabou via her naturalization of the transcendental. The next two sections deal with Simondon's and Malabou's contributions respectively in these veins. Then, the fifth and final section asks and answers questions regarding what, if anything, remains of the more traditional conception of the transcendental in the aftermath of my and certain others' revisions of it.

III The idiocy of individuation: Simondon and the becoming-subject of substance

Deleuze himself, during his discussion of transcendental stupidity in *Difference and Repetition*, invokes the notion of individuation. Although Simondon is not mentioned

explicitly as part of this invocation, his name subsequently surfaces in Deleuze's 1968 book (a book for which Lacan, as is well known, had the highest regard³⁷). This later direct reference highlights Simondon's theory of individuation,³⁸ thus indicating that Deleuze already has him in mind while reflecting on the link between individuation and *bêtise*. Additionally, two years prior to the publication of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze publishes a review of Simondon's *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique* in the journal *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*.³⁹ In 1969's *Logic of Sense*, Simondon's account of individuation is mobilized again by Deleuze.⁴⁰

What, in Deleuze's mind, is the relationship between stupidity and (Simondonian) individuation? Perhaps his clearest explanation states:

Stupidity is neither the ground [*le fond*] nor the individual, but rather this relation in which individuation brings the ground to the surface without being able to give it form (this ground rises by means of the I, penetrating deeply into the possibility of thought and constituting the unrecognised [*le non-reconnu*] in every recognition).⁴¹

As Deleuze is acutely aware, the three interlinked terms "ground," "individuation," and "individual" have very precise technical senses in Simondon's framework. A full appreciation of their significances, and, hence, of Deleuze's just-quoted statement, demands a reconstruction of the Simondonian theory of individuation. I will engage in such a reconstruction momentarily.

For the time being, suffice it to say a few preliminary things in order provisionally to illuminate Deleuze's association of stupidity in his sense with Simondon's theoretical apparatus. For Simondon, all individuals (i.e., individuated beings) are secondary products arising within and out of a pre-individual ground (i.e., non-, or not-yet-, individuated being). Furthermore, Simondon asserts that no processes of individuation and no thereby-produced individuals ever exhaustively appropriate, assimilate, digest, incorporate, master, sublate, etc. their anonymous, un-individuated background conditions for surfacing into existence. Therefore, internal to each and every individual, as a sort of "extimate" ineliminable remainder, there are to be found persisting residues of pre-individual bases. The un-individuated ground permanently accompanies the individual and its ongoing dynamics of individuation as a virtual dimension of non/not-yet-realized potentialities.⁴² For the sub-set of individuals qualifying as subjects, this means that, as Simondon puts it, "the subject is individual and other than individual; it is incompatible with itself."⁴³

As just seen, Deleuze associates his *bêtise* with the kinetics of individuation as mediating between pre-individuated being (i.e., ground) and individuated beings (i.e., individuals). More precisely, the Simondonian individual is (transcendentally) "stupid" insofar as, on the basis of the ongoing acts and movements of its individuation by which it comes to be and continues to exist as the individual that it is, it cannot "recognize" all of its pre-individual grounds and accompanying virtual potentialities. Individuation unavoidably brings about blind spots rendering portions of the pre-individual opaque to the thus-individuated individual. Deleuze appears to tie transcendental stupidity to such blindness and opacity.

But, what about Simondon himself? What is it that interests me in his corpus from the angles of EFO and my related reconsiderations of the transcendental? In the remainder of this section, I will set about answering this line of questioning. In light of my specific perspective and agenda in the present context, my engagement with Simondon will be highly selective. In particular, I will focus on what arguably is Simondon's *magnum opus*, namely, his massive 1958 dissertation *L'individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et d'information* (originally published as two separate books: *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique* from 1964, reviewed by Deleuze in 1966, and, quite belatedly, *L'individuation psychique et collective* from 1989). My rapprochement between the EFO of transcendental materialism as critical-dialectical naturalism and the Simondonian account of individuation will be anchored in targeted interpretations of certain relevant moments within *L'individuation*.

To be yet more precise, my reading of Simondon is driven by a perhaps somewhat contentious underlying thesis: Despite Simondon's wariness of Hegel (so typical of post-war French thinkers), his theory of individuation can be construed as unwittingly very Hegelian. Less controversially, I also will bring out the psychoanalytic debts of the Simondonian model of individuation. Hegel's motif of the becoming-subject of substance and this motif's incarnations, in the Philosophy of the Real, at the levels of both Nature and Spirit delineate in advance much of what is to be found in modified terminological guise in *L'individuation*. Similarly, both Freud and Lacan anticipate quite a bit of what Simondon's labors advance.

Curiously, Simondon *circa* 1958 recognizes Fichte and, especially, Schelling as historical forerunners of his own philosophy.⁴⁴ But, failing to register the affinities between Schelling and Hegel in terms of joint foreshadowings of individuation—these affinities continue to reverberate between Schelling's and Hegel's intellectual itineraries even after they part ways following the publication of the latter's *Phenomenology of Spirit*—Simondon is unwilling and/or unable to acknowledge the Hegelian precedents for his position. Indeed, as will be seen below, he even takes occasional swipes at what he (mis)understands Hegel's positions to be.

Given the preoccupations of transcendental materialism (as critical-dialectical naturalism) with animal-organic and human-subjective structures and dynamics, these same layers of Simondon's multi-layered delineation of various processes of individuation will be my main concerns throughout much of the rest of this section. But, before turning to the Simondonian examinations of the biological (as in *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique*) and the psychical (as in *L'individuation psychique et collective*), I will preface my treatment of these topics with a brief overview of some of the conceptual and argumentative fundaments of Simondon's general systematic edifice. Doing so will go a long way towards substantiating my (partial) Hegelianization of Simondon (a Hegelianization with interesting consequences for a Deleuze who, as a vehement anti-Hegelian, relies upon the very same Simondon of interest to me here). Then, at the end of my treatment of Simondon in this section, I will highlight Simondon's recasting of the transcendental and its relevance for anyone (including me) devoted to retaining a transcendentalism free of subjectivist transcendental idealism.

Early on in *L'individuation*, Simondon links any and every instance of individuation to tensions within non/not-yet-individuated being.⁴⁵ The latter is depicted as shot

through with asymmetries, disequilibriums, imbalances, and so on. Hence, the Simondonian pre-individuated ground is both an internally fractured and conflicted foundation as well as always-already perturbed from within by various sorts of negativity.⁴⁶ Correlatively, in the absence of such pre-individual instabilities and tensions, there would be no individuation. As Simondon expresses it at one point, symmetry would equal lifelessness⁴⁷ (a profoundly Schellingian and Hegelian observation). Therefore, his theory of individuation entails, at its foundation, an ontological commitment to a monism of out-of-synch multiplicities.⁴⁸

However, in what I cannot help but interpret as a case of classical Freudian *Verneinung*, Simondon insists that the immanent ontological agitation underlying and catalyzing individuations is different from and prior to dialectical negativity (as per Hegelian dialectics).⁴⁹ The contrasts Simondon likely has in mind between himself and Hegel can be best introduced by me first noting several additional general theoretical commitments of Simondon. These other commitments reveal significant differences between Simondonian metaphysics and what Simondon seems to take Hegelian “idealism” to be about.

Four cardinal features of Simondon’s position imply oppositions on his part to Hegel as (mis)represented in post-war French philosophy. I already mention the first feature immediately above: the embrace of a monism of multiplicities. Simondon probably views Hegel as a totalizing thinker of the All, One, or Whole dissolving all individuals into the unity of the Absolute, Idea, World Spirit, or the like. Hence, *L’individuation* strongly hints at a clash between Hegel’s monism of unity and Simondon’s monism of multiplicities.

Second, Simondon is adamant about the realism (*qua* anti-subjective-idealism) of his account of various possible and actual processes of individuation.⁵⁰ As a realist, Simondon rejects epiphenomenalisms that would reduce individuations and individuals to any pre-, non-, or trans-individual “x.”⁵¹ A key ingredient of Simondon’s anti-epiphenomenalism is endorsement of what more recent Analytic metaphysics and philosophy of mind refers to as “downward causation.” For this Simondon, emergent individuations and individuals can and do react back upon the pre-individual being(s) from which they emerged.⁵² As I noted in the prior paragraph, Simondon seems to suspect Hegel of being a monist of unity. As such, Hegel would be seen to collapse all individuals without exception into the One-All of the Absolute. Given this, Simondon may (mis)construe his anti-epiphenomenalism of downward causation as also anti-Hegelian.

Third, *L’individuation* emphasizes the key role of “accidental encounters” as crucial mediators of dynamics of individuation.⁵³ Of course, for many philosophers and theorists of the past two centuries through today, including the majority of denizens of French intellectual milieus of the past half-century or so, Hegel all too often is viewed as the metaphysician of teleological necessity *par excellence*, a sort of post-Kantian Leibniz with his own theodicy of a God-like *Weltgeist*. Along with certain others, I reject this picture of Hegel as a one-hundred-eighty-degree inversion of the truth, arguing instead that contingency, and not necessity, is the *Ur*-category in Hegel’s doctrine of the modalities (along with me underscoring Hegel’s often unappreciated rejections of Leibnizianism). Nonetheless, Simondon, with his concept of “the

accidental encounter, totally fortuitous,”⁵⁴ tacitly pits himself against, among other things, the image of Hegel-the-necessitarian.

Fourth, Simondon’s critical remarks apropos the philosophical concept-term “substance” subtly entail divergence away from what Simondon understands a philosopher like Hegel to mean when employing this term. For Simondon, the substantial would be homogeneous, self-identical/consistent, and internally undifferentiated. Therefore, his pre/non-individuated being or ground, as already fragmented into multiplicities and traversed by negativities, would not be a substance comprehended in this sense. Likewise, Simondon’s rejections of pre- and non-dialectical versions of materialism partially overlap with his criticisms of more traditional substance metaphysics.⁵⁵ However, as I indicated a short while ago, Schelling, in some of his incarnations, and Hegel, consistently throughout his career, both posit substance(s) as pervaded by (self-)disruptive antagonisms, conflicts, tensions, etc.

Ironically, these four apparently anti-Hegelian aspects of the Simondonian philosophy of individuation actually help identify the real Hegel as perhaps Simondon’s closest philosophical ancestor. Indeed, Hegel’s absolute idealism (as opposing itself to the subjective idealisms of, for instance, Kant and Fichte) is itself a robust realism. Moreover, Hegel advances an anti-epiphenomenal, neither-reductive-nor-eliminative vision of substance-also-as-subject. This vision is made possible by a desubstantializing reconception of substance, namely, a dialectical depriving that subtracts from substance its substantiality *qua* cohesiveness, harmony, solidity, and the like (e.g., as in the “weakness of nature” [*die Ohnmacht der Natur*] of Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature with its *Naturdialektik*, not to mention various other logical and spiritual forms of dialectical negativity in the Hegelian System). As now can be registered, some of Simondon’s core tenets inadvertently testify to his unwitting Hegelianism.

This perhaps unconscious Hegelianism is further on display at the levels of Simondon’s inquiries into biological and psychical individuations. Starting at the level of the individuals of inorganic physics, but also encompassing individuals as animal organisms, Simondon offers a “chrono-topological” delineation of the very formation of individuals.⁵⁶ That is to say, both physical and biological individuals are produced through the flat immanence of the surface of pre-individuated being folding and twisting itself (hence topology) in movements that, as movements, necessarily unfurl over time (hence chronology). Apropos this self-contorting immanence, being itself is, for Simondon, the ultimate author of acts of individuation.⁵⁷ Along these lines, he asserts, “*the individual is self-constitution of a topology of being which resolves an anterior incompatibility by the appearance of a new systematic*”⁵⁸ (an assertion embellished upon subsequently in *L’individuation*⁵⁹). Simondon’s theory of individuation combines, on the one hand, a dimension of the static, synchronic, and structural and, on the other hand, a dimension of the kinetic, diachronic, and genetic. What is more, and again like Hegel, Simondon, with his chrono-topology, outlines a dynamic in which resolutions of old negativities generate new negativities in processes forming open-ended trajectories.

Interestingly in relation to Simondonian chrono-topology, Lacan’s twenty-sixth and final seminar of 1978–9 is entitled *Topology and Time*. Similarly, Žižek, in the content of staging an encounter between Hegel and Deleuze, offers an implicitly

chrono-topological delineation of the emergence of individuated organisms through the self-organizing (i.e., autopoietic) kinetics of cell formation.⁶⁰ Žižekian autopoiesis is quite compatible with Simondonian individuation.

At one point in *L'individuation*, Simondon maintains that individuation (specifically, the emergence of organic from inorganic individuals) comes before adaptation.⁶¹ As regards, for instance, (post-)Darwinian evolutionary biology, this explanatory discourse presupposes and applies itself to already-constituted biological individuals. In order for there to be the problems of organisms having to adapt to environmental challenges and pressures, such individuals already have to have arisen. Therefore, individuations going from the inorganic to the organic would be ontological conditions of possibility for the very real struggles to survive of biological individuals. Likewise, a Simondonian delineation of these same individuations would be an epistemological condition of possibility for evolutionary theory as a body of knowledge.

But, what about the crucial transition from animal organism to human subject? How, according to Simondon, do psychical individuations arise out of biological individuals? *L'individuation* has a great deal to say about processes of individuation running from soma to psyche. Moreover, Simondon draws extensively from psychoanalysis in particular for his renditions of psychical life.

Elsewhere, and starting from indications surfacing in Hegel's philosophy of nature and philosophical anthropology, I forge a distinction between the organic and the "anorganic."⁶² The latter is not equivalent to the inorganic *qua* pre- and non-organic. Rather, anorganicity is a lack of inner consistency and harmony, an immanent (self-)negation, inherent to the (human) organism (with the etymology of the word "organism" linking it to order, organization, etc.). While the inorganic gives rise to the organic, the organic in turn gives rise to the anorganic.

Something similar to my (Hegelian-Lacanian) anorganicity is to be found in Simondon's psychoanalysis-informed ontogenetic narratives about the emergence of the subjective from the biological. For Simondon, ontogeny itself is driven by negativities.⁶³ Implicitly in line with Freud and Lacan, *L'individuation* emphasizes the biological fact of distinctively human prolonged prematurational *Hilflosigkeit* as pivotal here.

Much like with the *corps morcelé* of Lacan's mirror stage, the Simondonian infant, as an individuation-in-process between the somatic and the psychical, is both anatomically and physiologically helpless (uncoordinated and unable to fend for itself) as well as affectively troubled by this initial condition into which he/she is thrown by birth. The negativity of the young human organism's lack of self-sufficiency is registered by corresponding negative affects.⁶⁴ Indeed, Simondon immediately proceeds to claim that the psyche itself is born out of the dissatisfaction so powerfully felt by the flailing, immature creature.⁶⁵ Lacan likely would not agree that the psychical as a whole comes together in this way; his theory of the mirror stage accounts for the genesis of the ego specifically, not the individuation of the entire psyche or subject generally. Nevertheless, the Lacanian and Simondonian reflections on the ontogenetic significance of *Hilflosigkeit* partially but powerfully resonate with each other.

Simondon goes on to posit that organic dysfunctions (in my parlance, anorganic structures and dynamics) catalyze but do not determine the psyche.⁶⁶ This echoes,

however intentionally or not, Schelling's and Hegel's deployments of the notion of illness, namely, their shared theme of the human being as a sick animal, as the by-product of problems generated within organic nature (with Lacan, among others, picking up on this German idealist theme⁶⁷). What is more, Simondon, as just seen, is careful to stipulate that biological dysfunctionality prompts the emergence of a psychical reality that itself, despite arising thusly, thereafter does not deterministically reduce back down to its organic base. Such a stipulation is an important feature of transcendental materialism too.

Once psyche has thereby sprung out of soma, the tail starts to wag the dog, so to speak. That is to say, the *zoē* of animal vitality becomes the exception under the rule of the *bios* of psychical individuality.⁶⁸ In line with Simondon's overarching theory of individuation, he maintains that the psychical individual preserves within itself unsublated remainders of the pre-individual grounds of its individuation, including the biological being(s) out of which it surfaces. Although mind comes to dominate the body (partly) generating it, the latter occasionally is able to reverse this relationship, at least temporarily.

Simondon speaks of a predisposition (but definitely not a fate or destiny) of being itself towards opening out onto socio-cultural mediations.⁶⁹ This is most readily appreciable in connection with *Hilflosigkeit*. Indeed, *L'individuation* pinpoints ontogenetically primary prolonged prematurational helplessness as making the newborn human animal vulnerable and receptive *vis-à-vis* external, more-than-biological mediators.⁷⁰ Freud's 1895 *Project for a Scientific Psychology* already says as much.

Hilflosigkeit leads Simondon, following Freud, to stress the centrality of intersubjective and trans-subjective influences in the ontogenetic taking-shape (i.e., chrono-topological individuation) of the individual psychical subject. Yet, *L'individuation* contains a distinction enabling its author to avoid concluding that the individual psyche is exhaustively determined by and heteronomous with respect to social mediators. Simondon differentiates between, on the one hand, "autonomy" as the internal self-relating of an individual and, on the other hand, "independence" as non-relatedness to other individuals.⁷¹ For him, individuals can be, and usually are, (partially) autonomous but not (fully) independent. One finds the same distinction in different terminological garb in Hegelian Logic too. Apropos the relations between the psychical and the social in Simondon's philosophy, this distinction entails that inter/trans-subjective mediations do not thoroughly override the intrasubjective self-relating of the individual psyche *qua* locus of autonomous subjectivity.

Simondon sees his account of individuation as critically supplementing psychoanalysis. In particular, he adds to the individuated unconscious of analysis the pre-individual one of his philosophy.⁷² Analytic theory and practice arguably presuppose as already established a singular psyche within which discrete representations (i.e., Freud's signifier-like representations, *Vorstellungen*) are submitted to various operations, including the repressions constituting that psyche's unconscious. But, the pre-individuated being out of which the individuated psyche itself congeals would be, according to Simondon's model, an even more radically occluded and opaque (i.e., "repressed" in a looser, broader sense) dimension for this same psyche. Of course,

Deleuze, along with Félix Guattari, readily can be understood as further developing the suggestions of *L'individuation* along these lines, namely, theorizing a “productive,” “molecular” unconscious of virtual potentialities prior to, for instance, the “produced” individual actors of the Oedipal family drama or the well-defined “molar” agencies of a psychical topography.

By mentioning Deleuze, I bring things back to the start of this section on Simondon. Having opened this section with reference to Deleuze’s concept of transcendental stupidity, a concept he associates with Simondonian individuation, I will close it by examining what *L'individuation* has to contribute to a reconsideration of transcendentalism. Simondon’s dissertation puts forward several propositions in this vein worth underscoring for my purposes.

With psychical ontogeny as the process generative of minded subjectivity, this structured dynamic of individuation is a precondition for knowledge.⁷³ In other words, the knowing subject of an epistemology is made possible by the genetically emergent psyche of an ontology (here, Simondon’s ontology of individuation). Ontological ontogeny comes before and makes possible epistemological subjectivity; without the former, the latter would not exist in the first place. In the case of a transcendental epistemology, such an ontology would therefore be meta-transcendental.

In this vein, Simondon advances a thesis with respect to transcendentalism resonating with my efforts both in “Whither the Transcendental?” and here. He claims that, “the *conditions of possibility* of knowledge are in fact the *causes of existence* of the individuated being.”⁷⁴ On the heels of this claim, Simondon aligns the distinction between transcendental and empirical subjects with that between the individuated (*l'être individué*) and the individualized (*l'être individualisé*) respectively.⁷⁵

Simondon’s just-quoted thesis is especially important to appreciate in the present context. Simondon is once again surprisingly proximate to Hegel. Specifically, his reflections related to transcendentalism are strikingly close to Hegel’s decoupling of the transcendental from transcendental idealism in particular and, relatedly, his anti-subjectivist absolute idealism in general. Both Hegel and Simondon are realists. As such, they consider really true knowledge, in order for the very phrase “true knowledge” to mean anything, as having to do with mind-independent entities and events in themselves. Some of Hegel’s criticisms of Kant have as an upshot that Kant’s subjectivist idealism is fundamentally incompatible with any theory of knowledge whatsoever (including the epistemology Kant intends to establish) insofar as Kantian anti-realism, with its unknowable things-in-themselves, deprives the word “knowledge” of any coherent meaning.⁷⁶

Hegel’s and Simondon’s alternative is to argue that what ultimately makes possible thinking-as-knowing on the side of ideal subjectivity is being-as-knowable on the side of real objectivity. Put differently, Hegel, with his substance-also-as-subject, and Simondon, with his theory of individuation, are both monists for whom the transcendental subjectivity of epistemology immanently emerges out of the meta-transcendental grounds of ontology. Thanks to this, the categorial and conceptual structures of mind are akin to the pre/extra-mental structures of an already-structured-in-itself world (with Hegel fiercely attacking Kant’s subjectivist notion of the formlessness of the *an sich*⁷⁷). The isomorphisms between subjective and objective

forms make knowledge possible by enabling cross-resonances back-and-forth between thinking and being. Mind can know world because the former is of this same world.

Yet, at the same time, the contractions and separations that individuate transcendental subjectivity within meta-transcendental objectivity introduce differences between these levels of thinking and being. After passing through the idiocy of individuation, the estrangements and withdrawals from pre-individuality constitutive of individuality, the epistemological challenge for individuated mind is to regain the trans-individual world partly, but never completely, lost. As Hegel would put it, the regained ontological identity (as per his absolute idealism as full knowledge of the logical forms cutting across the subject-object divide and realized in both natural and spiritual incarnations) between the thinking of subjects and the being of objects is an identity of identity and difference (with, for me, EFO doing justice to the “difference” side of this equation).

As will be seen in the next section, Malabou’s recent work on the topic of the transcendental can be situated in the same lineage to which the Simondon just examined belongs too. This is not coincidental, since Malabou could be said to be indirectly influenced by Simondon due to Deleuze’s direct influence on her philosophy. However, what she adds to this discussion, additions especially close to and valuable for my own transcendental materialist endeavors, is a careful reassessment of the possible relations between transcendentalism and naturalism.

IV Against preformationism: Malabou’s genesis and structure of the transcendental

Malabou’s two most recent books, *Avant demain: Épipénèse et rationalité* from 2014 and *Métamorphoses de l’intelligence: Que faire de leur cerveau bleu?* from 2017, are centrally concerned with radically transforming, while not jettisoning altogether, the Kantian transcendental. In *Avant demain*, she contends that, “it is with Kant, and not against him, that it is necessary to negotiate his abandonment.”⁷⁸ What is more, for her, this passing through, rather than bypassing, of Kant’s critical philosophy must mobilize tensions internal to the Kantian apparatus itself—“there is in Kant himself, within critique, the organizing of an encounter between the transcendental and that which resists it.”⁷⁹

Malabou offers a similar set of observations in a 2017 interview. Speaking of her current efforts to reinvent transcendentalism, she therein remarks:

I was so interested in exploring whether the transcendental could be transformed. I don’t think we can keep it as it is, but I also don’t think we can do without it, so the challenge was to see if Kant himself offered the necessary resources to transform it. . . . Meillassoux thinks that Kant cannot explain the genesis of the a priori categories. There can be no transcendental deduction of the transcendental. But this is not true: in the deduction of the categories Kant is explicit that there *cannot* be a genetic account of the a priori categories as a genesis is always empirical, and transcendental conditions are independent of all experience. But at the same

time he has to prove that our categories are not *innate* or given by God, so he has to open a very subtle space between innateness and empiricism. And this is where the idea of epigenesis comes in—the categories are not given ready-made but have in themselves the principle of their own development, and this is what he calls the epigenesis of pure reason in paragraph 27 of *The Critique of Pure Reason*.⁸⁰

In good Hegelian fashion, Malabou is proposing an immanent-critical (self-)reworking of Kantian transcendentalism. She finds within the first *Critique* an internal tension “between innateness and empiricism.” Malabou’s core thesis here is that, within this “very subtle space” of in-betweenness, Kant outlines a notion of “epigenesis” as the non-empirical genesis, amenable to a peculiar (meta-)transcendental deduction, of transcendental subjectivity itself. I would add that, as I mention in the second section above, the problem of the non-empirical genesis of the transcendental subject is to be found in Kant’s *Anthropology* as well as *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Consistent with the arc of Malabou’s pre-2014 intellectual itinerary, *Avant demain* and *Métamorphoses de l’intelligence* both associate Kant’s epigenesis with the recent life-scientific field of epigenetics. Malabou avowedly engages in a project of “biologizing the transcendental.”⁸¹ As she admits, this is tantamount, in relation to some of Kant’s categories, to positing the *a posteriori* emergence of the *a priori*.⁸² In other words, Malabou’s concern is with the problem of the ontogenetic ascension to logic and logical subjectivity, namely, the emergence of the transcendental dimension itself.⁸³ As the end of the preceding section shows, this already is a concern of Simondon too, among others.

As Malabou herself is painfully aware, proposing any sort of rapprochement between transcendentalism and biology faces stiff resistance from various Kantian and post-Kantian strains within the Continental European philosophical tradition. She pleads for this tradition to set aside its anti-naturalist, science-phobic biases and reengage with the natural sciences.⁸⁴ Correlatively, Malabou pushes back against Heideggerian-style dismissals of epigenetics and neurobiology as merely “ontic” disciplines well below the dignity of philosophy and/as fundamental ontology.⁸⁵ One could say that, for her, interfacing the transcendental and the biological does not lower the former but, instead, elevates the latter. Expressed in Hegelian fashion, Malabou seeks to raise her life-scientific sources to the dignity of their philosophical Notions.⁸⁶

At a general level, Malabou characterizes the problematic of the transcendental as the question of the coming-to-be of the self-relating subject.⁸⁷ I see this as meta-transcendental rather than transcendental. Why? Assuming that the self-relating subject at issue here overlaps or is coextensive with Kantian-style transcendental subjectivity, its non-empirical “epigenesis” would be meta-transcendental *qua* the conditions of possibility for this subject (which itself in turn comes to function as a set of distinct possibility conditions for other things). Simondon likewise would distinguish between the productive becoming of individuation (as meta-transcendental) and the produced being of the individuated (as transcendental).

That said, Malabou’s approach to transcendentalism assumes its separability from transcendental idealism and outlines its compatibility with naturalism (as itself inseparable from a realist materialism). Of course, I explicitly argue for these points

both here and in “Whither the Transcendental?” I will return to them in the fifth and final section of the present intervention. At this juncture, I need to lay out in greater detail the biology to which Malabou has recourse in connection with the transcendental.

In Malabou’s 2014 and 2017 books presently under consideration, the term “epigenesis” serves as the *point de capiton* stitching together, on the one side, Kant’s non-empirical taking-form of transcendental subjectivity and, on the other side, the life-scientific sub-field of epigenetics. As is now common knowledge, the latter deals with the biological mechanisms through which milieus outside the organism influence the translations of genotypes into phenotypes. In the case of human organisms, these milieus are not just natural environments but, more importantly, social, cultural, linguistic, historical, political, etc. surroundings. Hence, epigenetics could be interpreted as illustrating particular instances of the entangling of nature and nurture, of the more-than-natural mediation inherent to the natural itself. With respect to Kant’s subject, this would be to suggest that its forms, categories, concepts, and the like take shape at the active intersection between the genetic and the extra-genetic, between first and second natures. Indeed, for Malabou, thinking belongs to a peculiar creature that is simultaneously a transcendental subject and a living being (with the latter as, in her view, more than a merely empirical status).⁸⁸

Malabou situates epigenetics in relation to the notion of “plasticity” guiding her endeavors from her doctoral thesis on Hegel onwards. Epigenetics thus would be a species of specifically biological plasticity, along with the neuroplasticity dear to Malabou too. In this vein, she remarks, “Biological plasticity is, if one wants, programmed in order not to be programmed.”⁸⁹ In light of this remark, epigenetics would amount to genetic preprogramming for extra-genetic reprogramming, namely, a natural determination not to be (entirely) naturally determined. Or, to risk an oversimplification, one could describe this as a natural inclination towards the dominance of nurture over nature. Such a depiction of epigenetics is of a piece with Malabou’s earlier treatments of plasticity generally and neuroplasticity especially.

On this basis, Malabou employs epigenetics (as she does neuroplasticity) so as to undermine the tendency to associate naturalism with determinism. Just as neuroplasticity dissolves the cerebral determinism of a preprogrammed neural machine, so too does epigenetics blow holes in the genetic determinism of an innately coded DNA destiny. On Malabou’s assessment, both of these biological phenomena involve natural science pointing to an underdetermination or indeterminism within nature itself (at least in the case of *homo sapiens*).⁹⁰

Although indetermination is not full-fledged self-determination—disrupting determinism is not tantamount to demonstrating freedom—it is a necessary, albeit not sufficient, condition for autonomy. And, of course, transcendental analyses are concerned with necessary conditions of possibility. Thus, Malabou’s Kant-related philosophical appropriation of biological epigenetics has implications for another portion of the *Critique of Pure Reason*: the famous third of Kant’s “Antinomies of Pure Reason.”

As is well known, this Kant accepts a Newtonian vision of nature, with its efficient-causal determinism à la Laplace’s demon. Therefore, in order to leave room for a free *qua* autonomous, self-determining subject, Kant feels compelled to reinforce a strict

dualism between natural objectivity and anti-natural subjectivity. Natural objectivity is dealt with by the empirical, experimental sciences epitomized by mechanical physics. By contrast, anti-natural subjectivity is dealt with by transcendental philosophy both theoretical and practical.

Biological plasticity as per Malabou strongly implies a reconfiguring of the terms of Kant's third antinomy through liquidating the Newtonian image of nature. This image already is in jeopardy for the Kant of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, saved only by the later Kant's quarantining of biological final causes within the confines of the deontologized limbo of the regulative "as if" (*als ob*).⁹¹ Of course, Malabou's thinking is profoundly colored by Hegelian speculative dialectics. Hence, it would seem fair to discern in the background of her philosophical reassessments of the life sciences Hegel's (and Schelling's) playing off of Kant's third against his first *Critique*. Specifically, this would be the Hegelian (and Schellingian) gesture of combatting the Newtonian metaphysics of nature by ontologizing the third *Critique*'s presentation of biological teleology, by transforming the 1790 Kant's final causes from regulative into constitutive ideas. Hegel, Schelling, and Malabou share in common an approach to the third antinomy of the first *Critique* in which its antinomic character is taken to arise from a mistaken picture of nature.

Despite Malabou's anti-Newtonian solidarity with late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century German idealism and Romanticism, she definitely is not opposed to biology utilizing the languages of mathematics in describing its objects of investigation. As she is well aware, the various sub-fields of the life sciences upon which she draws employ mathematical and formal delineations of the entities and dynamics falling within their explanatory jurisdictions. However, just because Galilean-style mathematized modern physics has tended to be paired with a determinism of mechanical efficient causality does not entail that the application of mathematics to biology automatically brings about the confinement of life within the iron chains of deterministic mechanisms. For Malabou, one does not have to choose between a mathematical determinism and an anti-mathematical indeterminism. This would be a false dilemma. Life can be modeled mathematically without, for all that, being turned into a preprogrammed clockwork automaton.⁹² At the same time, Malabou is sensitive to the risks of encouraging either physicalist or metaphysical-realist reducing-away of living beings and events via the mathematization of biology.⁹³

Returning to Malabou's weaving together of Kantian epigenesis and biological epigenetics, she contends that the latter enables liberating the transcendental from the lingering traces of the early modern rationalist doctrine of innate ideas coloring Kant's transcendental idealism. In relation to the recent biology Malabou relies upon, she proposes that, "The epigenetic is . . . the origin born of the absence of origin."⁹⁴ Assuming the justifiability of linking contemporary life-scientific epigenetics back with the epigenesis of the first *Critique*, this suggests that at least some of the possibility conditions for the emergence of the Kantian subject would be the inbuilt blanks, the determined indeterminacies, of a plastic nature. These clearings, as innate absences (rather than innately present ideas) *qua* encodings for re-codings, are structural spaces making possible the (epi)genetic processes that might happen to arise out of them. Therefore, Malabou posits that a synthesis of transcendentalism's epigenesis with

naturalism's epigenetics opens out onto the theoretical option of a transcendental *sans* the preformationism of Kant's rationalist hangover.⁹⁵

In connection with the issue of preformationism, Malabou distinguishes between two versions of the transcendental: a hyper- and a hypo-normative transcendentalism. The more rationalist Kant, inclined towards an innateness that itself enforces an absolutely strict separation of the *a priori* transcendental from the *a posteriori* empirical, would be hyper-normative. As seen, this hyper-normativity makes it difficult for Kant to do justice to his own notion of epigenesis as non-empirical yet non-innate too. If the transcendental is *a priori* innate and the empirical is *a posteriori* acquired, then it indeed seems impermissible to try to conceive of a transcendental genesis, an *a priori* acquisition, without preformations.⁹⁶

So, Malabou herself clearly cannot endorse a hyper-normative transcendentalism. Instead, she opts for the other variety, namely, the hypo-normative one. The biological plasticity she deploys in her biologization of the transcendental indeed involves constraining, configuring forms and structures. Neither rewirable neurons and synapses nor extra-genetically modulated genes are formless, unstructured beings imposing no shape upon that to which they give rise. There indeed is a minimal "normativity" to these biological conditions of possibility for the more-than-biological subject of transcendentalism. However, not only are the built-in openings to external mediators represented by neuroplasticity and epigenetics different from the hyper-normativity of anything along the lines of innate ideas in the classical sense—these biologically plastic forms, in their plasticity, are the very forms in and through which transformations are allowed to transpire. They are preformations permitting reformations. As Malabou puts it regarding these hypo-normative biological transcendentals, "the transcendental certainly is a constraint—of form and of structure—but, paradoxically, this is synonymous with freedom."⁹⁷

To be more precise, such hypo-normative biological transcendentals are, for Malabou, necessary preconditions for the possibility of the emergence of an autonomous subjectivity defying all determinisms and reductivisms.⁹⁸ Although she turns away from the rigid hyper-normativity accompanying orthodox Kantian transcendentalism, her heterodox reworking of Kant in an immanent-critical fashion enables her to hold onto the transcendental after decoupling it from transcendental idealist preformationism. Instead of opposing a straightforward, garden-variety empiricist naturalism to traditional transcendentalism, Malabou opts for dividing the transcendental from within so as to play off one form of it (i.e., the hypo-normative) against the other (i.e., the hyper-normative). In so doing, she conveys that there is something of enduring merit to the term "transcendental." For her (and for me too, as will be seen in the fifth section to follow), one of the virtues of this term is its designation of implacable resistance to anything and everything deterministic or reductive.⁹⁹

I wish to touch upon a final set of points contained specifically in *Avant demain* before concluding my consideration of Malabou's recent labors in relation to the topic of the transcendental. In the context of criticizing Meillassoux's attempted problematizations of Kant's theoretical philosophy, Malabou insists that Kant himself affirms the ultimately factual status of the transcendental itself.¹⁰⁰ She suggests that

Kantian critique accepts the necessity of contingency, namely, the hybrid modality Meillassoux tries to turn against Kant and his legacy.¹⁰¹

This move of Malabou's goes against not only Meillassouxian speculative materialism, but also the three major post-Kantian German idealists, namely, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. In the wake of some of Jacobi's and Schulze's challenges to Kant, these three, despite their many differences, all strive in their own manners to eliminate the factual, contingent qualities of Kant's transcendentalism through more systematic deductions of such things as the categories of cognition and the faculties of human mindedness. Malabou, in her countering of Meillassoux, transforms what the post-Kantians see as a vice into a virtue. For her, Kant's failure/refusal to provide systematic deductions all the way down, his leaving of core features of the subject as un-grounded givens, is an essential acknowledging and indication of the irreducible contingency/facticity of the very existence of transcendental subjectivity.

Additionally, Malabou extends the contingency/facticity of the transcendental subject to the biological being (i.e., the human organism) she posits as the natural condition of possibility for this subject. Life itself is both ontologically contingent, as evolutionary theory from Charles Darwin onward shows, as well as a real-material transcendental (or, as I would say, meta-transcendental) *vis-à-vis* transcendental subjectivity. This is what Malabou intends when she identifies life as a "contingent transcendental."¹⁰²

Taking a step further back to an even more sweeping perspective, Malabou gestures at a general ontology involving a combination of facticity, contingency, necessity, and irreducibility. Specifically, she sketches a picture of real being in which there exists a factually given plurality of different levels of existences (such as the physical, chemical, and biological strata of nature). These levels are irreducible in relation to each other. Moreover, necessities are internal to particular levels (for instance, intra-physical, intra-chemical, and intra-biological "laws"). Necessities do not emanate from a foundational level in relation to which other levels are secondary, reducible determinations (such as a standard physicalist reductivism in which everything boils down to the physics of the smallest constituents of material nature). There is an *Ur*-contingency to the givenness of this dispersed multitude of ontological regions. Likewise, the domain of thinking covered by transcendental philosophy would itself be an irreducible and factually given level with respect to physical, chemical, and biological domains.¹⁰³

From the start, Malabou has situated her work in the lineage of dialectical materialism. Her just-summarized vision of a stratified ontology of irreducible layers indeed is in line with aspects of a tradition including Friedrich Engels, the later Nikolai Bukharin, and the mature Georg Lukács (not to mention the non-Marxists Émile Boutroux and Nicolai Hartmann). I deal with Engels *et al.* along these lines elsewhere.¹⁰⁴

Here, I want to conclude my discussion of Malabou with a line of questioning leading straight into the subsequent fifth section of my intervention. These queries are directed at a feature of Malabou's thinking setting it apart from what often is associated with dialectical materialism. Due to this orientation's debts to Marx's historical materialism, with its profound historicist sensibilities, both Kant and his transcendental usually appear anathema to most Marxists, including most self-avowed dialectical materialists

(such as Engels, Lenin, etc.). Yet, as seen, Malabou passes through via immanent critique, rather than bypasses via external critique, Kantian transcendentalism.

So, a more conventional dialectical materialist might ask of Malabou: Why continue speaking of the transcendental after its naturalization? Especially in light of Malabou's reliance on the empirical, experimental sciences of nature, why not replace transcendentalism wholesale with an empiricist naturalism, perhaps supplemented by a variant of historical materialism aiming to encompass the distinguishing peculiarities of human histories both phylogenetic and ontogenetic? What, if anything, is left of the transcendental after the revisions and alterations to which Malabou submits it?

The following final section of my intervention attempts to answer precisely these questions. It is intended as a friendly supplement to Malabou's efforts apropos transcendentalism, ones for which I have deep sympathy. My replies to the preceding queries also will serve to encapsulate the key philosophical upshots of both "Whither the Transcendental?" and this present sequel piece.

V Between history and eternity: what is left of transcendentalism today?

From Kant himself, with his subjectivist idealism, onwards, transcendentalism often has been bound up with philosophically and/or politically problematic larger theoretical projects. It has been made to aid and abet a range of dubious enterprises: artificially and conservatively limiting the scopes of legitimate human inquiry; protectively rationalizing and perpetuating religious dogmas and superstitions; sometimes hastily eternalizing and essentializing what arguably are transient historical phenomena; at other times trying to rule out claims to any sort of theoretical or practical knowledge not always-already qualified as contextualized *qua* socially, culturally, historically, linguistically, etc. conditioned and localized ... I pose the questions with which I end the preceding section as much to myself as to Malabou. Moreover, another, similar question should be raised at this moment: Burdened with all its accumulated baggage, is it even worth the trouble to attempt salvaging something from transcendentalism?

Addressing these concerns, as I am about to do, will allow me to enumerate the results of "Whither the Transcendental?" and the present sequel piece. Taken together, these two texts of mine are meant to justify retaining the term "transcendental" as signifying a set of points of enduring validity and contemporary importance. These points would be in danger of being conceded or abandoned if transcendentalism in its entirety were to be rejected.

I will begin through a *via negativa*, stipulating three things that the transcendental is not, despite commonly being associated with them. First, transcendentalism is not synonymous with or equivalent to subjectivist transcendental idealism. To be transcendental is to be a necessary condition of possibility for subjectivity. Therefore, the transcendental is not, by definition, inherent to already-constituted ideality *qua* subjective mind as separate from reality *qua* objective world. Consequently, there is nothing oxymoronic about pairing transcendentalism with realism, materialism,

naturalism, or the like. A phrase such as “transcendental materialism” is not a contradiction-in-terms; it would be so only for those who falsely conflate the transcendental with transcendental idealism. Neither Kant’s opposition to realism, etc. nor certain of his descendants’ aversions to such stances are dictated by the very idea of transcendentalism. On the contrary—the transcendental can and should be divorced from all subjective idealisms.

Second, the transcendental need not be treated as timeless. As seen, even Kant himself (partially) concedes that the subject of his critical philosophy is emergent, that there is a process of genesis through which a passage occurs from pre-subjectivity to subjectivity proper (for instance, a transition from a nature devoid of subject to a nature containing a more-than-natural subject). In short, there are comings-to-be of transcendental subjects. Therefore, since the bearers and instantiations of the dimension of the transcendental are not eternally existent, this dimension itself arguably is not eternal either.

Third, and closely linked to the second point, transcendentals do not have to be (and ought not to be) taken as absolute necessities. More precisely, the ideal-epistemological transcendentals of subjectivity, although necessary for the subject and its thinking, are not themselves absolutely necessary at the level of the real-ontological meta-transcendentals of substantiality. That is to say, transcendentals can be relative necessities, with their relative necessity itself being contingent (as per the Hegelian thematic of the contingency of necessity). Nevertheless, despite the contingency of even transcendental necessity, such necessity, although historically emergent (whether from natural history, phylogeny, or ontogeny), is still really necessary relative to certain other things. As Hegel convincingly demonstrates, necessity is not inherently eternal and not categorically opposed to contingency.

With these three negative stipulations put forward, I turn now to specifying the positive features of the modified transcendentalism I consider worthy of defense in the present and preservation in the future. I will spell out these features in eight points. To begin with, and as the first negative point above indicates, transcendentals, as nothing more and nothing less than (relatively) necessary conditions of possibility, can be real-ontological as well as ideal-epistemological. By definition and in principle, nothing rules out pursuing a theoretical identification of pre- and non-subjective possibility conditions for (transcendental) subjectivity itself. Of course, transcendental materialism, with its critical-dialectical naturalism, pursues an account of precisely such conditions.

Second, any static ideal-epistemological transcendentalism of transcendental subjectivity (such as the standard image of Kant’s critical philosophy as transcendental idealism) cannot remain within its own confines, whether it wants to or not. At the most fundamental of levels, there can be no epistemology without ontology. In other words, even if a philosophical endeavor strives to be purely epistemological and thus to avoid any and all ontological posits, it still cannot help but fall back on ontological presuppositions (as both John Locke and Kant each reveal to varying degrees despite themselves). In line with core aspects of Hegel’s multifaceted critique of Kant, a static epistemological transcendentalism of an ideal subject must be led by immanent (self-)critique to a genetic ontological meta-transcendentalism of a real substance (or substances) prior to and independent of this subject.

Third, the status of being transcendental or meta-transcendental is, at least sometimes, retroactive. As the third negative point above specifies, the necessity of any condition of possibility is relative rather than absolute. Hence, being (meta-)transcendental depends upon being related to something else as condition to conditioned. And, what holds for Hegel's speculative dialectics of causality holds here too. For Hegel, there is a retroaction of effect on cause; the effect causes its cause to be a cause in the first place.¹⁰⁵ Likewise with condition and conditioned: The conditioned conditions its condition to be a condition. Therefore, a necessary condition of possibility will have been such (in the mode of the future anterior) only if and when what it conditions happens to arise and exist. The condition and its necessity come to be after-the-fact of the conditioned and its contingency.

Fourth, situated within an ontological meta-transcendentalism, the genetically emergent transcendental subject is, however long it endures, ultimately transient. Hence, transcendentals, as carried and realized by subjects who arise and pass away, neither always have been nor always will be. However, they remain necessities for so long as there are subjects as such.

Fifth, the transition from meta-transcendental substance to transcendental subject involves "error" as per EFO. Both here and in "Whither the Transcendental?" I already have delineated features of EFO by tying it to sources of inspiration to be found in the works of such thinkers as Hegel, Freud, Heidegger, Lacan, Deleuze, and Simondon. Similarly, Hegel and Schelling alike, through their overlapping manners of comparing evil to illness as both involving a part withdrawing from and rebelling against its encompassing whole, could be said to gesture at an evil-first ethics (EFE) that would be to practical philosophy what error-first ontology (EFO) is to theoretical philosophy. The fall into a subjectivity practically (as evil) as well as theoretically (as erring) alienated from substantiality precedes and makes possible the redemptions of both the Good of ethics and the True of epistemology. In Schelling's and Hegel's footsteps, one could say that humans are exceptionally sick (as per EFE) as well as exceptionally stupid (as per EFO) animals.

Sixth, although the terms "transcendental" and "transcendent" are far from equivalent, playing with their false synonymy enables emphasizing something else of value in transcendentalism. As Malabou observes (as seen in the preceding section), transcendentals are worth retaining for their resistances to all reductivisms and determinisms. Transcendental subjectivity is at least transcendent in the sense of being neither reducible to nor, after its emergence, thoroughly determined by its meta-transcendental, pre-subjective grounds. The main caveat to be attached here is that, for any monistic materialism or naturalism, this transcendence would have to be a strange transcendence-in-immanence, namely, a more-than-material or denaturalized dimension nonetheless internal to matter or nature.

Seventh, the word "transcendental" is a fitting name for something in history more than history itself, to paraphrase Lacan. An example of one version of this is Marx's conception of the nature-initiated and mutually modifying subject-object dynamic of social laboring. For Marx, so long as there is human history, a constant possibility condition for this history's continued unfolding is labor as *praxis* broadly speaking. Hence, labor, according to Marx's historical materialism, is a transhistorical condition

of possibility for history itself. Although thoroughly immanent to history, it is not merely one historical detail among others, but that which continually propels the movement of history along. Additionally, on my reading of the relationship between Logic and the Philosophy of the Real in Hegel's mature, encyclopedic System, with Hegel as neither a metaphysical realist of the logical nor a nominalist of the real, the categories of Logic play similar roles as transhistorical possibility conditions for the movements of historical Reals.

An example of another version of "in history more than history itself," one inspired by Badiou, would be truth-events such as mathematical discoveries. On the one hand, these discoveries, like everything else in human history, occur in specific historical contexts, arising within determinate times and places. On the other hand, after they happen in their given socio-historical locales, these truth-events achieve a sort of transcendence *vis-à-vis* their particular sites of origin. Although surfacing within history, these advents thereafter detach from their birthplaces and become transhistorical, cutting across an indefinite number of subsequent times and places.

Therefore, "in history more than history itself" can designate either the history-immanent motor of history itself (for example, labor *à la* Marx) or the historical generation of the thereafter transhistorical (for example, truth-events *à la* Badiou). Such instances occupy a peculiar liminal position in-between the temporal and the eternal (as does Kantian epigenesis on Malabou's reading of the first *Critique*, as I explained in the prior section). A transcendentalism recast along the lines I have been urging is meant to be able to do justice to this neither historical nor timeless region.

Eighth and finally—this is closely tied to the preceding seventh point—any vulgar, reductive pan-historicism, including bastardized versions of Marxian historical materialism, is self-refuting. If unreserved historicizers refuse to recognize any sort of transcendental dimension with the contours of what I already have traced, then their cry of "Everything is historical!" runs up against the same type of paralyzing paradox as radical empiricism and logical positivism. Put in the form of a question, is the claim "Everything is historical" itself historical? If so, then not everything is historical, since this claim's universality is denied in the claim itself being historicized. If not, then at least one thing, the claim itself, is not historical, thus contradicting the very content of the same claim. Either way, the claim itself turns out to be false.

A genuine historical materialist with a proper appreciation of Marx's theory avoids the self-refuting paradox of crude, unqualified historicism by granting that, once again to have recourse to Lacanian locution, not all is historical. This *pas tout* includes cases of transcendences-in-immanence relative to natural and social histories, the transhistorically necessary conditions for historical sequences to unfold as they do. I would go so far as to say that a true historical materialist must also embrace an appropriately qualified transcendentalism.

In addition to the philosophical reasons for revising and retaining the category of the transcendental I have provided, there is the never-more-timely political need for a vigorous defense of precisely the sort of universalism inseparable from Kant's transcendentalism—a universalism Marx inherits from the great German idealists. The transcendental can and should be fashioned into a weapon with which to arm authentic Marxist materialism in its struggles against the ongoing proliferation of

identitarianisms and relativisms. A materialism that leaves itself without such a weapon is in danger of finding itself unable to win the fights it continues to face against its many foes.

Notes

- 1 Adrian Johnston, "Whither the Transcendental?: Hegel, Analytic Philosophy, and the Prospects of a Realist Transcendentalism Today," *Crisis and Critique* 5, no. 1 (March 2018): 162–208. Available at: <http://crisiscritique.org/2018h/aj.pdf>.
- 2 See Adrian Johnston, "On Transcendental Materialism: An Interview with Adrian Johnston," *Ex Nihilo*, 2018 (forthcoming).
- 3 Ibid. See also my *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism, Volume Two: A Weak Nature Alone* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, forthcoming).
- 4 See Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Penguin, 1973), 88, 100–2, 104–6.
- 5 See Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," trans. S. Ryazanskaya, in *Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 156.
- 6 See Adrian Johnston, "Transcendental Materialism: A Conversation with Adrian Johnston," in *The Kantian Catastrophe? Conversations on Finitude and the Limits of Philosophy*, ed. Anthony Morgan (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bigg Books, 2017), 191, 202–4.
- 7 See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 108–9 (Bxii–xiv). See also Adrian Johnston, *A New German Idealism: Hegel, Žižek, and Dialectical Materialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).
- 8 G. W. F. Hegel and F. W. J. Schelling, "The Critical Journal of Philosophy, Introduction: On The Essence of Philosophical Criticism Generally, and its Relationship to the Present State of Philosophy in Particular," trans. H. S. Harris, in *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, ed. and trans. George Di Giovanni and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000), 281.
- 9 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 49.
- 10 Ibid., 9.
- 11 Ibid., 16.
- 12 Ibid., 19.
- 13 Ibid., 49.
- 14 Ibid., 3.
- 15 See Adrian Johnston, "Preface: From Nonfeeling to Misfeeling—Affects Between Trauma and the Unconscious," in Adrian Johnston and Catherine Malabou, *Self and Emotional Life: Philosophy, Psychoanalysis, and Neuroscience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), xi. See also Adrian Johnston, "Confession of a Weak Reductionist: Responses to Some Recent Criticisms of My Materialism," in *Neuroscience and Critique: Exploring the Limits of the Neurological Turn*, ed. Jan De Vos and Ed Pluth (New York: Routledge, 2015), 166.
- 16 Johnston, "Whither the Transcendental?," 162–208.
- 17 Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (London: Continuum, 2008), 124.

- 18 Ibid., 7.
- 19 See Adrian Johnston, *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism, Volume One: The Outcome of Contemporary French Philosophy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 129–209. See also Adrian Johnston, *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism: Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 14–16.
- 20 Quentin Meillassoux's presentation in Ray Brassier, Iain Hamilton Grant, Graham Harman, and Quentin Meillassoux, "Speculative Realism," *Collapse III* (2007): 449.
- 21 See Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Victor Lyle Dowdell (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 9–10, 85, 176; Michel Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology*, trans. Robert Nigro and Kate Briggs (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008), 22–3, 67; Adrian Johnston, *Time Driven: Metapsychology and the Splitting of the Drive* (Evanston, IL; Northwestern University Press, 2005), 79–93.
- 22 See Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," in *Basic Writings: Ten Key Essays, plus the Introduction to Being and Time*, ed. David Farrell Krell, rev. edn (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993) 132–5.
- 23 See Sigmund Freud, "The Psychopathology of Everyday Life," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey et al., 24 vols. (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953–1974), 6: 259.
- 24 See Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses, 1955–1956*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1993), 295–6.
- 25 See Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XIII: L'objet de la psychanalyse, 1965–1966* (unpublished typescript), session of January 12, 1966.
- 26 See Jacques Lacan, "Response to Jean Hyppolite's Commentary on Freud's 'Verneinung,'" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2006), 323–4.
- 27 Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXII: R.S.I., 1974–1975* (unpublished typescript), session of April 8, 1975 (translation mine).
- 28 See *ibid.* See also François Balmès, *Le nom, la loi, la voix* (Ramonville Saint-Agne: Érès, 1997), 53.
- 29 See Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXII*, session of April 8, 1975.
- 30 See Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 192–3, 263–4.
- 31 Jacques Lacan, "Television," trans. Denis Hollier et al., in *Television/A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, ed. Joan Copjec (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1990), 6.
- 32 See Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 1964, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1977), 29; Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XIX: . . . ou pire, 1971–1972*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2011), 222–3; Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore, 1972–1973*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1998), 30–1. See also Johnston, *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism*, 209.
- 33 Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XIX: . . . ou pire*, 223.

- 34 Balmès, *Le nom, la loi, la voix*, 48.
- 35 See *ibid.*, 54.
- 36 See V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's Book *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*," in *Collected Works*, vol. 38: *Philosophical Notebooks*, ed. Stewart Smith; trans. Clemence Dutt (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), 274.
- 37 See Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XVI: D'un Autre à l'autre, 1968-1969*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2006), 218–19.
- 38 See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 246–7.
- 39 See Gilles Deleuze, "On Gilbert Simondon," in *Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953–1974*, trans. Michael Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 86–9.
- 40 See Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 103–5.
- 41 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 152.
- 42 See Gilbert Simondon, *L'individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et d'information* (Grenoble: Éditions Jérôme Millon, 2005), 166, 197, 248, 316.
- 43 *Ibid.*, 248. All translations from Simondon's *L'individuation* are mine.
- 44 See *ibid.*, 513–19.
- 45 See *ibid.*, 25, 307.
- 46 See *ibid.*, 32, 95.
- 47 See *ibid.*, 90.
- 48 See *ibid.*, 266.
- 49 See *ibid.*, 34, 308.
- 50 See *ibid.*, 60, 128.
- 51 See *ibid.*, 68.
- 52 See *ibid.*, 82.
- 53 See *ibid.*, 127.
- 54 See *ibid.*
- 55 See *ibid.*, 158–60.
- 56 See *ibid.*, 149–151, 163–4, 224–7.
- 57 See *ibid.*, 190.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 256–7.
- 59 See *ibid.*, 316–17.
- 60 See Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 111–18.
- 61 Simondon, *L'individuation*, 208.
- 62 Johnston, *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism, Volume Two*.
- 63 See Simondon, *L'individuation*, 206–7, 316–7.
- 64 See *ibid.*, 163.
- 65 See *ibid.*, 165, 276.
- 66 See *ibid.*, 166.
- 67 See Adrian Johnston, "Humanity, That Sickness: Louis Althusser and the Helplessness of Psychoanalysis," *Crisis and Critique* 2, no. 2 (2015): 217–61.
- 68 See Simondon, *L'individuation*, 165.
- 69 See *ibid.*, 288, 290.
- 70 See *ibid.*, 173, 197, 204–6, 302.
- 71 See *ibid.*, 194.
- 72 See *ibid.*, 242–3.
- 73 See *ibid.*, 278.

- 74 See *ibid.*, 257.
- 75 See *ibid.*, 257–8.
- 76 See G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969), 45–7.
- 77 See G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, trans. Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977), 76–7.
- 78 Catherine Malabou, *Avant demain: Épigenèse et rationalité* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2014), 25. All translations from Malabou's *Avant demain* are mine.
- 79 *Ibid.*
- 80 Catherine Malabou, “Transcendental Epigenesis: A Conversation with Catherine Malabou,” in *The Kantian Catastrophe?*, 241–2.
- 81 Catherine Malabou, *Métamorphoses de l'intelligence: Que faire de leur cerveau bleu?* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2017), 163. All translations are mine.
- 82 See *ibid.*, 165.
- 83 See *ibid.*, 96, 98.
- 84 See Malabou, *Avant demain*, 319–20.
- 85 See *ibid.*, 261, 303–4.
- 86 See *ibid.*, 264.
- 87 See *ibid.*, 158.
- 88 See *ibid.*, 300.
- 89 Malabou, *Métamorphoses de l'intelligence*, 118.
- 90 See Malabou, *Avant demain*, 153, 157, 170.
- 91 See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), §61 (234), §67 (250–1), §76 (273–4), §78 (280).
- 92 See Malabou, *Métamorphoses de l'intelligence*, 90.
- 93 See Malabou, *Avant demain*, 25, 261.
- 94 *Ibid.* 170.
- 95 See *ibid.*
- 96 See *ibid.*, 223.
- 97 *Ibid.*
- 98 See *ibid.*
- 99 See *ibid.*, 223–5.
- 100 See *ibid.*, 294.
- 101 See *ibid.*, 297.
- 102 *Ibid.* 296.
- 103 See *ibid.*, 298.
- 104 See Johnston, *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism, Volume Two*.
- 105 See Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 559, 562–3; G. W. F. Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 227–30 (§153–4); G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on Logic: Berlin, 1831*, trans. Clark Butler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 167–9.