



MONASH University

Walking in Place: Time and Totality in Hegel's Modernity

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Abstract

At issue in this thesis are continuity and the future's possibility, neither of which are given. What has continued and is continuing, despite the constant change that would appear to mark the present, and history more generally, is domination. The latter, it will be argued, can, under the temporal conditions of modernity, be linked to the emergence and maintenance of a particular subject position, one that will be framed in terms of the spectator, and which can be linked to both the lifting of the head of the genius, as found in the work of Walter Benjamin, and the 'mature' subject that belongs to Kant's political work and the *Critical Philosophy* more generally. It is the coming of this subject position that both opens up the possibility of a future, and, at the same time, renders that future programmatic, the latter subject to a process of infanticide in the very moment of its birth, the opening itself assuming pre-determined form and repeated *ad nauseam* such that the future is reduced to a series of aborted attempts to leave the past behind.

Central to both diagnosing and dislodging the stasis that belongs to what will be named a Kantian modernity is time. Time is not merely a container within which objects, deeds, and occurrences pass through and are dated, but ontologically constitutive in the sense that, in modernity, things have their being in terms of time. A Kantian modernity, informed by a successive notion of time, brings with it a particular ontology, one that reduces the existent, including the life of the subject, to a timely image. It is this contraction that can be linked to domination.

To the extent that Hegel figures as a counter measure to Kant, the dialectic brings with it both a different time and a different ontology, one in which the spontaneity of social labour remains internal to the thing-in-itself without reinvoking a pre-critical monism. What Hegel allows, it will be maintained, is the co-presence of ontological difference upon which historical change is predicated. From a Kantian modernity of 'mere life' to a Hegelian one of contestation, what opens up, by way of a different time that is both recovered and produced by working through the past, is the possibility of both undoing that past and intensifying the present, which, taken together, interrupt history's continuity and render the future an imageless opening in which history may begin anew, absent of continuity's domination. What will be

asserted is that Kant is a thinker of the timeliness of the present, Hegel that of the untimeliness of historical change. Taken together, they provide the resources for both diagnosing the present and opening up a 'way-out' of repetition and the present's effacement of a future.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Christopher Wallace
April 2nd 2017

Acknowledgements

The spectator always takes him or herself to be singular, and, as a consequence, remains confined to a homely abode unperturbed by the world outside the window. Philosophy does not on its own offer a way-out of this dwelling, but being with others just might.

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Is it possible that the whole of world history has been misunderstood?

Is it possible that the past is false because it's always its masses that have been spoken about as if one were talking of a convergence of many persons instead of talking about the one person they were gathered round because he was a stranger and was dying?

Rilke

And Polo said: "The inferno of the living is not something that will be; if there is one, it is what is already here, the hell where we live every day, that we form by being together. There are two ways of enduring it. The first is easy for many: accept hell and become part of it, until you no longer see that it is there. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and learning: in the midst of hell to look for, and to know how to recognise what is not hell, to make it endure, to give it space".

Italo Calvino

Do nothing secretly; for Time sees and hears all things, and discloses all.

Sophocles

The Present as Question

Space and time are generally taken to be poles apart: space is there, and then we *also* have time. Philosophy calls this 'also' into question.

Hegel

What cannot be expected – even though it is too often expected – is [a future] to come through continuity.

Benjamin, A.

A Worn-Out Shoe, an Opportune Moment

Why Hegel, why now, today? If, for Alain Badiou, any return to Kant is ‘a sign of closed and morbid times’¹, the resurrecting of Hegel (in a form that refuses the easy acquiescence to the given apparent in the normative readings of Hegel that belong to the two Roberts, Brandom and Pippin), would seem to be even more reprehensible, if not the sign of a degenerate mind. To speak of totality, the absolute, the whole and the speculative (precisely those aspects that the normative jettisons) is to evoke the spectre of totalitarianism and its mysticism, the dominance of the universal over the particular, the state over the individual, subjection over subject. To go further, in an age of sectarian violence at every level of society, is not recourse to a long gone past and a refusal to bury one’s dead an anachronistic pursuit that evades the present, and, in doing so, the mere affirmation of the latter? That is to say, is it not a wilful withdrawal from the present in order to disappear into the quaint concerns of another time, which have no bearing on what is taking place now? This would be the line of thought that views history as discontinuous, the sins of the father shed with biological birth and the ticking of the clock.

Of course, there are also strains of thought imbued with a historicism that suggests of the present as an after-effect of the past, an efficient form of causality linking before and after, then and now. In this, history is a continuous line in which each epoch or

¹ Quoted in Hallward, (2010) “Kant”, *Alain Badiou: Key Concepts*, ed. Bartlett, A.J. & Clemens, J. Durham: Acumen, p. 128

period is linked to the prior one, something carried or passed on between the generations.

On the one-hand, the present period (whether as instant, decade or century) figures as a self-contained singular, the movement of history predicated upon a radical break with the past. On the other, the past continues to figure in the present and calls the latter back towards its origins and beginnings. In both instances, there is what could be called an objectivism about the past, its being graspable ‘the way it really was’, as the caricature of Ranke has it. It is such objectivism that informs not only progress narratives and the malaise of nostalgia so prevalent in the present, but also claims of innovation and novelty². Only by circumscribing the past within the limits of a singular ontology can something be said to be new or irretrievably lost.

Neither approach, it will be argued, can provide an adequate answer to the question of why Hegel, why now? The evasion of the present lies not in recourse to an obsolete Hegel (or Kant, for that matter), but in the reduction of the past to a singular ontology that belongs to the present, which has the effect of rendering past, present and future the same and effacing both the contestation had and that to come³. What is evaded in

² In mind here is this from Badiou: ‘I am surprised to see, for instance, that today everything that does not amount to surrender pure and simple to generalized capitalism, let us call it thus, is considered to be archaic or old-fashioned, as though in a way there existed no other definition of what it means to be modern than, quite simply, to be at all times caught in the dominant forms of the moment. I ask myself if behind all this there does not lurk still a difficult settling of accounts with historicism, and with the conviction that you must always be in tune with what I would call the average of our time, and that, otherwise, you are marginalized, lagging behind, or archaic’ (Badiou, A. & Bosteels, B. (2005) "Can Change Be Thought?: A Dialogue with Alain Badiou", in *Alain Badiou: Philosophy and its Conditions*, ed. Riera G. New York: SUNY Press, p. 238. What must be added here is that nostalgia is itself surrender to this ‘generalized capitalism’ that Badiou speaks of. It is not archaic despite the turning to the past precisely because the terms under which this turning occurs belong to the present. And yet, nostalgia, and its present ubiquity, does open up something like what Eric Hobsbawm names a ‘cultural popular front’ in which segregated aspects and areas of civil society are marked by the same cultural phenomenon (Hobsbawm, E. (2002) *Interesting Times: A Twentieth Century Life*, New York: Pantheon Books, p. 71). Nostalgia, although misrecognising the past as that which appears in the mere turning back allowed by the present totality, nonetheless suggests of the past’s continued figuring in the present. What will become important is the move away from the past of nostalgia to that of a discontinuous past, one that counters the present totality. It is this latter past that could be described as archaic precisely because it does not belong to the present, but nonetheless figures in it by way of the ‘bitter labour of Spirit’ that belongs to a particular thread of philosophy. As a counter to the present, it suggests of what will be named a plural ontology from which the present emerged and which must be recovered in order for there to be a future. What is of concern is not the past as it was, but the ontological conflict that underpins historical change. Although, in line with Marx, the present must bury its (nostalgic) dead, it must also recover, and disinter, a plural ontology.

³ For reasons of word limit, Kant must figure in this work as something like the older Hamlet’s ghost, neither adequately present, nor without effect. And yet, such a Kant is not inappropriate to the work. Indeed, it is as Hamlet’s ghost that Kant troubles every Hegelianism by insisting upon the absence of

this reduction that informs an objectivism about the past is not only what will be named, drawing on Theodor Adorno, the ‘actual objective processes’ that determine the living out of a life, but the contestation that the objective is an after-effect of, and which remains absent from the present’s understanding of its past⁴.

It is tempting, in answering the question of why Hegel, why now, to let the vehemence of Adrian Johnston do the work. He writes:

For them [normative readers of Hegel – CW], the key questions are: Where does Hegel stand with respect to the present? What remains interesting or palatable in Hegel’s philosophy judged by today’s philosophical criteria and tastes? But, for anyone risking the encounter of a true engagement with a giant of the philosophical past such as Hegel... with as few (usually anachronistic) presuppositions as possible, the key questions always (also) are: Where does the present stand with respect to Hegel (or whichever member of the pantheon of the “mighty dead”)? How would Hegel (or any other philosopher of the never-even-past past) judge today’s philosophical criteria and tastes? That is to say, recognizing Hegel (or anyone else) as truly worthy of sustained attention in the present, as an interlocutor irreplaceable by other recent or current thinkers, ought to entail those conferring this recognition

dialectics from history, or, even better, the absence of history, the stasis of the present, the persistence of bourgeois dichotomy that infects every subject position. As Robert Kaufman writes, ‘Kant effectively becomes the ghost of the old Hamlet, disappearing with the allegedly materialist dawn but murmuring - to Adorno in particular - "adieu, adieu, adieu; remember me." This conjuring away or summoning up of the figure of Kant is a maneuver that for Marxism (and the various post-Marxisms) begins with Marx and continues unabated’ (Kaufman, R. “Red Kant, or the Persistence of the Third Critique” in Adorno and Jameson”, *Critical Inquiry*, Summer 2000, vo. 26, no. 4, p. 685). As Rebecca Comay has argued, Hegel, as a counter to the Marxist tendency to abjure Kant, does not renounce Kant and the persistence of dichotomy, separation, representation, etc., but instead, as will be suggested shortly, points to all the ways in which philosophy has failed to extricate itself from such spectral parameters. Kant’s *Wohnhaus*, as he names it, remains both standing and inhabited by the spectator of modernity, which is to say that the Critical Philosophy is a ghostly apparition that is nonetheless still present, reducible to neither ruin nor tourist attraction despite the repeated attempts at internment. There is a certain anecdote, related by Andrew Cole, which speaks to the situation. A house on the outskirts of Kaliningrad, said to be a former residence of Kant, was graffitied with the words *KAHT JOX*, or ‘Kant is a moron’. According to Cole, the irony lies in ‘the fact that the house isn’t Kant’s—the existing structure dates from the nineteenth century. Only the foundations are contemporary with the philosopher’ (Cole, A. “Those Obscure Objects of Desire”, *Artforum*, Summer 2015, p. 320). And yet, the irony speaks to the truth of the matter. Which is that one does not dwell merely between four walls adorned with ornament and decoration, but is rooted in foundation irrespective of whether such a dwelling appears groundless from within the present. This is what it means to claim that modernity persists; fashions have come and gone, the “new” constantly appears, but the conditions under which life is lived continue. It is these foundations, and the experience engendered, that are of concern in this thesis.

⁴ Adorno, T.W. (2006) *History and Freedom: Lectures 1964–1965*, ed. Tiedemann, R. trans. Livingstone, R. UK: Polity Press, p. 77

being willing and able to have their very present itself called into question and challenged by the object of this recognition. This amounts to a reversal of Žižek's question "Is it still possible to be a Hegelian today?": Is it still possible to be contemporary (i.e., to presume as well-founded today's established standards for judging Hegel's enduring value or lack thereof) in the face of an honest, thorough reckoning with Hegel himself in all his glorious philosophical untimeliness? Anything short of this reckoning signals a disrespectful underestimation throwing the doors wide open to the surreptitious replacement of Hegel with the ersatz of a dummy made for exploitation by post-Hegelian ventriloquists⁵.

There is a lot here to digest. Indeed, it could be suggested now, at the very beginning, that the chapters to follow set out to explain Johnston's point by not just framing Hegel as untimely or archaic, but by constructing such a Hegel in reading, re-reading and writing another Hegel, one that insists on the non-contemporaneity of a Hegel whose concern is nonetheless the present. It is only by way of a Hegel that conflicts or disturbs the present that his work proves worthy of reanimation in the present. That there was a "Hegel" and continues to be one does not mean that there is not another Hegel, one that both emerged as a potential and never was, and which nonetheless continues as philosophy's other possibility.

The living on of both Kant and Hegel, their continued figuring and returning, cannot, despite the accompanying morbidity, be evaded through mere disavowal. Both their work and the present they suggest continues to insist irrespective of the conscious attention they hold. Indeed, it is the parameters of their work that defines the present, as modernity, in which contemporary life is lived out. And this is despite the readily apparent differences between them. As Peter Osborne has remarked in regards to Hegel, if every move away from Hegel is, as some have maintained, only a movement of the dialectic, how is he to then be dispensed with?⁶ Must he just be abandoned, 'like a worn-out shoe'?⁷ The claim to be made here is that the present can be framed in terms of a Kantian modernity. Hegel, as counter to Kant, suggests a different one.

⁵ Johnston, A. (2014) "Where to Start?: Robert Pippin, Slavoj Žižek, and the True Beginning(s) of Hegel's System", *Crisis and Critique*, vol. 1, no. 3, p. 411

⁶ As Daniel Dahlstrom has argued, Hegel's legacy can be viewed as one in which questioning such a legacy is seen to be questionable, which has the effect of negating critique of Hegel before it has even been mounted. See Dahlstrom, D. "Hegel's Questionable Legacy", *Research in Phenomenology*, (2002) vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 3-25.

⁷ Osborne, P. (1995) *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*, London: Verso, p. 42

Both however, remain within modernity's bounds. Despite a continual reversion to a Kantian modernity, a Hegelian one continues to persist as its other possibility. And yet, any movement to a Hegelian modernity must necessarily retain this 'closed and morbid' Kant precisely because, to draw on Andrew Hass, 'our turning [to Hegel – CW] will remain in the orbit of the modern, if only because we have not yet figured out how to make a proposal or a claim, of any kind, outside the gravitational pull of self-consciousness and its freedom', both of which are central to a Kantian modernity⁸. Not only does Hegel continue to insist in the present, it will be argued that it is only via Hegel and the dialectic that justice can be done to the experience had in modernity despite that modernity remaining Kantian⁹.

It is as a worn-out shoe, as disavowed, that Hegel calls the present into question, in much the same way as Walter Benjamin's 'rag-picker', or that which dwells in Kafka's corners and stairwells, and which figure as a counter to the present precisely because of their obsolescence. Such figures, in their figuring, cut across the divide of what separates the included and excluded of the totality that informs the present in which objects are fetishized and endowed with the mythic quality of the commodity. It is the very untimeliness of Hegel that suggests not what is false about Hegel, but what in the present is false, or what cannot be seen through because it is seen only with present eyes. As Slavoj Žižek writes of the *Phenomenology*, 'it appeared in the unique historical moment of the passage between ancient (premodern) and the new (modern) world – in this in-between. Hegel, for a brief moment, saw something that was not visible either before or after. Today, we find ourselves in another such

⁸ Hass, A. (2014) *Hegel and the Art of Negation: Negativity, Creativity and Contemporary Thought*, London: I.B. Tauris, p. 6

⁹ This is not to claim, of course, that the recovery of Hegel has not been a constant aspect of philosophy's history. Richard Bernstein, for example, asked the very same question in 1977 (Bernstein, R.J. (1977) *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 29-60). As the chapters to follow, particularly 4 and 5, will make clear, the reading, re-reading and writing of Hegel, and even the asking of the question of why Hegel, why now, have tended to reappear at fairly regular intervals. It could even be claimed, as Slavoj Žižek does, that now is a particularly fertile period in the re-writing of Hegel. On the other hand, despite the constant re-emergence, the inability to bury our dead, Hegel has never been. As an argument to be unfolded in chapter 1, modernity, upon which the very possibility of Hegel is predicated, has remained Kantian in the sense that the dichotomies that mark the Critical Philosophy continue to pertain as the structure of civil society. The present stood, and continues to stand, on the precipice of a Hegelian future. And yet, as a thinker of historical change, it is not the future itself that will be Hegelian, but its very possibility. At least, that is what will be argued throughout.

passage, which is why there is a need to repeat Hegel'¹⁰. This *in-between* passage both suggests and is that in which historical change occurs. Which is to say that Hegel, by dint of the historical circumstances in which he found himself, was and is a thinker of the event¹¹. The latter is not merely an occurrence however, but what will be framed in the opening chapter as the co-presence of ontological difference, which necessarily exceeds the parameters of the present despite the present, as modernity, emerging as singular from such contestation. What Hegel calls into question are thus the parameters of a present that appears to be exhausted by present configuration and concern.

Thinking the 'Also'

What then can these long-dead and German figures divulge about a present so different (in its universality) from their seemingly provincial concerns? The answer to be put forward here is a simple one: Kant is a thinker of mediation and of the present; Hegel is a thinker of mediation and of historical change. In their concern with mediation both thinkers problematize immediacy, that unmitigated experience and thought untrammelled by the various big Others such as culture, history, nature and consciousness that populate the philosophical register. As the opening chapter will suggest, both are thinkers of the modern subject as spectator in the sense that what appears in experience is an after-effect of what could be called configurations of consciousness. As Adorno has written, 'whoever wants to experience [erfahren] the truth about life in its immediacy [unmittelbares Leben] must scrutinize [nachforschen] its estranged configuration [entfremdeter Gestalt], the objective powers that determine individual existence even in its most hidden recesses [Verborgenste]'¹². This is what mediation refers to, these objective powers, which assume estranged form, and which determine the living out of a life by configuring what figures in life. Kant's talk of the faculties and categories of cognition refer to precisely this.

¹⁰ Žižek, S. (2012) *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*, London: Verso, p. 239

¹¹ See, for example, Cole, A. (2017) "Hegel's Big Event", *Crisis and Critique*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 64-80

¹² Adorno, T.W. (2005a) *Minima Moralia: Reflections From Damaged Life*, trans. Jephcott, J.F.N. London: Verso, p. 15, trans. amended

However, and here's where Hegel becomes singular over and against Kant, what mediates, that is, the in-between, is itself subject to what Hegel names a 'formative movement' [bildende Bewegung]¹³. In contrast to Kant, Hegel does not merely take up and render ahistorical the estranged form that governs the present, but instead charts its movement, which is neither linear nor constant. The difference then is that Hegel more thoroughly explored, in his concern with a plural past, the estranged configurations that for Kant remain singular. Of concern for Hegel however are not just different configurations, but the movement from one to another. It is this movement that signals historical change, which suggests, insofar as different shapes configure change differently, that change itself is subject to change.

To think the 'also' is to refuse the Kantian gesture of knowing one's limits and coming to a stop on this side of them, which does not automatically entail a return to a pre-critical monism or absolute parousia. Hegel attempts to think not just that there was historical movement, but how it came about. Which is to say dialectics is a logic of the in-between, neither a method nor an epistemology, but an opening up and working-through of the process of determination in which what mediates everyday experience is comprehended, even if only at dusk. There is, with Hegel, as chapters 4 and 5 will contend, a reversal of time's incessant forward movement that follows from his attempt to undo the process of determination that renders objects of experience reified and that which produces them blocked to human cognition. In place of the 'bang, crash' that for Hegel marks the life of the spectator (for whom historical change and the disenchantment of previously fetishized objects proves unknowable and thus fated), not only does dialectics seek to comprehend the actual objective processes in their formative movement, it also inserts itself into this movement as a means of reinscribing the subjectivity of social labour back into what for Hegel is the divine. In turn, the dialectic is both constitutive of things-in-themselves and itself subject to the transformation that follows from the co-presence of ontological difference, the dialectic that which invokes, but not that which is, a future. It is the very calling into question of the present by way of Hegel's anamnesis that opens up the possibility of that present being rendered otherwise, which is the future's precondition. To think the 'also' means to think the universal in the particular, the

¹³ Hegel, G.W.F. (1977) *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Miller, A.V. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 17, trans. amended

plural in what would seem to be singular and foundational, and the past of the in-between that also insists in the present. The ‘also’ is not another or one more, it does not increase the count or fill out the concept. It is, rather, that which counters the count, interrupts the straight line, or renders the given more than it appears.

The Need of Philosophy

To suggest that Hegel is a thinker of historical change, and that the present stands in need of both, is to have implied that there is something that needs changing. This will be elaborated in full in the opening chapter, but it suffices to say that the position of the spectator that both Kant and Hegel attend to is problematic. As the subject of a Kantian modernity, the spectator, to draw on a line from Gillian Rose, is infinitely sentimental about itself, ‘but methodically ruthless towards others’¹⁴. Or, as Nina Power has put it, in the time of the spectator, ‘all life resembles a cross between a spreadsheet and a horoscope’¹⁵. Philosophy is not immune to this ruthlessness, or the sentimentality. Indeed, the philosopher figures as the prototype of the spectator and its attendant problems.

As Dimitris Vardoulakis, drawing on the work of Jean-Joseph Goux, has suggested, it is as Oedipus that the philosopher first emerges. ‘Instead of the hero’s using force to overcome the monstrous’, Vardoulakis writes, ‘Oedipus uses only his mind against the Sphinx’. This ‘use’ is predicated upon the emergence, or so it would seem, of a unified consciousness. It is only in having emerged, as unified, that the mind becomes the means of countering the monstrous. ‘As a consequence of Oedipus’ self-reflective act’, Vardoulakis continues, ‘the subject can aspire to self-identity’, which represents the ‘humanist insistence on self-knowledge’¹⁶. Drawing a distance from the world whilst withdrawing into the self is, at the same time, the emergence of the subject as self-identical, an identity that allows both the emerged subject and the world from which it emerges to be known, which becomes a power the former exerts over the latter. It is this move that enables the dividing of self from world and thus self from that which disquiets; the very power of thought is derived from the

¹⁴ Rose, G. (1995) *Love’s Work: A Reckoning With Life*, New York: Schocken Books, p. 136

¹⁵ Power, N. “She’s just not that into you”, *Radical Philosophy*, 177 (Jan/Feb 2013) (<https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/reviews/individual-reviews/rp177-shes-just-not-that-into-you>)

¹⁶ Vardoulakis, D. (2010) *The Doppelgänger: Philosophy’s Literature*, New York: Fordham University Press, p. xi

separations and divisions that it enacts. The overcoming of the monstrous is here presented as a matter of coming to know the self, which enables the One to be distinguished from the other, self-knowledge becoming self-containment and thus self-control. Within its self-contained world the subject renders itself immune to external perturbation by contracting its space of experience to that which adheres to pre-determined measure. Only that which is permitted entry by the subject figures in experience. It is in these terms that the philosopher, in its becoming spectator, can be thought.

Vardoulakis identifies two dangers that arise as a result of this withdrawal, and which invoke unintended consequences that continue to insist in a Kantian modernity and which also afflict philosophy. Oedipus, Vardoulakis suggests, ‘can be called a last man in the sense that his reason creates a space separate from his fellow humans, a space where he remains forever trapped’¹⁷. This is the first danger, that of isolation and repetition, the suggestion being that withdrawal into the self precludes the figuring of difference, which, in turn, precludes the possibility of change. The second is that in overcoming the Sphinx, Oedipus establishes himself as sovereign, a sovereignty predicated upon a founding violence that is nonetheless not recognised as such. In order to establish itself as self-identical, the master/thinker must efface that which does not accord with the self, which suggests of a form of sovereignty that, to draw again on Vardoulakis, ‘is supported by the spilling of blood’. To preclude the figuring of difference is to also inflict violence upon it. For Oedipus, in becoming the ‘last man’, the very movement upon which such a position is predicated is effaced in establishing what is a result as origin or ground. As will be shown in the opening chapter in relation to Walter Benjamin’s notion of the ‘lifting of the head from the mist of guilt’, the sovereign is itself an after-effect, which means it is also dependent. By taking itself as independent, however, the sovereign establishes itself as ontologically singular. What a founding singularity requires is the constant reaffirmation of that singularity, which, in turn, demands the constant violence of refounding.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

There is a violence here worse than the one Oedipus attempts to evade, the violence of effacement in which the plurality from which the singular emerges is denied in that very emergence. This founding violence, in which the sovereign is established, must be held apart from a notion of ontological contestation, which prefigures what is founded. Contestation is not therefore associated with what might be traditionally called violence, that involving physical altercation, or some form of psychological torment or abuse. The latter form follows ontological contestation, but its occurrence is by no means necessary. In between contestation and founding is a ‘formative movement’ in which violence need not await the other despite the tendency of history to play out in such a way. Only in the assertion of self-identity does the spilling of blood occur. The self-identical subject, to follow Vardoulakis’ argument, cannot be separated from the dual problem of violence and its repetition. The benign countenance of the spectator houses a continuing barbarity, which also informs the self-identical philosopher.

It is both the subject as after-effect and as imbued with a founding violence that Kant remained blind to by conceiving of the faculties and categories of cognition as atemporal. And yet, he nonetheless came, in the mode of a ‘late Kant’, to draw on Peter Fenves’ formulation, to recognise such a subject as prone to the ‘nameless pains of boredom’ that accrue from being confined to Wilfrid Sellars’ ‘space of reasons’¹⁸. Hegel, the chapters to follow will argue, can be read as an extension of this ‘late Kant’. Which is not to say that he somehow overcame the ‘cramp-like [Krampfhaft] suffering’ and ‘oppression in the head’ [Kopfbedrückung] that the geriatric Kant attributed to the ‘revolution in the air’¹⁹, and which figures as a form of ‘structural trauma’ that belongs to the spectator²⁰. Where Hegel differs is in attending to all the different modalities of spectation that mark the history of philosophy and its attempt to overcome the divide upon which its very existence depends, as related in the Oedipus myth. His peculiar approach is not to renounce or do away with the

¹⁸ This notion of a ‘late Kant’, or what Rebecca Comay has named the ‘geriatric sublime’, suggests of a ‘way-out’ of the Critical Philosophy and its empty universalism. This ‘late Kant’ must remain largely unexplored in this work however owing to spatial constraint. See Fenves, P. (2003) *Late Kant: Towards Another Law of the Earth*, London: Routledge, and Comay, R. (2016) “Hypochondria and its Discontents, or, the Geriatric Sublime”, *Crisis & Critique*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 41-58.

¹⁹ See Fenves, P. op. cit. p. 5

²⁰ The notion of ‘structural trauma’ is drawn from Rebecca Comay. See Comay, R. & Nichols, J. (2012) “Missed Revolutions, Non-Revolutions, Revolutions to Come: On Mourning Sickness”, *PhaenEx* 7, no. 1, p. 314.

spectator, but rather, in proper Hegelian fashion, go further with it, to take it to its ends, by inhabiting its most secret recesses, the myriad positions into which philosophy retreats thinking it has overcome the problem of stasis and violence. Thus Rebecca Comay, writing on a specific form of spectatorship, that of the ‘German Ideology’, as Marx named it, suggests that Hegel tries to ‘account for its logic’ rather than merely denounce such ideology as false²¹. He shows the ‘dissonance or spectrality’ that informs the German *Misère* to be irreducible, which opens up a different perspective on the melancholia that marks experience in modernity, a perspective that will be outlined in chapter 5. Moreover, this shift in perspective, or what might otherwise be named a reorientation of consciousness, evades, it will be claimed, the violence that accrues from the effacement of a plural being despite remaining within the broad parameters of spectatorship. Which is to say that the latter is not reducible to a singular ontology despite the repeated founding of one.

A Hegel who attempts to account for the logic of spectatorship, in all its guises, is not a thinker of flux and vitality. Hegel is a thinker not just of dialectics, of historical change and movement born of sublation, but of stasis, of both continuity and movement, and the impossibility of linear or punctual historical change. The morbidity of a return to Hegel is the morbidity of a persisting Kantian present that remains stuck, one more failed attempt to find a ‘way-out’ of the continuing mythology that precludes access to the thing-in-itself. In this way Hegel cuts across the aforementioned divide between continuity and discontinuity (but also the metaphysical and non-metaphysical), drawing out and surveying, from all sides, that which continues in the constant flux of the emerging and passing away of objects, deeds and occurrences. What Hegel points to are the repeated failures that have accompanied attempts to both think and act our way out of certain conditions, which demands that philosophy return to them instead of acting out what it does not know it is subject to, the lingering of a past that it cannot recognise and which becomes its unconscious companion, as in Freud’s ‘repetition compulsion’²². It is in this sense that Hegelians can speak of the absolute, the whole, and the speculative. Not as voracious attempts to administer every particular by way of a universal, and having

²¹ Ibid. p. 312

²² Freud, S. (2003), *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. Strachey, J. New York & London: W.W Norton & Company, p. 13

always already been down the path of every anti-Hegelianism, but of comprehending that which continues to govern the living out of a life despite the anachronistic stance that such a philosophy demands, and which suggests of its obsolescence. What is maintained in repetition is the absolute subject, which suggests any aversion to such a term is akin to denying of the self what is diagnosed as reprehensible in what is taken to be other. What is totalitarian is a totality that does not recognise itself as such and refuses to admit such a term into its discursive self-understanding. It is this blindness that suggests of the falsity of both liberalism and capitalism's claims to diversity and change.

Philosophy figures as a counter measure to the spreadsheet and horoscope, to the ruthless and sentimental. There is a need of philosophy, and it is double: philosophy is needy because it cannot evade the problem of spectation despite taking itself to have repeatedly done so; and there is a need for philosophy because it is via the latter that the claim of having overcome the problem of spectation is refused, which opens up a space in which a plural being may figure by way of the recovery of the event and ontological contestation.

In chapter 1, the parameters of a Kantian modernity will be sketched by way of time, drawing in particular on Peter Osborne's notion of a politics of time. Although, as Osborne has remarked, different social practices evince their own temporal structures, such difference fails to figure in the immediate experience of the modern. Successive time, Osborne suggests, remains 'external and indifferent to the concrete multiplicity of the rhythms' of such practices²³. As an 'actual objective process' that undergoes its own 'formative movement', time is both a determinant of the given, and subject to transformation. It is Kant's reification of what mediates that Hegel takes aim at, and which will form the concern of chapter 2. For Hegel, it is only by collapsing the absolute distinction between the phenomenal and transcendental, and the phenomenal and noumenal, that the empty universalism of the Critical Philosophy and its attendant boredom may be overcome. Mediation, for Hegel, belongs not just to a phenomenal domain informed by the faculties and categories of consciousness, but also belongs to

²³ Osborne (1995) op. cit. p. 34

the latter such that they can be neither accessed immediately, nor remain immune to the cultural and historical workings of consciousness.

Chapter 3 will focus on the consequences of this collapse. In his dependency upon a reciprocal notion of time drawn from the logic of the organism, Hegel would seem to render all change programmatic by predetermining the parameters in which it takes place. This is compounded by the apparent reduction of the past to a series of images that appear before consciousness in the present by way of its ‘bending back around’ and ‘working-through’ the past. Chapter 4 takes this problem of absolute parousia and attempts to invoke the dialectical reversal that would allow the very melancholia of spectatorship to give way to a form of mourning in which the trauma born of an irreducible untimeliness does not continue quite like that, or not in the same way. The means with which such a shift could be brought about are the topic of chapter 5, which concentrates on the reorientation that consciousness both invokes and undergoes in the bitter conceptual labour of confession and forgiveness, which does not attempt to heal the wounds of history by invoking a premature and spurious reconciliation. A Hegelian modernity would leave no scars because the sickness of the present is healed not via a forced unity, but in allowing difference to figure as incommensurate. It is the very wounding that accompanies the recovery of ontological difference that intensifies the present, and which opens up the possibility of a future that would follow from ontological contestation rather than the founding violence that effaces a plural being.

Chapter 1

The Time of the Spectator

There was a story about a travelling salesman whose left wrist began to hurt him, just under his wrist watch. When he removed the watch, blood spurted out. The wound showed imprints of very tiny teeth.

Julio Cortázar

The original task of a genuine revolution [...] is never merely to 'change the world', but also – and above all – to 'change time'.

Giorgio Agamben

'Die Welle der Zukunft'²⁴

An opening will be made with a passage from Theodor Adorno's *Minima Moralia*, a passage concerned with what he terms the 'ultra-modern', which, in quick succession, consigns what was modern to a past no longer present in its hurried aim to be up-to-date. It is worth an extended hearing:

When my first composition teacher, trying to knock the atonal nonsense out of me, found his tales of erotic scandals about the new composers proving ineffective, he switched his attack to what he suspected as my weak spot, by showing himself up-to-date [zeitgemäß]. The ultra-modern [Ultramoderne], his argument ran, was no longer modern [modern], the stimulations I sought were already dull, the expressive figures [Ausdrucksfiguren] that excited me belonged to an outdated sentimentality [altmodischen Sentimentalität], and the new youth had, as he liked to put it, more red blood cells. His own pieces, in which Oriental themes were regularly extended by the chromatic scale, betrayed the same ultra-subtle deliberations as the manoeuvres of a conservatory director with a bad conscience. But I was soon to discover that the fashion [Mode] he opposed to my modernity [Modernität] did actually resemble, in the primeval habitat [Ur-heimat] of the greats *salons*, what he had hatched up in the provinces. Neo-classicism, that form of reaction [Reaktion] which not only fails to acknowledge itself as such but even passes off its reactionary moment as ahead of its

²⁴ Adorno, T.W. (2005) *Minima Moralia: Reflections From Damaged Life*, London: Verso, p. 218

time, was the advance-guard of a massive tendency which under Fascism and mass-culture quickly learnt to be rid of tender concern for the endlessly tiresome sensibilities of artists, and to combine the spirit of Courths-Mahler with that of technical progress. The modern has really become unmodern [Unmodern]. Modernity is a qualitative category, not a chronological one. Just as it cannot be reduced to abstract form, with equal necessity it must turn its back on conventional surface coherence, the appearance [Schein] of harmony, the order affirmed [begründete] by way of mere replication [bloßen Abbild]²⁵.

Adorno signals two things in this denunciation of the *ultra-modern*, or what will come to be formulated as the subject of the time of the new, which are of concern in this opening chapter. Firstly, in the suggestion that the stimulations of the modern have already grown old, it would seem that whatever the modern 'is' it has already been left behind and that what is past is only a faint echo that goes unheard in the bustle of the present. In the successive time of the new, time is, as Guy Debord suggests, 'irreversible', one moment both following and followed in a constant movement from future, to present, to past²⁶. Time is understood here as a container in which deeds and occurrences take place and receive their temporal categorisation, which determines the way in which they figure in the present. The modern, Adorno's modern, is consigned to the past with the mere passing of time, becoming, in its concern with expressive figures, outmoded. To be up-to-date is to be of the time, or timely, keeping up with the ever-changing fashions that pass through the present and into the past at an increasingly rapid clip, even when those fashions are drawn from the past, the nostalgic mode mistaking its appearance in the present for the past itself. Adorno's weak spot, according to his teacher, is his failure to be up-to-date; the world moves on as he remains stationary, a Luddite lost in a time that is no longer present in his refusal to be carried along by what he terms at a later point 'the procession of total society' [Zug der Gesamtgesellschaft]²⁷. Adorno is accused of being perennially out of fashion, a 'backwoodsman' [Hinterwälder] attached to an obsolete sentimentality whose time has now passed²⁸. This is the eternal risk that one faces in the time of the

²⁵ *ibid.* p. 217-218, trans. amended.

²⁶ Debord, G. (1994) *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Nicholson-Smith, D. New York: Zone Books, p. 58

²⁷ Adorno (2005) *op. cit.* p. 218

²⁸ *ibid.* p. 219

new, becoming outmoded or untimely and consigned to a past that is no longer present.

The second aspect of the above that will become important is the suggestion that modernity is best understood in qualitative rather than quantitative terms.

Approaching modernity as a quality opens up the present as a site of temporal contestation. If suggestive of only a quantity there can be no dissensus within modernity because time itself cannot be contested, the temporal form in which things take place merely given and exhausted by successive measure. Considered as a quality, what is introduced is the possibility of a measure that counters 'irreversible time'. To claim that the modern has become unmodern is to suggest that with the ticking of the hands of the clock the modernity to which Adorno is attached is no longer present. This claim however rests on a chronological understanding of time in which modernity is but one discrete period that runs from a particular point on the chronological scale to another, which can also be applied to various movements, fashions, states of affair, or even the lives of individuals. The argument to be made here is that obsolescence is predicated upon a chronological form of time in which dissensus and conflict are absent. What does not figure in a world imbued with the continuity of successive time is the historicity of that time, the sense in which it is the result of a confluence of specific social processes bound up with disequilibria of power, which will come to be formulated in terms of the event. Although time may be irreducible, it is neither merely natural nor immutable, which suggests it is subject to transformation. As William Large has remarked, 'we have not always lived under the same time, just as much as we have not always lived under the same sun'²⁹.

Modernity, it will be claimed, is both contested and pregnant with other possibilities that, to the extent that the time of the new renders the present continuous with past and future, appear impossible³⁰. The potentiality of the present is not exhausted by

²⁹ Large, W. "Time and Money: Philosophy of Religion and the Critique of Capital", *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory*, vol. 9, no. 1 (Winter 2008), p. 55

³⁰ That a different time appears impossible from within the parameters of successive time is precisely what enables the reading of the present in terms of the end of history. What emerges with such a claim is not the impossibility of a future however, but the sense in which the latter's possibility is predicated upon the finitude of the present, and its concomitant parameters, being overcome. To speak of the end of history is to understand history as that which takes place within given parameters, parameters that would appear to have become metaphysical and ahistorical. History however, to follow both Derrida and Hegel, is precisely the movement from finitude to the infinite that occurs with the end of a given present. Indeed, the end of (linear) history, the latter read in terms of the present, is necessary if

the limits invoked by a successive notion of time. However, these potentialities do not appear as such in the time of the new. To reconfigure modernity as a qualitative term is to preclude its dismissal at the behest of the claim that it is no longer up-to-date. Although clock time moves on modernity persists as a quality, not yet exhausted. As Peter Osborne has suggested, the modern and the new have ‘become synonymous’, which has the effect of rendering modernity itself (which is no longer modern) antiquated³¹. In accord with Osborne, it is the reduction of the modern to the new that will be refused in this work. The modern will be taken not as what is up-to-date, but as a form of historical totalisation, one that is not exhausted by successive measure. Adorno’s modernity is reducible to neither a particular time period nor successive time, which allows that the potentialities effaced in time’s incessant movement, past possibilities that failed to materialise, have an after-life that endures beyond the destruction of the old in the emergence of the new. If successive time proves problematic, a claim that remains to be shown, approaching it as a quality has the effect of denaturing its givenness and allowing for the recovery of another time, or what could be called the time of the other³².

history, in Hegelian form, is to prove possible. A discussion of this aspect of Hegel’s notion of history will take place in chapter 5.

³¹ Osborne, P. (1995), *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*, London: Verso, p. 137

³² This formulation is to be distinguished from that of Levinas. Levinas’ overall position could be described as one in which the time of the other invokes an exteriority that can never be incorporated into a new totality. The other thus remains other for Levinas, ‘a being that is not the system, a transcendent being’ (Levinas, E. (1987) *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Lingis, A. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, p. 42), which is absolutely exterior to the totality in which meaning, category and system is inscribed. As a means of avoiding what he sees as the logic of war, he approaches such otherness as a ‘resistance which has no resistance’ (ibid, p. 55), which means it is not a force that can be countered by an opposing force. Rather than this invoking what will be described as a relation of non-relation however, this instantiates what could otherwise be named a non-relation of non-relation. The latter refers to an other that cannot effect the totality because it eludes the One of consciousness absolutely. There can be no relation, and thus no effecting, or determination, when the other remains absolutely exterior. Against this position, it will be argued that the otherness of the other only manifests as such by way of the labour performed by the One. As will be suggested in chapter 5, it is only at the end of Hegel’s dialectic, Spirit having turned back around and devoured its own past, that the otherness of the other is released. Which is not to say that the other is a mere product of the One, but that it’s figuring in the life of the One depends upon the work of the latter. The time of the other refers not to a time that pertains in a separate domain from the One therefore, but is invoked, as a means of actualizing historical change, in the transformation of successive time, a transformation that occurs from within the totality of the One, but nonetheless transforms that totality by opening up the co-presence of ontological difference that manifests with the figuring of the other. For Levinas, the latter proves impossible because co-presence is precluded by the absolute exteriority of the other. Which is another way of saying that the futurity of Levinas’ infinite remains abstract and unrealised because he revokes the contestation upon which a future is predicated. See, for example, Levinas, E. (1997) *Time and the Other*, trans. Cohen, R. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press.

Introduced by Adorno's reconfiguration is thus what Peter Osborne has named a 'politics of time' in which the continuity of past, present, and future is contested not just on the terms that belong to historicism, which renders each period its own discrete time, but at the level, as the argument will be unfolded in this chapter, of time. Modernity is for Osborne a form of historical totalisation in the sense that it is concerned not merely with what is present, but also past and future, a concern laid bare in the tendency towards temporal periodisation. This is not to say that historical totalisation is particular to modernity however. Modernity suggests, following Osborne's argument, a particular form of historical totalisation, one that occurs by way of time. Indeed, Osborne goes so far as to describe modernity as a 'culture of time', one that necessarily views past and future in temporal terms³³. To the extent that time is reduced to the singular quality of succession, the figuring of the past and future in the present also becomes singular, which not only determines in advance what remains open as future, but also renders time's components, its tenses, commensurate and continuous. This has the effect of effacing contestation at the level of what Adorno has termed the 'actual objective processes'³⁴, which, it will be claimed, determine the living out of a life by instantiating a particular ontology.

Another way to describe such commensurateness would be as the moderating of the present's intensity, which reduces existence to the given by effacing the incommensurate. In modernity, totality is informed by time, which involves the latter being torn loose from its hinges and becoming 'out of joint', as Hamlet has it³⁵. This entails, Osborne argues, a reconfiguration of Aristotle. Rather than approaching time

³³ Osborne, op. cit. p. x. Raised by this claim is the question of what it would mean or what would it take to no longer be modern? If modernity suggests of a temporal form of historical totalisation, no longer being modern would demand either the absence of such totalisation or the emergence of a different form of totalisation, one that no longer occurred by way of time. The argument to be unfolded here is that leaving behind modernity may be neither possible nor advantageous. Rather, if the opening up of a different form of temporal totalisation, one that would allow for the emergence of a future that, whilst modern, is no longer confined to the limits of successive time, allowed for the movement to, on Hegelian terms, a different configuration of Spirit, this would constitute a future, yet one that remained within the broad confines of modernity. However, to the extent that this would also demand contestation at the level of the ontological, a theme to be introduced shortly, it cannot be said what type of future would emerge. To this extent, the limits of modernity, and any movement beyond, can only be determined after the fact, with the emergence of a future that is not continuous with the present. Which is to say that modernity has neither run its course nor can its future be imaged despite the insistence upon time as its organising principle.

³⁴ Adorno, T.W. (2006) *History and Freedom: Lectures 1964–1965*, ed. Tiedemann, R. trans.

Livingstone, R. UK: Polity Press, p. 77

³⁵ See Deleuze, G. (1994) *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Patton, P. London: The Athlone Press, p. 88

through change, the equation is reversed such that change is, with the coming of modernity, best understood through time. Historical change, in looking back at the past from the present of modernity, is best approached via the transformation of time. To the extent that Aristotle framed the relation between change and time as reciprocal, it would seem that this reconfiguration already formed part of Aristotle's account of time³⁶. However, such reciprocity is revoked in modernity to the extent that change supervenes onto time, but time no longer depends on change. Writing of one of the German terms for modernity, *Neuzeit*, Reinhart Koselleck notes that the expression itself 'refers only to time... without, however, providing any indication of the historical content of this time, or even its nature as a period'³⁷. As a category all that can be inferred is that time is to be new, which opens up an understanding of change as occurring by way of time itself rather than what occurs within a given time. This is how *Neuzeit* can be distinguished from other forms of totalisation, which draw upon, in Koselleck's estimation, 'substantial, material, or personal determinants', epochs characterised by the metaphors of different metals being one such example³⁸.

No longer dependent upon change, time's character is transformed. Torn loose from its hinges, time itself, Koselleck writes, 'becomes a dynamic and historical force in its own right', rather than a mere medium³⁹. There is an important shift that Koselleck picks up on here, one that the very possibility of a politics of time is predicated upon. In gaining its own 'historical quality', time cannot be a mere container in which deeds and events take place despite the tendency towards reading it in such terms. Rather, that which occurs is imbued with the temporal quality that belongs to *Neuzeit*, such that present occurrence is discontinuous with what occurred in other times. Which is to say the very character or composition of present occurrence (the present taken here as modernity) is an after-effect of this new time; what takes place does so in terms of time. This is what it means for time to become a historical force 'in its own right' and, consequently, what allows modernity to be distinguished from other epochs. And as a form of totalisation, it is not just the present that becomes an after-effect of time's force and the form it assumes in modernity, but also past and future, which

³⁶ Aristotle's time will be taken up later in the chapter.

³⁷ Koselleck, R. (2004) *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Tribe, K. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 224

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 236

come to be viewed by way of the present's 'culture' of time. In turn, the historical movement that allows modernity to be distinguished from past and future is erased such that all time assumes the same contours.

What is more however, time's being torn loose from its hinges, its becoming a quality, opens up the possibility of its contestation⁴⁰. The historical change that occurs, and which allows time itself to become a historical force, renders time central to the understanding of modernity. This is not to claim that time becomes an essence or origin, but rather, that any assessment of modernity that does not attend to time remains blind to the 'actual objective processes' that determine the living out of a life. And to the extent that the form time assumes, in this movement, also becomes contested, such blindness effaces the possibility of politics. As Osborne has argued in relation to Perry Anderson's critique of Marshall Berman's now infamous modernity, 'he [Anderson] is wrong to reduce the idea of modernity to the homogenization of historical time'⁴¹. Despite being a form of historical totalisation, invoking a homogenous time is not the only means of totalising history in terms of time because time is no longer singular. It is for this reason that its given temporal form does not exhaust modernity.

To return to Aristotle, time can no longer be the mere measure or medium of change because, on Osborne's terms, to think change in terms of time is to also allow for the measure itself to change. The coming of modernity is not just change, but the transformation of change itself. What opens up with *Neuzeit* is the possibility of approaching historical change as a matter of time's qualitative transformation, which

⁴⁰ Time's becoming a historical force will have always been a potentiality that belonged to it. However, it is only in *Neuzeit* that this potentiality was actualised in time's becoming 'out of joint'. This is what Kant's first *Critique* and his 'transcendental aesthetic' registers: what appears in experience is an after-effect of a form of time that whilst determining change does not depend upon change.

⁴¹ Osborne, op. cit. p. 15. Whilst Andersen is correct to criticise Berman for framing modernity in terms of an undifferentiated concept of historical time, one bound up with Hegel's 'bad infinite', he himself fails to allow that modernity, despite being a form of historical totalisation, is marked by different temporal forms of such totalisation. Andersen, approaching modernity on terms set by Berman, reduces modernity to what Osborne has named 'bad modernity', a setting that leads to the dismissal of the notion of modernity because it is construed as being exhausted by its given temporal form (Osborne, op. cit. p. 116). See Andersen, P. "Modernity and Revolution", in (1992) *A Zone of Engagement*, London: Verso, & Berman, M. (1998) *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Middlesex: Penguin.

becomes a new form of historical totalisation⁴². Differing politics, in the time of the new, both give and are predicated upon different understandings of historical time, including a conservative politics that both depends upon temporal totalisation and attempts to efface the plurality that such totalisation is the after-effect of. Although modernity suggests a particular form of historical totalisation, one that occurs by way of time, the form that such totalisation assumes remains heterogeneous precisely because its particular form is the result of contestation.

For Osborne, it is the continuing of such contestation in terms of time that characterises modernity's politics. Moreover, and what will become central in this work, it also allows for a future that would not be the mere reiteration of the past in the sense that a different time would give a different future. Although the latter, as Andrew Benjamin has suggested, 'insists', its seeming inevitability need not necessitate its assuming one particular form over and against another⁴³. Despite establishing continuity between past and present by way of rendering the former in terms of the latter, such affirmation must be repeatedly enacted anew in the present, which means it is neither natural nor inevitable. It is in this gap, which will be formulated in terms of the 'in-between', that a politics of time plays out, the maintenance of which opens up the present as a site of contestation and the future as a potentiality that figures in the present to the extent that it is recovered from the past. There is more to the present than its presence, it will be maintained, precisely because there is more to time.

As a quality, modernity, as Adorno's aversion to his teacher's timeliness suggests, is not therefore exhausted by its periodisation, its being dated and delimited. As a form

⁴² And this is why, as the introduction suggested, Hegel can be approached as a thinker of historical change on terms that belong to modernity. Although Kant is also a thinker of modernity, the two differ in the extent to which further historical change is allowed, which is to say that Hegel allows of a modernity not circumscribable within given limits. For Kant, the formal character of time precludes further historical change, and although, as Adorno and various others have pointed out, this is in many ways attuned to the persistence of a dichotomous and unreconciled bourgeois civil society, the Kantian future remains given when approached by way of time despite the ban on graven images that Kant advances. Whilst the future cannot be imaged for Kant it can be temporalised. What remains possible from a Hegelian perspective, and yet which remains within the strictures of modernity, is another time precisely because modernity is not exhausted by the successive time of the Critical Philosophy. History's end, in the movement from the successive time of a Kantian modernity, to the reciprocal time of a Hegelian one, would both be reached and overcome. These are the stakes that are at play in both the distinction and relation between Kant and Hegel when approached by way of a politics of time.

⁴³ Benjamin, A. (2013) *Working With Walter Benjamin: Recovering a Political Philosophy*, Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, p. 244-45

of totalisation it necessarily extends beyond itself, which, again, not only allows of historical differentiation, but also of dissensus in the present by sanctioning time's plurality. To situate modernity chronologically in relation to other periods is to efface the transformation of time that the coming of modernity announced by rendering both the before and after temporally commensurate. In turn, time becomes homogenous and undifferentiated, which precludes contestation over the form that its totalisation assumes. In this sense, contestation over time plays out, as Osborne has argued, as the dialectic of modernity and tradition such that the former is never merely new and the latter never merely old. The historical consciousness of modernity is Janus faced; the destruction of the old enacted by the new also producing a new tradition in the sense that what emerges as tradition in *Neuzeit* is itself new. This is what it means for change itself to change. Drawing on Walter Benjamin, Osborne writes that modernity's present 'is defined, historically, not just by its negation of the past, but by its negation of the past form of temporal negation (tradition)',⁴⁴ which opens up the possibility of not just a new time, but also the solidification of that time, a problem that marks Kant's first *Critique*. In modernity, historical change becomes everyday, which renders such change programmatic. On the other hand however, the potential for world historical change is intensified by way of such everydayness. To approach time as undifferentiated is to erase the sense in which change itself both changed and became changeable. Likewise for Adorno, the *ultra-modern* to which his teacher attests his approval is both modern (insofar as it draws upon time as a historical force) and a reaction to the modern (approaching that historical force as given in terms of successive measure that is commensurate with past and future). As a conservative politics of time that refuses time's heterogeneity, the *ultra-modern* sides with tradition and the 'procession of total society', a claim that can also be levelled at Berman's modernity.

⁴⁴ Osborne, op. cit. p. 115

‘sich...erhob’: The Lifting of the Head

The reduction of *Neuzeit* to given form circumscribes the present within a logic of self-preservation and its attendant biological conception of life in which continuity is mistaken for progress. Again, to preserve the self in given form is to deny that change is changeable, which effaces the interruption from which both *Neuzeit* and (on Kantian terms) the ‘mature’ [mündig] subject emerged⁴⁵. For Adorno, this denial renders obsolete what he refers to as the ‘critical construction of being [kritische Konstruktion des Wesens]’ allowed by the time of the new⁴⁶. In this sense, the *ultra-modern* is not progressive, but rather regressive. If for Walter Benjamin it was with the genius that the head was first lifted [sich... erhob] from the mist of guilt [Nebel der Schuld], in tragedy rather than law, it is only with Kant that this emergent subject not only gained its ‘maturity’ [Mündigkeit], but also became a universal potential. This raising of the head occurs in the ‘realisation’ [Erkenntnis] that the human being is ‘better than God’, a realisation however that for Benjamin robs the genius of speech [verschlägt ihm die Sprache] such that the breach necessarily remains unspoken [bleibt dumpf]⁴⁷. That such a breach occurs not in law but in tragedy is central to a politics of time that seeks to counter a ‘bad modernity’ in which a particular temporal totality is absolutised. It is only with the suspension of (in this case, temporal) law that the figuring of difference is allowed, just as the law is only suspended with the figuring of difference, a paradox that will be taken up shortly.

The initial emergence of a subject, it would seem, is accompanied by the production of the domain of the unsayable, not in terms of a transcendental beyond and the sublimity of God, but a world made human insofar as the lifted head results from what will be named the event, itself the result of profane work rather than the sacred. It could be argued therefore that Kant attempted to give voice to the raised head in order to render this subject ‘mature’⁴⁸. In this movement from ‘immature’ [unmündig,

⁴⁵ Kant, I. (1991) “What is Enlightenment?”, in *Political Writings*, ed. Reiss, H.S. trans. Nisbet, H.B. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 54

⁴⁶ Adorno (2005) op. cit. p. 218

⁴⁷ Benjamin, W. (1979) “Fate and Character”, in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Jephcott, E. & Shorter, K. London, UK: NLB, p. 127

⁴⁸ Indeed, in Kant’s conjectures on the movement from an age of plants and animals to that of the human being, he frames the cry of the newborn baby as belonging only to the latter time despite the appearance of the human in the former. Only in having emerged in the age of the human being can the cry of the baby not lead to its demise at the hands of predators. Kant writes in the *Anthropology*: ‘One

Benjamin's term⁴⁹] to 'mature' the lifted head obtains its universality whilst, at the same time, countering the unsayability of such a movement. Kant's notion of 'maturity' [Mündigkeit] can be linked to the notion of the oral [mündlich], which, as Mladen Dolar points out, suggests of the democratising of participation in the court of law, which gave voice to the illiterate around the time of the French Revolution⁵⁰. This 'principle of orality', as Dolar names it, would allow for the participation in a civil society governed by law of those who were previously excluded. 'The living voice was the instrument by which the legal system could be extracted from the hands of specialists, their incomprehensible lingo and a host of anachronistic regulations', he writes⁵¹. From the lifting of the head to the subject's becoming mature is the democratising of the position of the genius, which would have consequences for the notion of the unsayable, or what will come to be formulated in terms of the untimely. The genius, it could be suggested, won't shut up, which effaces both the movement and work from which it emerged.

In the movement from *unmündig* to *mündig*, from Benjamin's genius to the universal Kantian subject (which is both historical and becomes substantive), the conditions of possibility that followed from the subject's emergence effaced the interruption upon which it was predicated. From *unmündig* to *mündig* the domain of the unsayable is lost in the arrival of a universal discourse that opened up the possibility of the

must therefore assume that in the early epoch of nature [frühen Epoche der Natur], with respect to this class of animal (during the period of its rawness) the child did not yet cry at the moment of birth; only later did a second epoch arrive when both parents had reached the state of culture that is necessary for domestic life, although we do not know how, and with which efficient causes, nature is arranged such a development' (Kant, I. (2006) *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, ed. & trans. Louden, R. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 232). As Peter Fenves has written, 'the cry can be heard to say: another "epoch of nature" has made its entrance' (Fenves, P. (2003) *Late Kant: Towards Another Law of the Earth*, New York, London: Routledge, p. 159). The voice figures here as that which announces and confirms an epochal shift. The time of the human being is for Kant a time of the voice. Of interest in Kant, but which cannot be properly addressed here, is his suggestion that still another epoch may arrive, one to which the human being in its present form must cede its place to by 'making room' [Platz schaffen]. If not governed by a principal of orality, and its concomitant successive time, such a future would remain open in a very radical way, including temporally. This is what Fenves' notion of a *late Kant* offers. However, and what will prove important in the current work, Kant seems, in the *Anthropology*, to preclude the possibility of the co-presence of ontological difference such that the move from one epoch to another remains miraculous and unknowable, historical change being of superstitious character. The age of plants and animals was not and cannot be singular, as this fails to account for the movement to a human epoch, the latter being a result of contestation rather than merely given by way of a teleology.

⁴⁹ Benjamin, W. (1979) op. cit. p. 127

⁵⁰ Dolar, M. (2006) *A Voice and Nothing More*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, p. 108

⁵¹ ibid. p. 108-109

democratising of participation in a civil society⁵². In a civil society constituted discursively (in which the speaking of a language ensures inclusion in, it can be argued, an ontological sense: what ‘is’ is in terms of the discursive), the unsayable not only constitutes its limit, but is also excluded. The very possibility of universality is predicated upon the production and effacement of its other. What is lost is thus the movement from *unmündig* to *mündig*, the result assuming metaphysical form despite being an after-effect of contestation in which the head is lifted, for the first time, from the mist of guilt. In this, past, present and future are rendered continuous such that the time introduced with the coming of *Neuzeit* is projected both back into the past and forward into the future. From what Benjamin frames as the ‘sublimity of tragedy’ [Erhabene der Tragödie] (which will come to be formulated in terms of the event) to the rule of law (in which the heterogeneity of the event is effaced in its codification), time itself both emerges as new and assumes the fated form of a homogenous transcendental principle. From a *neue Zeit* to *Neuzeit* the ‘critical construction of being’ upon which the lifting of the head was predicated solidifies into an amorphous, universal subject whose gaining of a voice at the same time denies the sublimity of which it is an after-effect and of which it could not speak before Kant⁵³. This may

⁵² This could also be approached in terms of Walter Benjamin’s notion of the death of the storyteller. ‘What distinguishes the novel from the story’, he writes, ‘is its essential dependence on the book’. ‘What can be handed on orally, the wealth of the epic, is of a different kind from what constitutes the stock in trade of the novel’ (Benjamin, W. (2007) *Illuminations*, ed. Arendt, H. trans. Zohn, H. New York: Schocken Books, p. 87). As a consequence, what is handed down, to the extent that the novel replaces the story as a form of historical transference, changes, a transformation that can be thought in terms of competing accounts of being, which is why the movement is both historical and substantive. The novel, which ‘neither comes from oral tradition, nor goes into it’ (op. cit.), effects the same reversion from *mündig* to *unmündig* that takes place in the reification of the oral that occurs by way of both the law and the book. The question confronting the novel is whether it is capable of maintaining or recovering the ontological difference that is a marker of contestation. To the extent that modernity has come to form a discursive totality, the novel’s engagement with the discursive cannot merely remain within this register without simply replicating that totality. This is the problem Frederick Jameson attempts to confront when, in the foreword to the English translation of Peter Weiss’ *The Aesthetics of Resistance*, he speaks of the need for the avant-garde to not only modify the ‘way a work is constructed or executed, but also by a program of changes for its reception’ (in Weiss, P. (2005) *The Aesthetics of Resistance: Vol. 1*, trans. Neugroschel, J. Durham & London: Duke University Press, p. xii), a claim, of course, that has its roots in both Benjamin and Adorno. The avant-garde must press upon the receiver new modes of reception. To return to the novel, if its emergence charts a movement that extends beyond itself, to the sociopolitical, then it must, in the way that it informs its own reception, press upon its readers the historical movement that its emergence is predicated upon. Otherwise the novel becomes a mere transmitter of information, the latter going unrecognised as a form of communication that is itself new and the after-effect of historical contestation.

⁵³ As will be argued in chapter 2, this is precisely what Hegel is getting at when he asks of Kant from where did the transcendental faculties and categories come from? What Kant forgets is that the transcendental subject is an after-effect, not a ground, which means its transcendence is obtained rather than given. For Hegel, there can be no return in which the universality of language, and thus the discursive, can be suspended. Which is to say that the unspoken sublimity that accompanies the

strike the reader as an unambiguously false claim, Kant's notion of the sublime doing precisely what Benjamin would later suggest in preserving a space for the unsayable. However, Kant's very establishing of an absolute distinction, and thus an absolute limit, between the phenomenal and noumenal means that the sublime is also (negatively) circumscribed within the discursive totality of the *mündlich*. That is, it only figures in opposition to it such that it is determined by it. In sociohistorical terms, the sublime supervenes onto the discursive, which means its efficacy as a counter to the reification that accompanies such a totality is not merely given. Which is to say that the experience of the sublime does not occur without also transforming the way in which it is received, which necessitates dislodging the subject position of the spectator, for whom the sublime does not figure or figures only discursively.

Although Benjamin suggests that for the genius there can be no restoration of the 'moral world order'⁵⁴, there is nonetheless the production of a new totality that fails to maintain the very subjectivity that enabled the sublation of the past. The Kantian sublime, and aesthetic more generally, figures as reactionary because it fails to recognise the lateness that is the marker of an aesthetic response to the totalising of the discursive: Kant mistakenly thinks that the sublime, upon which modernity depends, is merely carried into that totality such that its experience remains available. Although the sublime emerges with the lifting of the head, this movement must be preserved (and repeated anew) in order that the sublime continue to pertain post emergence. The civil society established on the back of this movement, in failing to recognise itself as an after-effect of contestation, effaces its other. The Kantian aesthetic, it could be maintained, attempts to counter the time of the new but is itself dependent upon it. This is what Andrew Benjamin refers to as the 'reawakening of

emergence of a subject who is 'better than God' can only be approached, at least initially, discursively. However (and this is the wager at stake with Hegel), this does not mean that the past from which the present emerged is effaced absolutely in its discursive rendering. Precisely because time itself is not homogenous, the past need not be approached as continuous and thus absent of contestation and dissensus despite not being able to be accessed 'the way it really was'. Although Kant offers an account of what counters the discursive (what could simply be termed the aesthetic), access to the other of the discursive can only take place by way of the discursive, which, it will be argued, demands a discursivity that is capable of doing what would seem impossible from within its given confines. Only by going back to Kant by way of Hegel does, as the conclusion to the thesis will argue, this possibility abound. This is the paradox of both philosophy and the present that will be taken up again shortly by way of Marx and Adorno. In this sense, Hegel figures as the vanishing mediator that allows of the type of Kantian Marxism espoused by Robert Kaufman and which Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* could be said to evince. See Kaufman, R. "Red Kant, or the Persistence of the Third "Critique" in Adorno and Jameson", *Critical Inquiry*, Summer 2000, vo. 26, no. 4, pp. 682-724

⁵⁴ Benjamin, W. (1979) op. cit. p. 127

the forces of tradition' in which the contestation upon which maturity is predicated is replaced by the immediacy of a given form of time that whilst modern is absent of what allowed the modern⁵⁵. As Dolar has written, 'the voice was the medium of democratization of justice, and it was supported by another element of "political fiction," namely that democracy is a matter of immediacy, that is, of the voice; the ideal democracy would be the one where everybody could hear everybody else's voice'⁵⁶. In the 'space of reasons', communication is both plural and egalitarian, or so such a totality claims about itself. It is in the latter assumption that the unspoken and unsayable, which the totality is predicated upon, is excluded. Walter Benjamin turns to Goethe to express the sentiment: 'the poor you let become guilty' [Ihr laßt den Armen schuldig werden]⁵⁷. Not only is there the excluded, guilt is attributed to that which does not accord with, and thus does not find itself included in, the totality: to not speak in the requisite voice is a fault of the unsayable. And yet, it is this very exclusion that also renders the totality guilty in the sense that exclusion entails a return to the immediacy of the temporality of fate: the lack of immediate articulation of the unsayable reducing the totality to the singular, which inscribes it within a logic of continuity. Both Hegel's figure of the 'rabble'⁵⁸ and Foucault's 'something plebeian'⁵⁹ suggest of this existence that both is and is not, is there yet not there, being and non-being, which the democratising of maturity denies in its forgetting of the unsayable and/or its circumscription within determined parameters. Lost in the apparent transparency of a universal maturity is what Benjamin refers to as the 'shaking' [im Erdbeben] of the 'tormented world' [qualvollen Welt]⁶⁰, which figures as the event of which the present is an after-effect and which enabled the raising of the head in the first instance. The mature, in the time of the new, forgets that it was once immature and thus reverts into the latter, the contestation and plurality from which it results effaced.

⁵⁵ Benjamin, A. (1993) *The Plural Event: Descartes, Hegel, Heidegger*, London: Verso, p. 10

⁵⁶ Dolar, op. cit. p. 109

⁵⁷ Benjamin, W. (1979), op. cit. p. 127

⁵⁸ Hegel, G.W.F (1991) *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Wood, A. trans. Nisbet, H.B. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 264

⁵⁹ Foucault, M. (1980) "Power and Strategies", in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other Writings: 1972–1977*, ed. Gordin, C. New York: Pantheon Books, p. 141

⁶⁰ Benjamin, W. (1979), op. cit. p. 127

Concomitant with this movement from immaturity to maturity is what Deleuze frames as the movement from cardinal to ordinal time⁶¹. In the emergence of the ordinal time of *Neuzeit* is both a shaking of the world that allows for the ‘critical construction of being’ and its reduction to an undifferentiated and homogenous universality⁶². This is the dialectic of modernity and tradition, the dominance of the latter invoking a regression in which the lifted head, as chapter 2 will argue on Hegelian terms, becomes a *Caput Mortuum*, or ‘dead-head’, for whom life is governed by immediacy and tradition despite also being firmly modern. Although *Neuzeit* allows of maturity, the arising anew of the mist of guilt also remains a modern possibility⁶³. The reduction of time to the homogeneity of successive measure returns the subject to the immaturity of the ‘political fiction’ of immediacy. To adopt the Kantian idiom, the *ultra-modern* reinstates a ‘self-incurred immaturity’ [selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit] that does not ‘dare to be wise’⁶⁴. To be governed by successive measure, as will be argued later in the chapter, is to be circumscribed within a logic of

⁶¹ Deleuze, G. (1994) *Difference and Repetition*, London, UK: The Athlone Press, p. 88

⁶² What will become modernity’s other possibility is a movement that Andrew Benjamin, in writing on Kant’s notion of *Unmündigkeit*, frames as from the aesthetic to the affective (Benjamin, A. (2015) *Towards a Relational Ontology: Philosophy’s Other Possibility*, Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, p. 68). Benjamin’s intention is to move beyond the fleetingness of aesthetic experience in order to construct a subject for whom the experience of the sublime or the unsayable does not end in a return to an immature subject for whom the event may well not have taken place. An affective structure of subjectivity is one in which the subject is transformed by experiences that exceed its grasp such that what cannot be captured by the discursive does not remain excluded. In the chapters to follow this other possibility will be framed as demanding a movement from a Kantian modernity to a Hegelian one.

⁶³ See, for example, Osborne’s discussion of the avant-garde (*The Politics of Time*, pp. 162-68). Both a radical politics of interruption and a reactionary politics of what he names ‘conservative revolution’ figure as modernity’s possibilities. To extend the discussion to Marx would be to assert the sense in which a capitalist mode of production is also bound up with this reawakening of the forces of tradition. Inherent to capitalism is what will be termed at a later point the continuity of discontinuity, which, although giving the impression of constantly producing the new, engages instead in the preservation of a new form of oppression that becomes permanent. This becomes clear in Walter Benjamin’s line about the dual nature of dialectical materialism: ‘for the materialist dialectician discontinuity must be the regulative idea of the tradition of the ruling classes, continuity that of the oppressed classes’ (Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*, ed. Tiedemann, R. trans. Eiland, H. & McLaughlin, K. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p. 364). For all the comings and goings from the scene of history, what Benjamin is concerned with is the continuity of domination that persists beyond the finitude of the specific forms in which domination inheres. This is despite, as Jameson points out, continuity always being on the side of ‘culture’, on the side of the dominant (*Aesthetic of Resistance*, op. cit. p. xlv). This is what Jameson refers to as a ‘methodological reversal’, and which allows appear what would otherwise be obscured by orthodoxy: namely, that the dominant is that which continues such that a radical politics should always be concerned with the discontinuous, a position that then leads to a siding with destruction over and against construction. This latter tendency, I want to argue, can be traced, as an example, to the figuring of the sublime in Lyotard. The sublime, to the extent that it remains confined to the aesthetic, fails to dislodge the discursive totality that nonetheless makes room for it. In this, the sublime is recouped without, on Hegelian terms, ‘laying old of the divine’. See Lyotard’s *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*.

⁶⁴ Kant (1991) op. cit. p. 54

presence in which the untimely (as the ‘rabble’ or ‘something plebeian’) cannot figure. Whilst the subject is an after-effect of the passage from *unmündig* to *mündig*, it takes itself to be wholly constituted in terms of its presence. Circumscribed within a self-enclosed present, the subject does not and cannot know what it is subject to, which can be framed, following Gerhard Richter, as the *afterness* of tradition that lingers in the present despite the disavowal of the past, a lingering, nonetheless, that is the result of such disavowal⁶⁵. This *afterness* continues to pertain as a limit in the present despite the present understanding itself as having left its past behind in the raising of the head. In this, the present cannot extricate itself from conditions that it does not know it is subject to, which, as the discussion of Freud will show, condemns it to a repetition in which it is haunted by the ‘uncanny’.

The successive time of modernity maintains the subject in the position of a ‘self-incurred immaturity’ by denying both the interruption from which it emerged and reducing existence to a discursive totality in which the untimely cannot figure. As what could be named a modality of the present, a modality informed by the immediacy of successive measure, the *ultra-modern* is allied with a particular life. To be up-to-date is to live out a modality that fails to understand itself as *unmündig*, and, as a consequence, engaged in repetition. Although such a life is historically specific and subject to particular limitations, it is a life that has absolutised its mode precisely because internal to it is the disavowal of a differential past, and thus its own historical specificity. Approached quantitatively, the time of the new, and its attendant subject, proves both absent of difference and immutable. On Walter Benjamin’s terms, the reduction of the human to the immediacy of the given circumscribes the subject within the limits of what he names ‘mere life’⁶⁶.

⁶⁵ Richter, G. (2011), *Afterness: Figures of Following in Modern Through and Aesthetics*, New York, US: Columbia University Press

⁶⁶ Benjamin writes in *On the Critique of Violence*, ‘for with mere life the rule of law over the living ceases. Mythical violence is bloody power over mere life for its own sake, divine violence pure power over all life for the sake of the living. The first demands sacrifice, the second accepts it (Benjamin, W. (1979) op. cit. p. 151). See also, Benjamin A. *Working with Walter Benjamin*, op. cit. p. 33, and Žižek, S. (2003) *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, p. 94. As noted in the introduction in the discussion of Oedipus, there is a difference between a founding violence that establishes a totality of the singular and the conflict born of the co-presence of ontological difference. The former is predicated upon the latter without, at the same time, being necessary. Politics, it will be claimed, occurs in the passage between the plural and the singular, which is to say that any totality is itself an after-effect of contestation despite appearing as sovereign and thus inaugurating.

Unfolded in the rest of the chapter will be a consideration of the totality invoked by Kant's 'transcendental turn' and its reduction of life to 'mere life'. It will be argued that a Kantian modernity, which continues to persist, produces a totality condemned to repetition insofar as it precludes the possibility of totalisation assuming different temporal form. Kant's 'normative totality'⁶⁷ is one that strives to 'administer justice [Recht] universally'⁶⁸, a universality that remains blind to the excluded to the extent that it is inscribed within the homogenous time of successive measure. In the pursuit of what will be named a 'way-out' of the repetition of a 'bad modernity', in which recourse will also be made to Marx and Freud, the passage from immaturity to maturity must be recovered and repeated anew, this time with Hegel, which is the concern of chapters 2-5. The latter will suggest of modernity's other possibility, one in which past, present and future are not only temporally discontinuous, but able to be brought into relation without effacing absolutely their differences, which counters readings of Hegel that suggest he remains within a logic of presence, readings that run all the way from Feuerbach to Peter Osborne by way of Lukács, Derrida and Foucault. In contrast to Kant, Hegel allows of a form of temporal totalisation that is both differentiated from past form and open to assuming other forms by way of what can be named the co-presence of difference that his notions of 'bending around'⁶⁹ and 'working-through'⁷⁰ effect. Indeed, Hegel's 'Absolute Knowing', it will be claimed, refers precisely to the co-presence of difference, which means it refers not merely to the epistemological, but the recovery of the event and contestation – at the level of the ontological – in the present. In this light, the end of history refers not to an absence of conflict, but to the end of a particular form that the discursive totality has assumed, an end that can only come about in being negated by another form of temporal totalisation, which would open up the future's possibility.

The argument will be pursued via the consideration of the temporal interruption invoked by modernity, which will also include a delineation of the transformation of

⁶⁷ Jay, M. (1984), *Marxism and Totality: Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas*, Berkeley, US: University of California Press, p. 47

⁶⁸ Kant, op, cit. p. 45

⁶⁹ Hegel, G.W.F. (2010) *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline, Part I: Science of Logic*, eds. & trans. Brinkmann, K. & Dahlstrom, D. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 228

⁷⁰ Hegel, G.W.F. (1977) *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Miller, A.V. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 15, trans. amended. This term would, of course, come to figure as central to Freud's later psychoanalytic method, as espoused in his *Remembering, Repeating, Working-Through*.

experience that the coming of *Neuzeit* provoked, and which has rendered the subject of a Kantian modernity spectator. Before this however, the argument for the subject as after-effect will be made.

A Conditioned Life: Living Out the Sins of the Father

Framing successive time as a particular modality raises the question as to how such a modality informs a life. The giving of an answer necessitates returning to Kant, who, to repeat the line from the introduction, figures in this work as something like Hamlet's ghost, unable to be interred despite ostensible death. Introduced by Kant is what has come, following Husserl, to be termed the 'transcendental turn', a turn that this work will explicitly take whilst also attempting to move beyond its Kantian form⁷¹. To follow Kant is to maintain that life, approached here in terms of there being something that appears before or is experienced by a subject, is lived under conditions that do not appear in immediacy despite determining what immediately appears⁷². For Kant, the very possibility of experience is predicated upon both

⁷¹ As Jeffrey Malpas points out, Kant is (mostly) very careful to distinguish between the 'transcendental' and the 'transcendent' (Malpas, J. (2003) *From Kant to Davidson: Philosophy and the Idea of the Transcendental*, London & New York: Routledge, p. 1). Because the former refers to claims about, in Kant's words, 'not so much... objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects in so far as this is to be possible a priori', it is not the case, at least from Kant's own perspective, that he engages in the speculation or dogmatism of metaphysics. The transcendental does not, in Kant's words, 'signify something passing beyond all experience, but something that indeed precedes it a priori', and which 'is intended simply to make knowledge of experience possible' (Kant, I. (2004) *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Hatfield, G. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 125). As will be suggested however, Kant gets caught in the trap between refusing the speculative, and its suggestions of that which surpasses all experience, and wanting to claim that the phenomenal does not 'follow' the faculty of Reason in its 'taking leave' of known objects of experience. Rather than allow the a priori, and thus certainty in cognition, Kant both reduces thinking to the parameters of empiricism and precludes the possibility of the phenomenal being expanded beyond the empirical.

⁷² This, of course, will be challenged by Hegel, a challenge that becomes the focus of chapter 2. However, what will be maintained is that despite denying an absolute difference between the conditions that allow and the conditioned that is allowed, or what might otherwise be framed as form and content, Hegel nonetheless insists that the former are neither merely given nor transcendental. Indeed, the very distinction between subject and object (as appearance) is for Hegel a particular state of affairs predicated upon historical change. Where he will distinguish his own position most readily from Kant is by arguing that what for Kant remains an *in kind* difference between the transcendental and sensible (which do not conflict) stand in a dialectical relation (as a relation of non-relations), such that both are subject to transformation and neither can be exhausted by present form. Which is to say that Hegel does not regress to the pre-Kantian dogmatism of Christian Wolff despite insisting (with Wolff, and against Kant) that the ontological, as it pertains in relation to consciousness, is constitutive of things-in-themselves. Instead, Hegel incorporates Kant's challenge to metaphysics within his own position whilst also attempting to go beyond Kant. As will be argued in the chapters to follow, that consciousness is ontologically constitutive of objects does not mean that they are merely ideal, nor that one ends in illusion.

conditions of possibility and the givenness of sensory impressions, which are, on his terms, ‘gone through’ [durchgegangen], ‘taken up’ [aufgenommen] and ‘combined’ [verbunden] by the intellect as a means of cognising an object of experience⁷³. From this principally Kantian position, subjective experience is mediated by conditions of possibility, which Kant terms the faculties and categories of cognition⁷⁴. The way in which something figures or appears is determined by certain conditions such that nothing empirical figures without being conditioned. With Kant, these conditions assumed a particular form, one, moreover, that will prove problematic, as it inscribes the subject within what can be named a modality of spectation. Kant’s *Critical Philosophy* invokes a particular life insofar as the conditions of possibility inscribed upon the subject, or even as the subject, allow objects of experience to figure in a particular manner. There is, it could be argued, a Kantian modality that, despite its historical specificity, has come to inform the modern subject, which, in turn, suggests of the modern as spectator. As a claim to be worked out in the course of this work, modernity became and has remained Kantian. This is not to say that Kant is in some way responsible for introducing the time of the new, but that his work registered, and rendered metaphysical, conditions that pertained during his lifetime and which continue to inform the present. In the reification of what was earlier described in terms of the movement from immaturity to maturity in which the contestation from which the latter emerged is effaced, the conditions that arose with the coming of *Neuzeit* figure in both the *Critical Philosophy* and the constitution of civil society more generally.

It is for this reason that the attempt made in the third *Critique* to undo what Kant himself came to recognise as a problematic account of experience proves ineffective and reactionary insofar as it sought to evade a form of successive time that informed not just his ‘normative totality’, but also the civil society in which subjects are situated in modernity. The Kantian present is not merely a philosophical condition,

⁷³ Kant, I. (1998) *Critique of Pure Reason*, eds. & trans. Guyer, P. & Wood, A. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 210

⁷⁴ For Kant, the conditions of possibility are divided between those that belong to intuition, which allow for the reception of sensory impressions, and those that belong to the intellect, which organise sensory impressions, the former passive, the latter active, or what Kant refers to as ‘spontaneous’. Insofar as he frames intuition and intellect as *in kind* different, the being of objects of experience is necessarily dichotomous, both sensible and intellectual, the former given by objects themselves, the latter furnished by the subject. It is this *in kind* difference that Hegel will come to contest.

but an after-effect of historical forces from which the present emerged. It is in this sense that such conditions can be approached as materially effective. The possibility of a future, which depends upon the transformation of such conditions, does not follow (owing to their materiality) from a strategy of avoidance. Neither *Lebensphilosophie* nor stoicism, which attribute immediacy to an aspect of experience that is held apart from a mechanical and abstract scientism, as with Henri Bergson, will suffice. Nor, moreover, can they be dislodged via reflective forms of judgement. Even what appears most distant from and least permeated by the repetition and nullity of 'mere life' takes on its contours. Only in immediacy does such distance appear to pertain. Insofar as the immediate is mediated by conditions not immediately given, to render an aspect of experience an exception is to merely affirm the whole that *Lebensphilosophie*, stoicism and aesthetics set out to oppose. The subject is, it will be maintained, an after-effect of what is considered external and at some distance from an internal domain that in immediacy appears to evade the problematic aspects of the society in which it has its being. Civil society is not a mere empirical space, but is itself bound up with the conditions that determine the figuring of the given and which permeate and shape the very depths of the subject, including the division between inner and outer.

To the extent that the conditions of possibility that belong to the first *Critique* have come to inform the living out of present life, and figure as the limits to the present, Kant remains central to the comprehension of the present. And yet, what must be reiterated at this point is that the contemporaneity of Kant does not exhaust modernity. To move from Kant to Hegel is to allow that the conditions themselves are subject to change, a possibility that for Hegel follows from bringing the conditions and the conditioned into relation, and thus refusing the non-relation that Kant invokes in his distinction between transcendental and phenomenal wherein the former determines the latter whilst remaining indeterminate. To approach the present by way of the notion of modality is to open up the possibility of other modalities. Whilst a certain Kantian modality continues to define the present, not only is this modernity not absolute, his own work both registers and depends upon conditions of possibility that exceed the parameters that the *Critique of Pure Reason* attempted to found as universal and atemporal. There is ontological conflict in Kant's work, but rather than drawing out and allowing figure such difference, he tends towards effacing the latter

by way of establishing a founding unity. There is a reading of Kant, which cannot be pursued here, that attends to those aspects of his work where, to paraphrase Jan Völker, he does what he does not know he is doing, that is, where he exceeds the limits that he himself inscribes upon the subject in the first *Critique*⁷⁵. This exceeding or surpassing however is not merely accidental. Rather, Kant engages, even if unknowingly, in the ‘bending back around’ and ‘working-through’ of the conditions that determine the present and belong to the first *Critique*⁷⁶. Which is to say he engages in the recovery of the past effaced by time’s successive movement and the potentialities that mark the present. There is the possibility of another life that both manifests in Kant’s work and which continues to insist in this Kantian modernity despite failing to appear and thus appearing as impossible. The modern need not remain spectator despite being a default position to which it continually reverts in the reawakening of the forces of tradition⁷⁷. Which is to say that the position in which the modern finds itself, as an after-effect of a particular history, does not determine absolutely what remains open to it. If spectatorship can be approached as a particular modality, one in which difference is effaced and change proves arbitrary, modernity is not exhausted by spectatorship despite the assuming of such a position being bound up with the coming of modernity. To follow Adorno’s claim that modernity is suggestive of the qualitative rather than quantitative allows that this potentiality, and the possibility of a different modality, continues to figure in the present. Whilst life is lived under conditions, these conditions remain both plural and contested, which also means that the given, despite its immediacy, is subject to transformation. It is within such contestation that this work will attempt to insert itself, its concern both diagnosing the conditions of possibility under which life is lived (along with their attendant problems), and recovering the potentiality of another life. Hegel, it will be claimed, in taking his lead from the third *Critique*, attempts to reinvoke the ‘shaking’ of the ‘tormented world’ that the lifting of the head was predicated upon and which was lost

⁷⁵ Völker, J. “From Hegel to Kant”, in *Slavoj Žižek and Dialectical Materialism*, eds. Ruda, F. & Hamza, A. (2016) UK: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 58

⁷⁶ These terms belong to Hegel and will be elaborated fully later in the piece.

⁷⁷ Again, whilst spectatorship is a modality that belongs to modernity it nonetheless assumes the form of tradition, being both modern and a reaction to the modern that seeks to deny the advent of modernity. As Freud has argued, despite giving the ‘misleading impression of being forces tending towards change and progress...’, [tradition seeks] to achieve an old goal by new means as well as old’ (Freud, S. (1961) *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. Strachey, J. New York & London: W.W. Norton & Co. p. 32, trans. amended).

in the reification of a successive form of time and the democratisation of a form of maturity that remains blind to its other.

The possibility of overcoming the limits of ‘mere life’ depends upon the comprehension of such limits. Hegel’s term for comprehension, *Begreifen*, must be held apart from the more Kantian notions of ‘understanding’ [verstehen] and ‘apprehension’ [auffassen], which attempt to grasp the phenomenal world by way of *a priori* conditions to which the knowing subject either remains blind or construes as necessarily fixed. Comprehension, by contrast, is concerned not only with epistemology, but also ontology. As Hegel writes in the *Phenomenology*, what pertains, or what ‘is’, is not the ‘actual whole, but rather the result together with the process through which it came about’⁷⁸. Of significance here, which counters the position of Kant, is that the process of comprehension is itself constitutive of objects. This process, as an argument that remains to be formulated, necessitates what can be named a plural notion of being in which the contestation that accrues from the co-presence of ontological difference transforms, and thus produces anew, not only the conditions of possibility that pertain in any present, but also that which is given. Comprehension, to the extent that it grasps this process by ‘bending back around’ and ‘working-through’ its moments, attempts to recover ontological difference, which, in allowing for the figuring of a plural being previously excluded, also produces that being. As Robert Sinnerbrink has written, this Hegelian negativity ‘is constitutive, ontological rather than ontic’, in the sense, as will be explicated below, that the determination of being that follows from such work transforms what ‘is’⁷⁹. Comprehension, on Hegelian grounds, figures in the determination of the conditions that mark the present, conditions that are ontologically efficacious and themselves the result of the contestation derived from the co-presence of difference. And whilst they do not exhaust existence, they nonetheless figure in the determination of that which figures in immediacy. If the ontological difference of which the present is an after-effect is excluded from the present, recovering its moments necessitates the surpassing of the present’s limits, which opens up the possibility of a future in which such a surpassing informs a new configuration of consciousness, as Hegel names the

⁷⁸ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 2

⁷⁹ Sinnerbrink, R. “The Hegelian “*Night of the World*”: Žižek on Subjectivity, Negativity, and Universality”, *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, p. 8

conditions of possibility that belong to a present. In this, consciousness, and the shape it assumes, is bound up with the determination of the ontological, and thus with what pertains. This is Hegel's objective idealism, one that does not exhaust being, as will be argued in chapter 3.

Philosophy, approached in terms of comprehension, is not therefore a mere form of contemplation. Not only does action, when held apart from philosophical practice, always already occur under conditions that do not appear, and thus remain mediated, the very divide between contemplation and action is an after-effect of the either/or logic that defines Kantian modernity. It is precisely this logic, which informs the parochialism and sectarianism of the present, that a new configuration of consciousness, as modernity's other possibility, would displace⁸⁰. In the time of the new however, comprehension proves elusive owing to the disorientation that a successive form of time invokes, which leads, as Adorno has it, to 'blaming on the neighbour [Nächsten] what is perpetrated by the whole, in the helpless attempt to make the incommensurable commensurable [Inkommensurabilität Kommensurabel zu machen]'⁸¹. Under the conditions of *Neuzeit* the whole evades subjective grasp by circumscribing the epistemological within a logic of immediacy that has no recourse to the conditions under which knowing takes place. As Adorno has argued, because subjects identify with what is 'immediately present' [unmittelbar gegenwärtig] to them, including the institutions, commodities, things and relations that populate the present, 'they are incapable [nicht fähig] of perceiving [wahrzunehmen] their dependence upon processes at some distance from them, the actual objective processes [objektiven Prozessen eigentlich]'⁸². Identifying with the immediate precludes the recovery of ontological difference, and, consequently, the transformation of the conditions under which life is lived in the present.

Although these claims may seem far from the philosophical and its supposed concern with meaning, truth or normativity (that is, with the question of how one should live,

⁸⁰ As Mark C. Taylor writes, 'as the impending threat shifts from totalitarianism to sectarianism, it is becoming increasingly clear that if oppositions can be neither negotiated nor mediated global catastrophe is all but inevitable' (Taylor, M. "Infinite Restlessness", in *Hegel and the Infinite: Religion, Politics and Dialectic*, eds. Žižek, S., Crockett, C. & Davis C. (2001) New York: Columbia University Press, p. 91).

⁸¹ Adorno (2005) op. cit. p. 163

⁸² Adorno (2006) op. cit. p. 77

or what one should do), what is being claimed here is that approaches that do not attend to the objective conditions under which life is lived, and which philosophy cannot itself evade, remain blind to both the reduction of life to the homogenous and undifferentiated, and the potentiality for another life that already marks the present. Which is to say that to remain within the logic of immediacy, with its associated lack of historical comprehension, is to affirm rather than surpass the conditions under which 'mere life' occurs. Approaches that attempt to direct life in some way cannot be anything other than a mere quibbling that attempts to derive the best possible outcome from within conditions that remain unmoved. This is not to say that the philosophical approach pursued here can in some way transform those conditions. However, what falls to philosophy, it will be argued, is the ability to discursively present potentialities not limited to the given parameters that mark the present. This opens up the possibility of organising around such potentialities in order that they become actualised. Which can be contrasted with the infanticide that has accompanied the emergence of what can be named, following Hegel's critique of Kant, the various one-sided ideas that failed to materialise, or whose materialisation was maintained by way of barbarity, as in the case of the Soviet Union. If the sectarianism of the present is to be consigned to the past (albeit with the knowledge that such consignment is never final, the reawakening of the forces of tradition a constant threat), the conditions of possibility under which 'mere life', a retrograde life, is lived, must change. By being up-to-date one merely lives out conditions that do not figure in immediacy such that life is the after-effect of what the subject remains absent from. It is for this reason that Walter Benjamin makes the argument that the present is always living out the sins of the father despite, or rather because of, the disavowal of the past and the apparent distance that separates then from now⁸³. Such sins are not (or not only) the deeds and occurrences that constitute history

⁸³ Benjamin writes in his Kafka essay that 'the fathers in Kafka's strange families batten on their sons, lying on top of them like giant parasites. They not only prey upon their strength, but gnaw away at the sons' right to exist. Fathers punish, but they are at the same time accusers. The sin of which they accuse their sons seems to be a kind of original sin' (Benjamin W. (2005) *Selected Writings: Vol. 2, Part 2 (1931-1934)* eds. Jennings, M., Eiland, H. & Smith, G. trans. Livingston, R. & Others, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p. 796). The sins of which the son is accused by the father stems from the continuity that pertains between them insofar as the son merely lives out what is handed down to him. By bending back and comprehending the past, the son not only transforms himself, but also the father in a manner that renders them discontinuous. The past cannot be dissolved, but it can, via what will be termed a retroactive incursion, be transformed by recovering the moments of contestability from which the present emerged, which opens up the present as a site of contestation rather than mere continuity.

(although even these are subject to repetition and necessarily accord with the conditions that pertain), but the conditions that determine the living out of a life in all its aspects and which figure as the limits to any present. As Marx has written:

Mankind [Menschen] makes its own history, but not of its own free will [aus freien Stücken]; it does not make it under conditions [Umstände] of its choosing [selbstgewählten], but under those that it immediately finds itself in [unmittelbar vergebundenen], which are given [gegebenen] and handed down [überlieferten] from the past⁸⁴.

The disavowal of a differential and contested past that marks successive time has the effect of excluding from the present the possibility of comprehending the conditions within which life is lived. As Ray Brassier has suggested, ‘the failure to change the world may not be unrelated to the failure to understand it’⁸⁵. Disavowal of the objective conditions under which life is lived do not make such conditions inoperative, but instead precludes the possibility of their transformation, the conditions continuing to effect despite their apparent absence. This is not to say however that such conditions are merely historical constraints in the sense that knowing the past would mean no longer being subject to them. As will become clear in the discussion of Freud, the past that, as Marx puts it, ‘weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living [lastet wie ein Alp auf dem Gehirne der Lebenden]’⁸⁶, cannot be known on the epistemological terms that belong to the present precisely because such a past is not given on those terms. The ‘actual objective processes’ of which the present is an after-effect are not themselves given, nor can they be transformed via mere reflection. Maintained by comprehension’s lack is a politics of continuity in which the sins of the father continue to be unknowingly lived out, the mist of guilt and a logic of fate continuing to govern.

⁸⁴ Marx, K. (1975), *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, New York: International Publishers Co. p. 15 (trans. amended)

⁸⁵ Brassier, R. *Concepts and Objects*, unpublished manuscript, quoted in Ruda, F. “Back to the Factory: A Plea for a Renewal of Concrete Analysis of Concrete Situations”, in *Beyond Potentialities? Politics between the Possible and the Impossible*, eds. Ruda, F., Potocnik, M., & Völker, J., (2013) Berlin: Diaphanes, p. 39.

⁸⁶ Marx (1975) op. cit. p. 15

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The result of a politics of continuity is the repetition of the past, a past, moreover, that is taken to have been either left behind, or which does not figure as past. As one of a number of Freudian motifs that will be drawn upon throughout the work, underpinning the continuity of particular conditions, conditions that can be traced to Kant's first *Critique*, but are nonetheless material, is a 'compulsion to repeat'⁸⁷. Repetition, it would seem, is not in itself problematic. To link it to a notion of habit, repetition underpins the very means with which a subject finds a home for itself in the world, and allows some form of cognitive orientation. And yet, it can also be linked to the continuing of 'mere life' and the reinstating of an 'immaturity' in which the subject remains absent from what it is subjected to, the objective processes that do not manifest in immediacy. If, as will be argued, the Kantian modality is bound to a notion of life in which pain and suffering awaits both the One and the other, why, if humankind makes its own history, does a civil society that would seem to be antithetical to life continue to persist? As Rebecca Comay puts it in relation to the normative, 'why, despite their manifest rottenness, despite their blatant contradictoriness and ineffectiveness, do outdated normative commitments *persist, and keep returning* long after their illegitimacy has been universally acknowledged?'⁸⁸ It is not just particular norms that are problematic, but the very idea that norms can and do govern behaviour. What repetition points towards is the irrationality that marks the rational, the latter unable to leave behind and distinguish itself from the former. Again, suggested here is that what a subject is subjected to or effected by exceeds the subject's grasp, including its normative commitments. As Freud argues in his *Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through*, not only is a past not remembered repeatedly acted out, knowing that one is repeating what is antithetical to life does not necessarily enable it to be avoided; the patient knows but does it anyway, Freud suggesting of the sense in which subjectivity exceeds

⁸⁷ Freud, S. (1991) "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through", *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Vol. XVII*, trans. Strachey, J. London: The Hogarth Press, p. 150

⁸⁸ Comay, R. "Hegel: Non-metaphysical, Post-metaphysical, Post Traumatic (Response to Lumsden, Redding, Sinnerbrink)", *Parrhesia*, no. 17 (2013) p. 54. It is this question that not only Robert Pippin's brand of normativity, but analytic philosophy more generally, cannot adequately answer.

subjective self-consciousness⁸⁹. To know the world, it will be argued, does not enable self-determination because determination is not a matter of epistemology alone. Indeed, the very means with which the world is apprehended precludes the possibility of evading the irrationality of the compulsion to repeat, the form that knowing assumes in the time of the new effacing the unsayable that exceeds the subject's grasp by reducing existence to the immediate⁹⁰.

The repetition that accompanies 'mere reflection' is not overcome however via recourse to the visceral over and against the intellectual. In contrast to his earlier work, the diminution of what Freud names 'unpleasurable tension' [unlustvolle Spannung] was no longer, by the time of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, considered to be the principle regulator of mental life. In the notion of the 'death-drive' [Todestrieb] Freud located a means of explaining the compulsion towards repeating what invokes a feeling of 'unpleasure' [Unlust], which suggests of competing structures of consciousness, one marked by the 'pleasure principle', the other by the 'death-drive'⁹¹. The Freudian subject is not just an amalgam of the conscious and

⁸⁹ Freud writes: ... 'then we may say that the patient does not remember anything at all of what he has forgotten and repressed, but rather acts it out. He reproduces it not as a memory, but as an action; he repeats it, without of course being aware of the fact that he is repeating it' (Freud (1991) op. cit. p. 150).

⁹⁰ For Freud, this form of knowing amounts to giving something a 'name', which, he suggests, enables that something to be neither grasped nor evaded. He adds, 'I have often been asked to advise upon cases in which the doctor complained that he had pointed out his resistance to the patient and that nevertheless *no change had set in*; indeed, the resistance had become all the stronger, and the whole situation was *more obscure* than ever' (ibid. p. 155). The argument to be pursued throughout this opening chapter is that naming, as an inadequate form of knowing that maintains both subject and object in atomised form, is bound up with the time of the new such that the possibility of knowing otherwise (which would not merely be knowing, but rather, the ontological production of the other) is predicated upon another time.

⁹¹ The compulsion to repeat suggests for Freud of a drive towards a primordial state. Insofar as every life ends in death, the organism becoming inorganic, Freud reads this necessary end as the attainment of the primordial state sought. Organic life is thus driven towards death or the inanimate beginning from which it emerged. In calling the subject back, the 'death-drive' counters the movement and change invoked by forward looking 'pleasure principle' (Freud (1961) op. cit. p. 30). Whilst Freud's claim that life's ending in death is the realisation of a goal to return to an inanimate beginning may be absurd, what is of interest in this opening chapter is the suggestion that the continuity of barbarity is not easily evaded, the rational subject who knows unable to extricate itself from the conditions from which barbarity results. However, there is also another aspect to Freud's conflicted subject. Insofar as the present can be framed in terms of 'mere life', the notion of the 'death-drive' also opens up the possibility of what Hegel termed a 'need' [Bedürfnis] that drives the human being beyond what is merely given (for Freud animate life is driven towards inanimate life, and thus away from the logic of the organism and self-preservation, as well as its singular ontology). If, as will be argued in relation to Marx and what he names the 'alms of nature', there is an irreducible 'non-being' that counters what has presence, objects can be approached as ontologically plural, which has otherwise been named the co-presence of ontological difference. Approached in this way, the 'death-drive' becomes that which calls the singular subject back to the contestation and plurality from which it emerged. It is this return, or

unconscious therefore, but is conflicted, and pulled in differing directions, in a manner that cuts across the conscious/unconscious divide. Freud suggests that although a particular compulsion constitutes unpleasure for one system of consciousness, it simultaneously constitutes satisfaction for the other⁹². In this other ‘system’, repetition ‘represents a source of pleasure’⁹³. The latter is derived from the restoration of a prior state, which was disturbed by what Freud names ‘external forces’⁹⁴. In contrast to the usual understanding of a ‘drive’ as something that invokes ‘change and development’, what Freud introduces is one that expresses the ‘conservative nature of organic life’⁹⁵. There is, it would seem, something from the subject’s past that calls it back, which compels it to repeat, and which goes by the name ‘death-drive’.

The repetition compulsion provides a suitable model with which to approach the form that civil society has assumed under the conditions of *Neuzeit*. The persistence of conditions antithetical to life suggests of a form of societal neurosis, or what Rebecca Comay refers to as ‘structural trauma’⁹⁶. Substituting Freud’s patient with civil society, the argument becomes that what the present, in the time of the new, does not know it is doing, is repeating⁹⁷. There is, it will be maintained, both a temporal and psychological aspect to this repetition. Imbued with a successive form of time, the present continues to act out its irrational past because what is past is consigned to history in the denial of *afterness*. As Adorno argues in his *History and Freedom* lectures, the psychological also plays an important role here in the sense that it aids in

bending back around, as Hegel has it, which enables the recovery of difference and thus what will be referred to as the intensification of the present. There is much to say at this point, but the argument can only be adequately developed as the work as a whole unfolds.

⁹² *ibid.* 14

⁹³ *ibid.* p. 30

⁹⁴ *ibid.* p. 35

⁹⁵ *ibid.* p. 32, trans. amended

⁹⁶ Comay, R. & Nichols, J. (2012) “Missed Revolutions, Non-Revolutions, Revolutions to Come: On Mourning Sickness”, *PhaenEx* 7, no. 1, p. 314. Comay worries, in using the term ‘structural trauma’, that it either becomes yet one more addition to the corpus of ‘trauma studies’ and the fetishisation of telling another past without recognising the tendency towards falling back into what could be called the modality of the victor, or that it becomes immutable, a transcendental principle that persists through time. As will be argued shortly however, although the structure that Comay points to exceeds the psychological, and figures as a determinant of being, it is a consequence of the time of the new rather than a different time that pertains concurrently. Whilst comprehending the present demands coming to terms with such structural trauma, it is not the case that this temporal form figures as a counter-measure to new time. Rather, the afterness that marks the present, the lingering of a past that can be neither left behind nor grasped, is a result of life’s reduction to ‘mere life’. This suggests that such trauma is neither metaphysical nor merely nominal or empirical. It both persists and remains mutable.

⁹⁷ Benjamin, A. (2013) *op. cit.* p. 251

repressing such afterness, and thus helps maintain time in its successive movement. However, the psychological is not a primordial or original ground such that coming to terms with it would enable a ‘way-out’ of ‘mere life’. Rather, it is a ‘secondary’ or ‘supplementary’ phenomenon that sustains the ‘actual objective processes’ of which the subject is an after-effect. The psychological functions as ‘the cement of the world as it exists [zum Kitt des je Seienden]’, holding together ‘the very conditions that would be seen through rationally [rational zu durchschauen], if this irrational cement did not exist’⁹⁸. Ideology, he continues, is not a matter of explicitly directing thought and behaviour, but of maintaining conditions of possibility that are antithetical to life⁹⁹. As Comay points out, modernity is not only marked by a structure of repetition, it also produces ‘ingenious ways to endure and even enjoy this stuckness’¹⁰⁰. This ‘cement’, which Freud names ‘resistance’¹⁰¹, not only persists, but comes attached with all the compulsions and fetishes that accompany the neurotic. There is, it would seem, a perverse enjoyment gained from the reduction of life to ‘mere life’, or even a form of sadism that both Lacan and Adorno read into Kant¹⁰². To return to Koselleck’s earlier description of the coming of *Neuzeit* as the emergence of time as an ‘historical force’, repetition becomes the means with which civil society refuses the ‘external force’ (Freud) that interrupts its continuity, thus restoring a prior state of immaturity. The dialectic of tradition and modernity suggests not only a traumatic structure, but also the perverse enjoyment that acts as the cement that

⁹⁸ Adorno (2006) op. cit. p. 78. It is the psychological that also informs commodity fetishism. The commodity, in Marx’s formulation, appears and is experienced as a relation between things. It is the psychological cement that holds consciousness in place, and thus precludes the recognising of the commodity for what it is. See Osborne, op. cit. p. 182

⁹⁹ A possible response to this argument would be that life is constantly evolving and adapting such that there is no specific form that could be named ‘mere life’. Arguments that frame the human as always already technological and thus always already more than mere biological life would seem to point in this direction. However, what is being argued here is that the evolutions and adaptations that life undergoes remain continuous in the sense that the change that befalls life is merely that of its being up-to-date. Whilst ‘mere life’ is subject to change, what persists is the absence of what Adorno called the ‘critical construction of being’. In its place, change accords with the logic of the organism. As chapter 3 will argue in relation to the critique of Hegel that suggests dialectics is also imbued with this logic, a criticism found in Lukács, Derrida and Foucault, the possibility of a future is not derived from the inevitability of change. What is required instead is the interruption of such inevitability, which is not a claim about preserving the present, but one of opening up a space in which the inevitable does not assume a pre-determined form. That the subject is always already technological and/or cultural does not preclude it from regressing to ‘mere life’.

¹⁰⁰ Comay (2013) op. cit. p. 55

¹⁰¹ Freud, op. cit. p. 164*. See also, Comay, R. (2015), “Resistance and Repetition: Freud and Hegel”, *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 45, pp. 237-266

¹⁰² See, for example, Comay, R. (2006), “Adorno Avec Sade...”, *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1

maintains the present in a barbaric form that excludes from civil society the incommensurate that does not accord with its given measure.

Taken together, a successive form of time and psychological ‘resistance’ to change effect a totality predicated upon absolute *parousia* or presence¹⁰³. In the arrival of maturity as a specific historical occurrence, for instance, the process upon which the lifting of the head depends is, in Kantian modernity, effaced, which encloses the present within itself and suggests the givenness of maturity. This immediacy plays out as the imaging of the future and historicism about the past. Immediacy defines not merely the subject’s relation to its present, but also past and future insofar as they can be imaged. To harbour an image of the present is to maintain a particular ontology, the reduction of the present to what is given discursively accompanied by an image within which being is circumscribed. Absolute *parousia* follows from this image, discursively constituted, when it is assumed that what ‘is’ is captured by such an image. Under the conditions of successive time that deny the possibility of temporal interruption, this image is projected both back into the past and forward into the future such that what is not present is *represented* [vorgestellt] in terms of a form that belongs to the present¹⁰⁴. Again, conceiving of the future by way of the image effaces the aforementioned difference between the future’s insistence and that future assuming a particular form. Andrew Benjamin writes that once the future can be imaged, ‘... what it constructs is a path towards it (the identified future)’. ‘Teleology’, he continues, ‘would thus have taken over, since what is allowed for by the creation of this path is the introduction of the temporality of continuity’¹⁰⁵, which is particularly apparent in Kant’s description of the first *Critique* as turning a footpath into a highway¹⁰⁶. Likewise, a historicism that conceives of the past as recoverable on terms that belong to the present neutralises prior ontological contestation such that the

¹⁰³ See Heidegger, M. (2002) “Hegel’s Concept of Experience”, *Off The Beaten Track*, trans. Young, J. & Haynes, K. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, particularly pp. 99-100, and Derrida, J. (1986) *Glas*, Lincoln, Nebraska: Nebraska University Press, p. 220.

¹⁰⁴ To recall, Kant distinguishes between the ‘representation’ [Vorstellung] and ‘presentation’ [Darstellung], the former an image produced in accord with a concept furnished by the Understanding, the latter an image for which no concept is adequate. The distinguish suggests a difference between ordinary cognition, which is conceptual, and aesthetic experience, in which the intellect encounters that which it cannot know on terms that already belong to it. See Kant, I. (2000) *The Critique of the Power of Judgement*, ed. Guyer, P. trans. Guyer, P. & Matthews, E. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 23

¹⁰⁵ Benjamin, A. (2013), op. cit. p. 246

¹⁰⁶ Kant (1998) op. cit. p. 704

measure that results assumes metaphysical form and is absolutised without differentiation. This has the effect of reducing being to the singular and effacing dissensus at the ontological level. Imbued with a measure that recognises only the commensurate, existence is exhausted by its presence and difference becomes mere variation between singular entities¹⁰⁷. What appears or has presence does so because it accords with the measure with which the dominant modality determines existence. As Benjamin adds, what is forgotten in the circumscription of existence within given parameters is both ‘the original conflict as well as the ensuing one’¹⁰⁸ such that the present becomes a site of equivalence, or what Hegel refers to as ‘indifferent’ and ‘undifferentiated’¹⁰⁹.

What is significant about Freud’s repetition compulsion is that the specificity of the death-drive is historically acquired¹¹⁰. To the extent that a drive cannot pertain without such specificity, the drive itself, and not just its content, is also necessarily historically determined. The latter, it will be maintained, is an after-effect of what can be named the intensification of the present that accrues from the co-presence of ontological difference. The determinant form assumed by the death-drive is itself an after-effect of conflict. Although suggesting of a split consciousness, the latter is historically acquired rather than essence. Its very possibility is predicated upon a plural being: split consciousness, and its anachronistic temporality, follows from conflict at the level of the ontological. And yet, the denial of conflict ends in the repetition of a subject acting out what it does not know it is subject to, a historically acquired ‘death-drive’ that informs the tradition of modernity, calling the subject back to a past it cannot recognise. To the extent that such co-presence can be effected in the present however, it remains the case that what is structural is also subject to transformation, which opens up the possibility of ‘overcoming’ [überwinden]¹¹¹ the ‘resistance’ that maintains the subject in its ‘self-incurred immaturity’.

Two conditions would seem to be required to render the present a site of intensity. One is the recovery of a differential past. The other is the absence of an image of the

¹⁰⁷ For a discussion of the difference between difference and variation, see Benjamin, A. (2006), *Style and Time: Essays on the Politics of Appearance*, Evanston, Illinois; Northwestern Universal Press

¹⁰⁸ Benjamin, A. (1993) op. cit. p. 10

¹⁰⁹ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 185 & 275

¹¹⁰ Freud, S. (2003), “Beyond the Pleasure Principle”, p. 31

¹¹¹ Freud, S. (2003), “Beyond the Pleasure Principle”, p. 20

future. Together they open up the present as a site of potentiality, which emerges in the past as a counter to the dominant modality and awaits actualisation in the present, a development that would effect a future. Rather than render the present empty, maintaining a 'space of allowing' by refusing to image the future provokes contestation¹¹². Andrew Benjamin writes that:

... the absence of an image does not entail emptiness. The contrary is the case. The image's absence is a precondition for the future to be charged with potentiality. The present's intensity is that which allows for the future. An allowing that would be undone by its being given an already determined image¹¹³.

What is significant here is that a future charged with potentiality is one that pertains in the present despite lacking empirical and phenomenal presence, where the latter is confined to conditions of possibility (and a concomitant image) already actualised. What lacks presence according to a particular measure is not merely absent therefore. Rather, its existence is excluded by the measure that governs. Whilst such a measure determines what appears, it does not exhaust existence, which must be held apart from the merely phenomenal or empirical. The incommensurate both is and is not, an impossible possibility that nonetheless figures in the present in the form of 'non-being'. Such potentiality does not relate to a beyond or the extension of the present therefore, but suggests of the co-presence of difference, both the One and the other. Moreover, its very possibility is predicated upon the recovery of that difference from out of the past, a claim that follows from the temporal nonsynchronicity that marks modernity, which will be outlined later in the chapter. What pertains, including a plural being (being that is more than One), emerges from intensity in the sense that the historical determination of conditions of possibility is an after-effect of conflict. What belongs to the past is thus not merely what took place or continues in the present, but also the 'non-being' upon which the given is predicated. Which is to say that ontological contestation from which a present emerges can be confined to neither form nor content. The co-presence of ontological difference is predicated upon material difference, the competing sides marked by both form and content. This is

¹¹² Benjamin, A. (2013), op. cit. p. 77

¹¹³ *ibid.* p. 246

precisely what Hegel has in mind when he compares Kant's transcendental aesthetic to eating:

There are things-in-themselves out there, but lacking space and time; now consciousness comes along, which already possesses space and time within it as the possibility of experience, just as it already possesses mouth and teeth etc. as the conditions of eating. The things which are eaten possess neither mouth nor teeth, and just as consciousness imposes eating on things, so too it imposes space and time on them¹¹⁴.

The other, which counters the One, is not mere content, but has its own form, which suggests of a different being. To have its own mouth and teeth means for the other to counter, in its very being, the discursive totality that results from the consumption and effacement of being's plurality. As Robert Stern frames the issue, Hegel 'frees the unity of the object from the synthesizing activity of Kant's transcendental subject'¹¹⁵. Although, to follow Hegel, objects are conceptually determined, their form is not merely furnished by a transcendental subject, which, in Stern's wording, means they are not 'reducible to the kind of atomistic manifold that requires [subjective – CW]... synthesis'¹¹⁶. The unity of an object, although constituted conceptually, is objective rather than subjective, which suggests the cognitive activity of the subject does not exhaust existence.

And yet, it is only in being consumed that this different being, which belongs to the past, obtains a determined (and recovered) form in the present. Which is to say that the plurality of being is derived from the process of determination in which the existent obtains its actuality. What is actual, it will be claimed, is determined. And yet, what is actual does not exhaust the determined¹¹⁷. If the actual refers to the being

¹¹⁴ in Comay, R. "Hegel's Last Words" in *The Ends of History: Questioning the Stakes of Historical Reason*, eds. Swiffen, A. & Nichols, J. (2013) London & New York: Routledge, p. 143

¹¹⁵ Stern, R. (1990) *Hegel, Kant and the Structure of the Object*, London & New York: Routledge, p. 5

¹¹⁶ *ibid*

¹¹⁷ This is what differentiates the position maintained here from Stern's notion of 'holism', which he attributes to Hegel over and against what he names the 'pluralism' of Kant. For Stern, that the conceptual is, according to Hegel, constitutive of objects makes him a realist. The designation is problematic however. Although the conceptual is constitutive, it does not exhaust existence, or the being of objects. However, the subject necessarily relates to and knows the object conceptually. In what will be argued in relation to Marx's notion of the 'alms of nature', the non-synchronicity that

that 'is', there remains that which forms its limit, which must also be determined insofar as it is an after-effect of the determination of what is included and excluded. As Hegel explains in his *Encyclopaedia Logic*, 'in existence, determinacy is one with being, and at the same time posited as negation, i.e. *limit, barrier*. Being other is thus not something indifferent outside of it but instead its own moment'¹¹⁸. It is this 'being other', or what is better, being of the other, that being, as actual, is predicated upon. A determined existence necessitates a limit. In order to construct a limit not only that which is included, but also what is excluded must be determined. 'One must not', Hegel continues, 'regard the limit as something that is merely external to existence; rather it permeates existence as a whole'¹¹⁹. There is the actual, as circumscribed within a limit, and what is excluded in order for such circumscription to take place, which takes the name 'non-being', and which figures as a potentiality that gestures towards being's plurality. Existence, as both being and non-being, stands on both sides of any ontological limit, which is why being is not only necessarily plural, but prefigures the determination of the singular.

A plural notion of being invokes a movement from the logic of either/or to both/and, a movement that also marks the difference between Kant and Hegel. To the extent that Kant reifies maturity by effacing the contestation from which determination results, Hegel can be understood as reinscribing subjectivity into the process of determination by allowing for the co-presence of difference from which the actual emerges. In this sense, the dialectic allows for the retroactive determination of being and what Hegel refers to as the 'undoing' [ungeschehen machen] of the present, as will be argued in the chapters to follow. If the absolute parousia of a singular ontology is countered by the 'non-being' produced in the determination of being, a 'way-out' of 'mere life' stands in need of a counter-measure that allows for the 'being other' produced in the process of determination. A counter-measure can be located in Hegel's notion of differing configurations of consciousness. Each shape of 'Spirit' [Geist] allows for a differing determination of being, and thus of a differing configuration of the relation between being and non-being. Moreover, to approach Hegel as a thinker of historical change, the movement between differing configurations occurs dialectically. In

informs the relation of subject and object and their mutual constitution allows that neither 'pluralism' nor 'holism' can account for what is. This argument will be pursued shortly.

¹¹⁸ Hegel (2010). p. 147

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

contrast to Kant, for whom the structure of consciousness (as conditions of possibility) is both transcendental and immutable, Hegel, in framing Spirit's 'bending around' 'back into itself' as constitutive activity, invokes a measure that counters the irreversibility of successive time. This counter-measure is not a footpath that needs be turned into a highway, but the interruption of that path and the seeming inevitability of its continuing. In turn, the Hegelian future to come refers not to an achieved configuration in which historical change once again comes to a rest, but rather, to the intensification of the present from which a future would emerge. Reciprocity refers to both the time of historical change and suggests a time beyond Kantian modernity. Although the coming of modernity was itself predicated upon such reciprocity, the configuration actualised precludes it.

To the extent that being remains circumscribed within Kantian limits that efface the incommensurate, a counter-measure, one informed by the Hegelian dialectic, would enable the recovery of being's other, which would both constitute and allow for the emergence of a new configuration of consciousness. This does not mean however that a process of restitution must take place in which the incommensurate is rendered commensurate. As a 'pathway of despair', traversing the various configurations of consciousness that Hegel charts in the *Phenomenology*, and which inform the dialectic, does not end in absolute presence. Rather, to follow the reading of Rebecca Comay, 'Absolute Knowing' becomes an exercise in comprehending the impossibility of absolute presence¹²⁰. A counter-measure need not refer to a more comprehensive measure of knowing. However, this does not necessarily lead to a negative theology. The recovery of being's plurality, to the extent that it takes the form of an allowing, is geared towards the interruption of the politics of continuity in which past, present, and future are rendered equivalent. As Andrew Benjamin has argued, intensifying the present by way of allowing for the co-presence of difference is a strategic move intended not to beget a particular future, but to interrupt the continuity of the present in order to allow for a future not yet known¹²¹. The future, he suggests, is thus a

¹²⁰ Comay, R. (2011) *Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 125

¹²¹ Benjamin, A. (2013), op. cit. p. 247. See also Peter Osborne, who writes of Walter Benjamin that 'montage may not be methodological, but it is not arbitrary. It is experimental. Selection is governed by a strict cognitive criterion: the uncovering of what is 'truly new' in the present as a sign of the possibilities it contains' (*The Politics of Time*, p. 150). Osborne conceives of the avant-garde as that

question and a task rather than an image¹²². The lack associated with a plural being that imbues the dialectic with despair does not preclude the intensification of the present. Indeed, it is only on the basis of the being of the other, which can be neither grasped in terms of its presence nor represented, that its possibility pertains.

The Giving and Withholding of Alms

In the discussion thus far, which has framed the given as determined by a traumatic structure that belongs to *Neuzeit*, it would seem that the totality effected is determined absolutely by social labour. What 'is' is because of social labour, existence predicated upon what could otherwise be framed as culture and the workings of human history. This culture of successive time only forms a totality, however, to the extent that the process from which it emerged is forgotten. In what was earlier described as the movement from immaturity to maturity, the lifting of the head from the mist of guilt is predicated upon what does not belong to the prevailing totality, and thus what is not produced by social labour. The breach that enables the subject's emergence from a self-incurred immaturity can only take place via the figuring of difference, which follows from ontological contestation. In this sense, each and every totality depends upon what it must subsequently exclude in order to constitute itself as a totality. The extent to which the non-being that being depends upon is allowed to figure by the totality does not determine existence absolutely. Which is another way of making the claim that the given, and its conditions of possibility, do not exhaust what 'is'. To invoke a notion of plural being means therefore that being is not a mere after-effect of the totality that constitutes civil society. Indeed, if the determination of being, in its singularity, is an after-effect, then being, as indeterminate, must be logically prior to determined being. It pertains at a level that, as Žižek suggests, 'must be retroactively presupposed, but can never actually be encountered', a designation that will be discussed below¹²³.

which interrupts linear time by allowing for (or producing) that flash of the dialectical image, which has been approached in terms of the co-presence of ontological difference.

¹²² Which is not to argue, however, that the image does not figure in the intensification of the present. Indeed, the other possibility of the image relates to its pressing in experience in a manner that exceeds the confines of 'mere life'. There is the image, but it has both timely and untimely variants.

¹²³ Žižek, S. (2000) *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, London: Verso, p. 33

There is, it will be maintained throughout this work, what Marx names the ‘alms of nature’, which must be given for the determination of being to occur¹²⁴. The givenness of such alms is to be distinguished from the givenness of an object of experience that appears in immediacy. The latter is the result of nature’s alms *and* the discursive categories and practices, that is, the social labour that produces objects of experience and determines being and non-being, the included and excluded, both of which stand in a relationship of reciprocity, a designation that will become important in the discussion of time to follow. The indeterminate being of the alms of nature, from which being and non-being emerge, exists in a paradoxical relation to discursive practice and thus not only the philosophical, but cognised experience in general. Although, as Andrew Benjamin has suggested, following Hegel means thinking difference in terms of identity and the singular as marked by the (discursive) whole, this does not necessitate the absolute effacement of difference¹²⁵. Not only does the whole stand in need of nature’s alms, the figuring of such alms is not fixed despite occurring by way of social labour. What figures in experience is always already mediated by objective conditions, and yet, the very possibility of figuring stands in need of material that is logically prior to universal measure. The givenness of the alms of nature is a prerequisite of experience that only manifests as such after the fact or belatedly, in terms commensurate with Freud’s notion of *Nachträglichkeit*. Nature’s alms prefigure the discursive, but only figure discursively, which is why one can follow Hegel and nonetheless allow that the discursive totality does not exhaust existence. To suggest that being and non-being, and thus being’s plurality, is produced in the determination of the given does not mean that the ontological is merely culturally produced¹²⁶.

¹²⁴ Marx, (2010), “Debates on the Law of Thefts of Wood”, *Marx and Engels Collected Works: Vol. 1, Karl Marx 1835-43*, Lawrence & Wishart, p. 234

¹²⁵ Benjamin, A. (1993) op. cit. p. 7

¹²⁶ What must be noted is that being’s plurality is not a duality. Non-being, or what will variously be referred to as the otherness of the other, or the untimely, is not itself a singular category that stands opposed to being. It cannot be circumscribed within a discursive category: its otherness is ontological. Nonetheless, it can be discursively allowed for or gestured towards. As will become important, its ontological otherness evades the categories with which discursive practice occurs, and yet, it is also effected (but not exhausted) by such categories, which determine the way in which it figures.

This is, as Adorno, Derrida and Lyotard have argued, the paradox of philosophy¹²⁷: it aims at the particular that experience depends upon, but its only means of approach is a discursivity that renders the particular always already universal¹²⁸. In Adorno's wording, 'language and the process of reification are interlocked'¹²⁹. As an after-effect of social labour and the spontaneity of the intellect, nothing can be accessed as if unmediated by humankind. To reduce existence to what is produced by social labour however denies the possibility of difference and circumscribes existence within the parameters of a given configuration of consciousness. As a result of this paradox, philosophy subverts its own intentions, which is why Adorno suggests it should flag the necessary disappoint to follow before it sets out¹³⁰. And yet, it is precisely this paradox that philosophy must 'work-through' if the possibility of the co-presence of difference is to abound. To allow the indeterminate being that the discursive totality depends upon to be determined differently is to invoke a different totality. This is what the 'comprehension' of the totality is directed towards: the 'shaking' of the 'tormented world' that would interrupt the continuity of successive time and open up the possibility of nature's alms figuring in a manner that does not merely reproduce an already established objectivity and the concomitant effacement of the particular. Particulars are necessarily linked to and have their being in terms of the universal, yet the form this relationship assumes remains mutable. The how of this mediation, which receives different answers from Kant and Hegel via their differing politics of time, remains the question and the task.

To return to Marx, in his discussion of the theft of wood from private land, including that which was dead or had fallen, a debate that took place in the Rhine in the early 1840's, and on which Marx wrote several articles that appeared in the *Rheinische Zeitung*, he makes the following suggestive claim: 'just as it is not fitting for the rich to lay claim to alms distributed in the street, so also in regard to these *alms of*

¹²⁷ Adorno, T.W (1993) *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Weber-Nicholsen, S. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, p. 100; Derrida, J. (2002), "Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce", in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Attridge, D. New York: Routledge, p. 258; Lyotard, J.F. (2011) *Discourse, Figure*, Hudek, A. & Lydon, M. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 13

¹²⁸ The possibility of a different measure would seem to rest upon relating to difference. And yet, the possibility of relating to difference appears to rest upon a different measure. It is from within this seemingly intractable position that a 'way-out' is sought.

¹²⁹ Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 100

¹³⁰ *ibid.* p. 101

nature'¹³¹. The very possibility of existence is predicated upon this given something. To lay claim to them is to allow that they figure in a particular manner. For only on the basis of such givenness, which Kant names sensory impressions, is life possible. To the extent that the figuring of objects of experience depends upon the prefiguring of nature's alms, labour cannot form a self-enclosed totality, a point that will become important in chapter 5 in the discussion of Adrian Johnston's notion of 'weak nature' and its relation to the Hegelian dialectic. That it is not 'fitting' for the rich to lay claim to this given something stems from the sense in which the determination of nature's alms, which establishes the included and excluded, being and non-being, is necessarily universal and belongs to the commons. As Marx suggests, this given something has the status of 'indeterminate property' and it thus marked by a 'two-fold private right': 'a private right of the owner and a private right of the non-owner'¹³². The determination of this indeterminate being plays out as contestation between owner and non-owner, such that the process is marked by disequilibria of power in a civil society in which property rights underpin governance. To the extent that, under the conditions of *Neuzeit*, the determination of being occurs by way of effacing the private right of the non-owner, what 'is' sides with the propertied class that lays claim to nature's alms. Class struggle would thus amount to allowing nature's alms to figure differently, not in accord with the determination enacted by what for Marx is the 'rich'. If social labour forms a totality, a criticism Adorno levelled against the Hegelian dialectic and the absolute diffusion of culture, recovering its dependency upon a given something marked by a 'two-fold private right' would interrupt the objective processes that determine the alms of nature and render them singular.

Although the alms of nature only figure in experience having already prefigured, this is not to say that experience is absolutely absent of difference. As Adorno argued at the close of *Negative Dialectics*, there are what he names 'intramundane traits', which 'cracks the shell of what, measured by the subsuming cover concept, is helplessly isolated and explodes its identity'¹³³. Unlike thought, but nonetheless only approachable via thinking, it is this notion of the intramundane that suggests of an experience not reducible to what figures phenomenally, and which gestures towards

¹³¹ Marx (2010) op. cit. p. 234

¹³² Ibid. p. 233

¹³³ Adorno, T.W. (2007), *Negative Dialectics*, trans. Ashton, E.B. New York: Continuum, p. 408

the prefiguring of nature's alms. There is what could be described as the pressing of the world upon a subject. Heidegger's description of the relation between a subject and world as the 'pushing against' [entgegenrängen] of 'something that is disquieting... [das Beunruhigende]' is instructive here¹³⁴. It is this pressing that invokes the mediation that in turn produces an object of experience. Insofar as what presses is only recognised as such to the extent that the conditions of possibility allow it to figure however, the subject recognises its being affected only after the fact and only to the extent that it has been rendered commensurate with the measure with which it is imbued. There is a pressing, but what are recognised accords with given conditions; what presses undergoes a process of determination that enables objects to figure in experience. The subject is affected, but only grasps its being affected to the extent that this process has occurred. From indeterminate to determinate, the given something that presses comes to figure in the life of the subject.

The objective processes of which Adorno speaks is that which governs and performs this passing or passage from indeterminacy to the determinate, a process that Hegel names a 'formative movement' [bildende Bewegung]¹³⁵, and which, following Clayton Crockett and Creston Davis, will be termed the path of the political¹³⁶. Whilst what appears in experience is an after-effect of 'actual objective processes', there is nonetheless something, the alms or gifts of nature, that furnish the material that such processes transform into objects of experience. This political passage is therefore both productive and destructive. As Robert Sinnerbrink, writing on Žižek, has noted, 'every synthetic unity is based upon a primordial act of 'repression' that inevitably leaves some (Schellingian) "indivisible remainder"'¹³⁷. Nature's alms only figure in having passed through this process of determination. And yet, such determination also effaces its particularity, which is why the particular never figures as a pure particularity. As Marx himself suggests, at his most Hegelian, 'the world would not be many-sided without the many one-sidednesses' that determine the given

¹³⁴ Heidegger, M. (1997), *Kant the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Taft, R. Bloomington, US: Indiana University Press, p. 112

¹³⁵ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 17, trans. amended

¹³⁶ Crockett, C. & Davis, C. "Introduction: Risking Hegel: A New Reading for the Twenty-First Century", in *Hegel & the Infinite*, op. cit. p. 15. The authors actually use the formulation 'political passage'.

¹³⁷ Sinnerbrink, op. cit. p. 9

by drawing distinctions and boundaries¹³⁸. The very possibility of experience is predicated upon a one-sidedness in which the whole proves excessive, which is why the process from which the given results is a ‘pathway of despair’, and why philosophy necessarily disappoints; there can be no fulfilled end in which being’s plurality becomes available to the subject. And yet, it is also this incompleteness of what is nonetheless a totality that allows of its transformation. In the sense that the conditions that structure this passage are the after-effect of contestation, experience, as the figuring of the given, is never just experience. It is the after-effect of a process upon which existence is predicated despite not exhausting the existent.

What presses, the alms of nature, are not, over and against Kant, mere content that stands in need of form. Rather, the indeterminate assumes, in its formative movement, a form to which it is open, which is not the same as being merely content or data¹³⁹. The process in which what presses is determined involves an encounter between an indeterminate existence that nonetheless pertains in some manner and the objective processes that determine that existence. However, assuming a particular form has the effect of effacing the plurality that the indeterminate itself contains as a potentiality. It is in this sense that one can speak of conditions of possibility as conditions of allowing; to open up a space of allowing is to allow the indeterminate to figure, and thus be determined, in a manner that does not simply accord with the forms with which consciousness circumscribes existence. This becomes apparent in Marx’s argument that rendering ‘indeterminate property’ private counters the law of the commons and is antithetical to life. Circumscribing nature’s alms within a form

¹³⁸ Marx, (2010), op. cit. p. 233

¹³⁹ As Stephen Houlgate has written, ‘... when a thing is acted upon, it is not just forced into an alien mould by the sheer power of something else, but is in fact given a form to which it is itself open by virtue of its own passivity’ (Houlgate, S. “Substance, Causality and the Question of Method in Hegel’s Science of Logic”, *The Reception of Kant’s Critical Philosophy: Fichte, Schelling and Hegel*, ed. Sedgwick, S. (2000) Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 243). In contrast to Houlgate however, nature’s alms are not merely passive, an amorphous, plasticine like mass, but instead evince their own temporality, one that exceeds social labour, but nonetheless remains open to being determined by social labour. This is what it means for the other to have its own mouth and bare teeth. The paradox of philosophy is thus one of allowing the other to use its mouth in a manner that does not merely accord with the discursivity of the present totality. To extend an argument made by Rebecca Comay, it is in the recovery of the mouth’s other abilities that the particular may figure in a discursive totality that reduces the mouth to the concept. See Comay, *Hegel’s Last Words*, p. 143, where she writes, ‘Hegel does not exactly renounce this oral phantasm but in a characteristic hyper-transcendental move both prolongs and overcomes the Kantian schema by turning the critical bite back on itself so that the orifice between inner and outer, container and contents, is in turn involuted’. The mouth is not just productive in the sense that it allows the sensible to figure objectively by way of its language, it is also destructive, capable of also negating the very universality that is its form.

that accords with private property is an act of privation that renders life ontologically singular not just for the property owner, but also the propertyless class. The transformation of the relations of production cannot only be a question of the empirical means of production. It must also attend to the alms of nature, that common indeterminate property, upon which labour depends. Only via the transformation of the ‘going through’, ‘taking up’ and ‘combining’, and thus only via the transformation of the production of value (which determines what is recognised as existing, and thus able to be gone through, taken up and combined), does the possibility of a plural being and the co-presence of difference abound. The alms of nature are not in pure flux or amorphous. There is no vitalist connotation intended here, as certain readings of Kant contend¹⁴⁰. Although the alms of nature could be described as plastic, to draw on Catherine Malabou’s Hegelian term¹⁴¹, changes that occur without a concomitant change in the conditions of possibility that inform experience invoke a continuation of ‘mere life’.

Conservative politics of time, which render past, present and future continuous, deny that this ‘in-between’ space that allows for the path of the political pertains. If, following Marx, disequilibria of power is at play in this passage, such that what figures is an after-effect of the propertied class laying claim to the alms of nature, the side that the necessarily one-sidedness of the given takes is also effaced in the denial of the ‘in-between’. In the projection of a homogenous time both back into the past and forward into the future, what is one-sided appears both absolute and neutral, which precludes contestation at the level of the ontological. To repeat Andrew Benjamin’s formulation, what is forgotten is the ‘original conflict as well as the ensuing one’¹⁴². A conservative politics of time can thus be linked to what Edith Wyschogrod has named a ‘commonplace’ understanding of the past in which ‘what once existed but exists no longer belongs to a past that is both irrecoverable and unchangeable’¹⁴³. For the conservative, if a recovery is to take place it is geared

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, Nassar, D. "Sensibility and Organic Unity: Kant, Goethe, and the Plasticity of Cognition", *Intellectual History Review*, (2014), and Morgan, D. (2002), *Kant Trouble: The Obscurities of the Enlightenment*, London: Routledge.

¹⁴¹ Malabou, C. (2005), *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*, trans. During, L. New York, US: Routledge

¹⁴² Benjamin, A. (1993) op. cit. p. 10

¹⁴³ Wyschogrod, E. (1998), *An Ethics of Remembering: History, Heterology, and the Nameless Others*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 146

towards the realignment of the present with a given past, the stitching back together of history's discontinuities by way of transcendental principle.

To turn back and work-through the moments of which the present is an after-effect, conversely, counters a politics of continuity by recovering the interruption that followed from the co-presence of difference. Recovery is not a matter of redeeming the past in its presence therefore, but of allowing manifest dissensus at the ontological level. Via the anamnesis of the Hegelian dialectic, the recovery of the past undertaken in the present prompts the extension of the conditions of possibility that pertain in the present¹⁴⁴. Recovery of difference from the past opens up the experience of otherness in the present, which otherwise goes unrecognised. 'In the [past – CW] voices we hear', Walter Benjamin asks, 'isn't there an echo of the now silent ones?'¹⁴⁵ Working-through the past necessitates an extension of the content to which consciousness attends, an extension that opens up the possibility of difference figuring in the present. This is what the anamnesis of Hegel is intended to allow.

The specific past that an anamnestic philosophy attends to is the event. The event is that in which the laying of claims to the alms of nature is contested and ontological difference is present at the same time, *zugleich*, as Hegel repeatedly says. It suggests not of specific dates, but of a process that produces the objective conditions that determine the given. The event is never punctual, but belated, its effect that of determining experience in the present despite remaining absent from it in its already having occurred, which aligns the approach to the event taken here with its formulation in the work of Andrew Benjamin, Rebecca Comay and Lyotard. In inaugurating the objective conditions that pertain in the present, both the contestation from which such conditions result, and the given that subsequently appears in experience, can only be comprehended to the extent that the working-through of the

¹⁴⁴ As Adorno has written, 'the abundance of experiential concreteness [das Gegenständliche] that is interpreted by thought in Hegel and nourishes thought in turn, is due not so much to a realistic frame of mind on Hegel's part as to his method of anamnesis, spirit's self immersion in itself, or, in Hegel's words, being's inwardisation and self-possession [das in sich Hineingehen, sich Zusammenziehen des Seins]' (Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 3). But because Hegel is concerned with both what 'is' and the process by which it came about, both of which inform what is actual, Spirit's concern with itself is also a concern with the other.

¹⁴⁵ Benjamin, W. (2006), "On the Concept of History", *Selected Writings: Vol. 4 (1938-1940)* eds. Jennings, M., Eiland, H. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p. 390

process in which these conditions of possibility emerge is enacted. A given object or experience can be reduced to neither its appearing nor the conditions in accord with which it appears precisely because the very conditions are themselves an after-effect of a process of contestation. Co-presence suggests of the *at the same time* of conflicting objective processes, which bring with them both form and content. To comprehend the given in its formative movement thus demands attending to the contested nature of the conditions of possibility that mark any present. The event's absence from what it inaugurates means it only figures to the extent that it is recovered, which means it is not only belated, but still to come.

Recovery is a process in which the 'formative movement' of which the present is an after-effect is reversed. Despite the belatedness of the event (its figuring depending upon its recovery), it is also subject to determination in its being recovered. Working-through the past both recovers and produces the past. Although having already occurred, the event also remains still to come despite also being past. Again, this opens up the possibility of 'undoing' what was done, which counters the 'commonplace' view of the past as irretrievable and irreversible. The event both inaugurates conditions that govern the present and is an after-effect of work presently carried out. The 'labour of the concept', to adopt Hegel's expression, not only recovers the event, it also works to transform the present configuration of consciousness. As Andrew Hass writes, drawing on Jean-Luc Nancy, such work "makes us available" for what is coming, as it makes the coming available (in us, as us, for us, against us)¹⁴⁶. In this sense, recovering the event allows the event to come again, which, at the same time, makes the event available to consciousness in the present, albeit as that which exceeds consciousness' grasp. Not only is comprehension of the event belated, the event's having occurred is itself dependent upon such comprehension. The event allows nature's alms to figure differently in the present, but such figuring depends upon the recovery of the plurality of that which the present is an after-effect. The event, to the extent that it allows a different figuring, arrives from outside of the totality of social labour that transforms the alms of nature into objects of experience. And yet, it is only via the labour that occurs from within this totality that the latter becomes open to the event. The event's effect therefore,

¹⁴⁶ Hass, A.W. (2014) *Hegel and the Art of Negation: Negativity, Creativity And Contemporary Thought*, London : I.B. Tauris, p. 120

what it inaugurates, stands in need of work carried out in a present that is its after-effect, which, as will be argued shortly, is precluded by a successive form of time. The time of the new is antithetical to the event despite its apparent proliferation, becoming, as it were, ‘the eternal recurrence of the new’¹⁴⁷.

The coming again of the event suggests of its repetition. However, this repetition is of a form that must be distinguished from Freud’s compulsion to repeat. Repetition, as it figures in Freud’s work, has a double register, one that is not foreign to Hegel despite the tendency to read the dialectic as an organism in constant flux. Not only does repetition refer to the compulsion to repeat and a politics of continuity, it also suggests of the need to do again, ‘seven and seventy times’¹⁴⁸, as Hegel puts it, the ‘working-through’ that the recovery of an interruptive ‘non-being’ is predicated upon. Despite being mutable, the conditions under which life is lived are neither easily comprehended nor able to be extricated from historical and societal forces that philosophy is also subject to, including the ‘supplementary’ ‘cement’ that Adorno attributes to the psychological. It is for this reason that the formalism of Kant becomes an important counter to the Hegelian tendency to all too easily sublate difference by way of the dialectic¹⁴⁹. Turning back to the past does not spontaneously transform the conditions of possibility that pertain in the present and thus effect a future. Such ability does not belong to philosophy. There are, as Freud argued, resistances to recovery, which are not merely psychological, but material¹⁵⁰. The logic of either/or is, to draw on Adorno’s philosophy of language, of the ‘flesh’ [eingefleischt], and thus not easily dislodged via discursive practice¹⁵¹. If the co-presence of ontological difference can be framed as conflicting objective processes, there is a need to rehearse, over and again, that which contradicts the actual objective processes that inform Kantian modernity. The objective figures as both actual and potential, and the event occurs by way of their co-presence that resulted from such

¹⁴⁷ Benjamin, W. “Central Park”, *Selected Writings: Vol. 4*, op. cit. p. 179

¹⁴⁸ Hegel, (2010) op. cit. p. 21

¹⁴⁹ See, for example, Kaufman, R. “Red Kant”. op. cit. For a critique of dialectics as the premature effacement of difference, see Eva Geulen’s review of Frederick Jameson’s *Late Marxism* (Geulen, E. (1991) “A Matter of Tradition - Late Marxism: Adorno, the Persistence of the Dialectic”, *Telos*, Issue 89, p. 155).

¹⁵⁰ See, for example, Freud, S. (1991) “The Resistances to Psycho-Analysis”, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Vol. XIX*, trans. Strachey, J. London: The Hogarth Press.

¹⁵¹ Adorno, T.W (2005) *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Pickford, H. Columbia, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 3

contestation. But it is only in terms of that which ‘lays hold of the divine’ that such co-presence abounds.

What is to be argued in the following is that the compulsion to repeat is not only a matter of the psychological, but of time. Time, specifically successive, or ‘irreversible’ time, is antithetical to recovery and thus figures as a block that denies the event and precludes the interruption of a politics of continuity. As the Agamben quote from the epigraph above suggests, one cannot merely change the world, but must also change time.

Being in Time

Time figures in the determination of existence, both being and non-being. It can thus be approached in terms of Adorno’s ‘actual objective processes’. The latter are neither empirical nor transcendental. Neither an object of experience, in a Kantian sense, nor disconnected from experience. Neither metaphysical nor merely nominal. Subject to change, but nonetheless resistant to it. The objective is not a matter of normativity. Moreover, such processes must be distinguished from the psychological insofar as the latter, following Adorno, is a ‘supplementary’ or ‘secondary’ phenomenon ‘historically acquired’ and thus itself subject to the objective. And yet, the objective cannot be approached as an origin or ground in the conventional sense of something which is both prior to what it determines and unaffected in its determining, which would evince a logic of efficient causality. Indeed, the event, as inaugurating, is always itself an after-effect, which means the co-presence of ontological difference from which the present emerged is not two but plural. What is recovered is not singular such that recovery does not exhaust the past recovered. In turn, the ‘actual objective processes’ that determine the given are not a ground, but rather, what Andrew Benjamin refers to as ‘anoriginal’¹⁵². The objective figures as an origin, but cannot be located in the singular.

¹⁵² See Benjamin, A. (2015) op. cit. Benjamin writes of the ‘anoriginal’ that ‘in the first place, there are forms of relationality that have an original quality. These forms are described henceforth as having “anoriginal” presence. The term “anoriginal” is used here to underscore a doubled presence at the origin and therefore a locus of irreducibility. Again, this doubling is an ontological claim rather than one determined by semantic concerns’ (p. 4).

It is in these terms that time will be delineated. What immediately becomes clear however is time's ambiguity, its cutting across the different domains mentioned above. If time determines the given, it would seem that it is not itself given. And yet, time nonetheless has its image. As Kant suggests, it is the drawing of a straight-line that enables successive time to be represented¹⁵³. The figuring of time, it appears, has a double register¹⁵⁴. Firstly, time figures insofar as it manifests or appears in experience. It is with this appearing that one must begin. Despite the recalcitrance of Adorno's objective processes, time nonetheless figures, the latter apprehended in its givenness, which is not to say it is 'comprehended' [begriffen]. Secondly, time figures in the sense that the figure, as that which appears in experience, is an after-effect of time¹⁵⁵. This double register suggests that time is self-determining; the way in which it figures is, at least to a degree, an after-effect of itself, which, again, is another way of suggesting that time became, with the coming of modernity, an 'historical force' in its own right. If time proves evasive, a common theme that runs from Augustine to Lefebvre, this is because the way in which it figures is consequent upon the way in which it allows itself to figure¹⁵⁶. Time itself, to follow Heidegger,

¹⁵³ Kant (1998) op. cit. p. 258

¹⁵⁴ Catherine Malabou likewise finds a 'double-meaning' in Hegel's definition of time as 'the being which, in being, is not and in not being is' (Malabou, op. cit. p. 13). This will be addressed in chapter 4. Emphasised in the following will be the suggestion that time is not double, there are not two different times, yet it both figures and configures.

¹⁵⁵ Clearly, 'figure' is not being used here in a sense that is commensurate with Lyotard. The *figural* is for Lyotard that which interrupts the representation to the extent that the latter renders experience absent of difference. In contrast, the notion of the figure refers here to that which appears in experience; experience in modernity, to link it to Kant's account of cognition in the first *Critique*, is predicated upon the image. However, what must be maintained is that what figures is neither reducible to the image, and thus perception, nor to a singular ontology. Over and against Lyotard, what figures does not evade the discursive, but rather is predicated upon it. It is this relationality, to draw on a term of Andrew Benjamin's, that suggests of the difference between Hegel and what Peter Hallward has framed as contemporary French philosophy, particularly the work of Michel Henry and François Laruelle. Again however, this does not mean that existence is reducible to a discursive totality, as has been argued throughout. See Lyotard (2011) op. cit. and Hallward, P. (2003) "The One or the Other", *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 8 no. 2

¹⁵⁶ Augustine writes of time, 'What is time? Who can explain this easily and briefly? Who can comprehend this even in thought so as to articulate the answer in words? Yet what do we speak of, in our familiar everyday conversation, more than of time? We surely know what we mean when we speak of it. We also know what is meant when we hear someone else talking about it. What then is time? Provided that no one asks me, I know. If I want to explain it to an inquirer, I do not know'. (Augustine, (1991), *Confessions*, trans Chadwick, H. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 230). Henri Lefebvre, picking up on several themes that will become important in this work, has written: 'Too late we realize what we should have said and done, what was great, what was beautiful. For men, time and history are out of joint, and the wish to make them coincide is a feature of utopianism. History is neither god nor devil, nor is it a substitute for them. History *is*, and mastering it is a slow process. Could time be more difficult to control and understand than space? It would seem so' (Lefebvre, H. (1995) *Introduction to Modernity: Twelve Preludes, September 1959-May 1961*, London: Verso, p. 68).

must be temporalised. There is a discrepancy therefore between time as it figures in experience and time as it determines, or what is better, configures such experience. Time is neither an appearance nor an objective force alone; it both figures and configures, and yet, the former is the appearing of the latter rather than referring to a different time. Comprehending time necessitates working-through this two-fold con/figuration. Apprehended time, time as it figures, is not equivalent with time as measure precisely because the former is an after-effect of the latter. In other words, time is not exhausted by its figuring such that it cannot be reduced to its image. Consequently, as a condition of allowing, what is allowed accords with a notion of time not reducible to its figuring, which suggests time's effect is not given by its appearance¹⁵⁷. Time effects in a way that it does not appear to, which is precisely why it is also complicit in the compulsion to repeat.

To approach the figuring of time in terms of this double register is to open up the question of how it is that time figures in the present. The question that emerges is, what is time's effect? The discrepancy or gap between time as a condition and its figuring is also double. In the first instance, what does not figure is the effect instilled by time in its determination of what figures. The effect of time is to bring the existent into being via its involvement in the process of determination detailed above, which must be contrasted with time's immediate affect. The latter refers to the sense in which time's image is affective, adherence to the clock and the pressure associated with punctuality being two obvious examples. In the second instance, the irreducibility of time to its figuring suggests of the possibility of time being other. It is both the effect of time, the way in which it configures, and its potential to become a counter-measure that stands in need of comprehension. To work-through time is to attend to both its effecting and its potential to effect otherwise. Neither can be held apart however from time's immediate affect, which refers to the way in which time appears, an argument central to Hegel that suggests that although appearances are inadequate they cannot be abjured. Comprehension does not entail removing the veil of appearance to discover the thing-in-itself. Rather, working-through an appearance

¹⁵⁷ Despite not being reducible to its figuring, time is not, as McTaggart argues, 'unreal' (McTaggart, J.E. "The Unreality of Time", *Mind* (1908) vol. 17, no. 68, pp. 457-474). McTaggart's understanding of time is predicated upon (particularly in relation to what he names the 'A-series') the absolute separation of past, present and future. His work thus remains within the parameters of a Kantian modernity that effaces the possibility of the co-presence of difference.

necessitates recovering the moments of which it is an after-effect, the event from which its present form emerged.

In order to comprehend time's effect, which, to repeat, cannot be reduced to its figuring, it is necessary to situate time historically. What this allows is time's differentiation, which, in turn, suggests of its mutability, and thus its differing effects as a condition of possibility. Deleuze's aforementioned distinction between cardinal and ordinal time allows for such a situating. The cardinal, which he locates in Aristotle, is bound to the circuitry of circadian rhythm, whereas the ordinal, which belongs to the Critical Philosophy and modernity more generally, unfolds time into the infinite future of Kant's straight-line¹⁵⁸. In the *Physics*, Aristotle establishes an irreducible relation between time and change. 'Not only do we measure change by time', he writes, 'but time by change, because they are defined by one another'¹⁵⁹. In the absence of change there can be no temporal movement; time would come to a standstill. The passing of time from one 'now' to another requires the two moments to be distinguished from one another, a role fulfilled by change, specifically the coming and going of the seasons, the repetition of which renders time circular. Change thus signals the movement of time and time is the measure of change. Or, in Aristotle's words, 'time is the number of motion in respect of before and after'¹⁶⁰. In performing an indexical role that registers change, time cannot be detached from it. Deleuze refers to change as the hinge to which Aristotelian time is attached. 'As long as time remains on its hinges', he writes, 'it is subordinate to movement'¹⁶¹.

With ordinal time however, time is disconnected from change, emerging as a form that appears to be independent of content. It is with Kant that this successive, formal time of the present emerges most forcefully, his conception of a faculty of Sensibility in which sensory impressions are situated meaning all phenomenal existence accords with successive measure. With Kant, time no longer supervenes onto phenomenal change, onto deed and occurrence, becoming instead that in which the phenomenal has its existence. Ordinal time cannot come to a standstill, or circle back upon itself,

¹⁵⁸ Deleuze (1994) op. cit. p. 88

¹⁵⁹ Aristotle, (1993) *Physics Books III & IV*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 46

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.* p. 47

¹⁶¹ Deleuze, G. (1984) *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, trans. Tomlinson, H. & Habberjam, B. London, UK: The Athlone Press, p. vii

as it does not depend on change. In removing time from the vagaries of the phenomenal world and the knowing that accrues from judgement, but nonetheless insisting on its successive form, Kant sought to master time by asserting the power of Reason over it. Kantian time is a marionette made dance to his metaphysics, what Hegel would call one-sided in the sense that it does not feed back into the faculty of Reason from which it was derived. And yet, it is only with and via Kant, and the separation of time from natural cycle, that modernity, as a form of temporal totalisation, and a historical force, emerged.

The movement from Aristotle to Kant is neither linear nor abrupt. Rather, drawing on the aforementioned notion of the ‘in-between’, successive time underwent its own formative movement, having appeared prior to Kant, but not yet been actualised to the extent that the phenomenal present could be framed as an after-effect of such time. Which is to say that ordinal time had to first emerge as a potentiality that countered cardinal time, there being various events in which contestation between the actualised and potential played out. The actualisation of ordinal time involved its becoming an objective condition that marked the present such that any subsequent recourse to the cardinal became reactionary. After Kant, the lingering of the cardinal informed a romanticism that longed for a now negated past, which is not to say that it no longer had its effect as a condition of possibility. This becomes apparent in the following from Andrew Benjamin:

... while interruption is central it should not be forgotten that it is far from absolute. Not only do vestiges of earlier configurations remain, it is also the case that the struggle to maintain the advent of the modern has to involve a continual and critical negotiation with the conflation of the new and the temporality of fashion on the one hand and on the other the insistent presence of historicism’s reactualisation in the form of continuity and arguments for gradual development through time¹⁶².

The interruption signalled by the coming of *Neuzeit*, as the opening to the chapter argued, does not signal the effacement of tradition, but rather, its transformation. Tradition lingers in modern form, such that, as Benjamin put it, the advent of the

¹⁶² Benjamin, A. “Introduction”, *Walter Benjamin and History*, ed. Benjamin, A. (2005) London & New York: Continuum, p. 1

modern must be maintained in the face of the reawakening of the forces of tradition, which necessitates holding open the path of the political.

It is with the Kant of the first *Critique* that ordinal time displaced cardinal time to the extent that time was no longer what it was. This movement opened up time's other possibilities, and with it, other modalities. In the emergence of another time, what is allowed is not merely time's doubling (as both cardinal and ordinal), but its contestability. Time, which, like any condition of possibility, undergoes a formative movement, is both contested and plural in the sense that its actualised form is an after-effect of the co-presence of difference and the 'shaking' of the 'tormented world'. This co-presence both brings with it a different time, the time of historical change, and allows for other times, which emerge from the intensification of the present that such co-presence invokes. As Peter Osborne has written, 'it is the idea of a competition or struggle between these different forms of temporalisation, within everyday life, which leads to the idea of a politics of time'¹⁶³. 'Modernity', he suggests, 'marks out the time of the dialectics of modernity and tradition as competing, yet intertwined, forms of historical consciousness, rather than that of a single temporal form'¹⁶⁴. It is with modernity that the possibility of other times emerges, and which, moreover, allows for what he terms a politics of time. And although Kant figures as the counter to a pre-modern Aristotelianism, that time became contested meant that modernity could be exhausted by neither the continued figuring of the cardinal, nor ordinal counter-measure. Again, it is via working-through the formative movement of modernity that the recovery and production of its plurality occurs. To move beyond a Kantian modernity and the 'mere life' to which it is attached, what must be recovered in the present are time's other possibilities, the potentiality that successive time once was, and which emerged via contestation over time. One need not remain, in a temporal sense, Aristotelian or Kantian. Again, there is more to the present because there is more to time.

With Kant, the movement from cardinal to ordinal time gained its revolutionary character. Kant figures as a break in which the before and after proved incommensurate despite mutually constituting one another. This is not to say that the

¹⁶³ Osborne, op. cit. p. 116

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.* p. 114

past no longer figured in what followed. Vestiges of earlier configurations always continue to insist. Rather, the way in which the past figured was transformed, invoking what Osborne refers to as new forms of historical consciousness. Modernity did not inaugurate temporal negation. It did however introduce the possibility of that negation assuming different form. When Heinrich Heine writes of Kant's Copernican revolution that, in comparison to the French who only killed a King who had already lost his head, he brought about the death of God, this is more than a claim about the legitimacy and existence of either figure¹⁶⁵. Rather, change occurred at the level of the actual objective processes that determine the living out of a life such that nothing was left unmoved, including the experience of past, present and future and the movement from one to the other¹⁶⁶.

If change itself is subject to change then the time that informs the way in which history is both portrayed and experienced cannot be said to hold for all time. This is what the event that is modernity insists upon. As an event, the becoming actual of ordinal time cuts across the movement from the cardinal to ordinal, which means it can only be situated on the ordinal scale after the fact. The event is not a continuation therefore, but an interruption that appears continuous when its revolutionary character is denied. For Osborne, both reactionary and progressive politics are forms of political modernism that follow from the transformation of experience that modernity announces. To maintain the advent of the modern, there must be, as Andrew Benjamin argues, a 'continual and critical negotiation' with time as it figures in the

¹⁶⁵ Heine writes; 'it is said that the spirits of the night are alarmed when they catch sight of the executioner's sword: how they must be alarmed when they are confronted by Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*! This book is the sword with which deism was put to death in Germany. Frankly, in comparison with us Germans, you French are tame and moderate. You have at most been able to kill a king, and he had already lost his head before you beheaded him. And in doing so you had to beat the drum and shout and stamp your feet so much that it made the whole world shake. Really it is honouring Maximilian Robespierre too much to compare him with Immanuel Kant... Immanuel Kant has stormed... heaven, he has put the whole crew to the sword, the Supreme Lord of the world swims unproven in this own blood' (in Schnädelbach, H. (1994) *Philosophy in Germany, 1831 - 1933*, trans. Matthews, E. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 17).

¹⁶⁶ The change wrought is akin to Walter Benjamin's description of the First World War: 'a generation that had gone to school on a horse-drawn streetcar now stood under the open sky in a countryside in which nothing remained unchanged but the clouds, and beneath these clouds, in a field of force of destructive torrents and explosions, was the tiny, fragile human body' (Benjamin, W. *Illuminations*, op. cit. p. 84). One must go even further however and suggest that even the clouds are no longer the same in the transformation of time precisely because the experience engendered by time's changing leaves nothing the same despite the persistence of clouds. In this sense, the First World War does not figure as an event in which the co-presence of ontological difference was invoked. It is, one could (all too easily) say, the wrong kind of conflict.

present. Such negotiation is a form of repetition that attempts to maintain time's contestability and plurality. To disavow the event and fold it into a narrative that renders it commensurate with both the deeds and occurrences that came before, and the conditions within which they occurred, is to contract the plural into the singular, and thus reinvoke the politics of continuity and tradition that is a marker of 'mere life'. The willed 'invention' of tradition, writes Osborne, becomes prevalent where tradition has been obliterated, which suggests it is a reaction to the modern rather than its evasion¹⁶⁷. That the very temporal structure that it reacts against is its own means that it performatively contradicts itself, and thus, in its attempt to resist the modern, further solidifies what it reacts against by acting it out and succumbing to Freud's repetition compulsion. Whilst the event opens up the possibility of a 'way-out' of servitude, its revolutionary potential can also be denied despite that denial depending upon the event. The latter follows from the effacement of time's past, which is a site of contestation and dissensus from which its present form emerged.

A different politics of time, that of interruption, approaches modernity as a movement *of* time, which can be contrasted with a movement *in* time, wherein the chronometer ticks over to signal quantitative change. To measure the present quantitatively is to specify and date without recourse to the notion of change implied. Dating remains blind to the quality of time that both allows and prompts such dating. Periodisation by way of time is not what allows one to speak of modernity therefore, but what is allowed by the movement of time that signals modernity. Heidegger, for instance, in *The Age of the World Picture*, suggests that the asking of the question of periodisation is particular to the modern:

But why do we ask concerning a world picture in our interpreting of an historical age? Does every period of history have its own world picture, and indeed in such a way as to concern itself from time to time about that world picture? Or is this, after all, only a modern kind of representing, this asking concerning a world picture?¹⁶⁸

To be modern and thus informed by ordinal time is to have Heidegger's notion of a world-picture appear before oneself. Following Osborne however, what is peculiar

¹⁶⁷ Osborne, op. cit. p. 172

¹⁶⁸ Heidegger, M. 'The Age of the World Picture', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, (1977) New York: Harper, pp. 128-129

about this picture is not that it is a form of totalisation, but that it occurs in terms of time, as noted in the opening to the chapter. And despite lending itself to reactionary forms of historical consciousness, it is the very appearing of a (temporal) world-picture that allows a politics of time. Ordinal time has the effect of distancing the present from time's other dimensions. The very possibility of the latter is predicated upon emerging from the attachments of tradition, which allows the lifting of the head. With the coming of ordinal time, the subject draws a distance from the past, opening up the possibility of a future that would not be its simple reiteration. Which is to say that the continuity of tradition was interrupted, which also produced the notion of tradition that belongs to *Neuzeit*, its having emerged from its own destruction. Only with the coming of ordinal time and the lifting of the head does such a possibility abound. And yet, to the extent that successive time invokes a totality by projecting its form both back into the past and forward into the future, what it fails to comprehend is the reawakening of the forces of tradition that render past, present and future continuous. Approaching change as a mere movement in time condenses history into a series of time periods that both follow and are followed such that time forms a container through which all of life flows without the form itself being subject to change. In the movement from the cardinal to ordinal, time unfolds into an infinite straight line, which both destroys tradition and invokes a new tradition, that of successive time. It is this ('in-between') space between tradition's destruction and its re-emergence that will prove important in recovering another time.

Neuzeit

The emergence of ordinal time, which cannot be deduced from the movement of the chronometer, has the effect of instilling not only a new time, but also new forms of experience that are incommensurate with other times. This suggests that subjective experience is bound to time to the extent that there can be no transformation of the subject without a concomitant change of time. What Kant enacts, by both registering and producing, is a form of time that subverts the subject position proper to the Aristotelian. This emphasis on the significance of time to accounts of experience, and, in turn, the importance of experience to subjectivity, is pursued by Reinhart Koselleck in his work *Future's Past*. Koselleck charts a movement, at the level of the semantic, from what he describes as a past-orientated temporality, which can be

aligned with the perspective of cardinal time, to a future-orientated one, which he frames in terms of *Neuzeit*, or modernity. Koselleck portrays this movement from the pre-modern to the modern in terms of the separation of the metahistorical categories of the 'space of experience' and the 'horizon of expectation'. In the pre-modern, he writes:

The expectations cultivated in this peasant-artisan world subsisted entirely on the experiences of their predecessors, experiences which in turn became those of their successors. If anything changed, then it changed so slowly and over so long a time that the breach separating previous experience and an expectation to be newly disclosed did not undermine the traditional world¹⁶⁹.

Although Koselleck identifies a breach in the pre-modern, it is not one that interrupts the continuity of past, present and future. In the dislocation of experience and expectation that he attributes to *Neuzeit* however, the past no longer throws its light on the present. This reconfiguration and emergence of a new time has the effect of dissolving the authority of the past by denying its effect in the present, which opens up the future as a site of potentiality, no longer weighed down by the persistence of tradition. This suggests, as Koselleck argues throughout the work, of the fragmenting of the relation between past, present and future such that the past's prior responsibility of furnishing the ground upon which future expectation could be placed was revoked, which had a significant effect on the writing of history. If present and past are incommensurate owing to the interruption invoked by modernity, history could no longer be written as if continuous with the present from within which such writing takes place. The past must be considered instead on its own terms, that is, as various and distinctive singularities. Koselleck writes of this movement, from which the German Historical School emerged, that 'history, processualized and temporalized to constant singularity, could no longer be taught in an exemplary fashion. Historical experience descending from the past could no longer be directly extended to the future'¹⁷⁰. With this, the past appears as a series of disconnected singularities, each distinctive in the sense that they could be approached in accord with Ranke's famous formulation of knowing the past 'the way it really was' [wie es eigentlich

¹⁶⁹ Koselleck, op. cit. p. 264

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.* p. 268

gewesen]¹⁷¹. In this new time one's gaze is raised from a now fragmented past whose meaning is no longer legible (Ranke, for instance, arguing that the past can only be described, not deciphered) to the horizon of a future yet to come, which would nonetheless be different. Past experience, its authority dissolved in the disruption of history, is displaced by expectation.

The temporal modality introduced with modernity is thus marked by interruption, the latter invoking a futural orientation. Rendering the past discontinuous allows for the opening of a future that would be different. This future is not merely semantic however, but ontological. In contrast to Koselleck, the argument to be pursued here is that what occurred with the coming of *Neuzeit* is the transformation of being. In modernity, what figures, that is, presses upon the subject, changes. The move from a past to futural orientation effects a different subject in the sense that the being of the existent is marked by the lack that accrues from the destruction of the past. To recall Andrew Benjamin's formulation, it is the very emptiness, the absence of an image (and thus an ontology that accords with the parameters of the image), which opens up the future's possibility. This *neue Zeit* becomes *Neuzeit*, the time of the new, which can now be created rather than being merely received¹⁷². Ontologically, what pertains following history's interruption is no longer imbued with a presence derived from a past that continues to insist in the present. Time itself is both transformative and transformed with the coming of *Neuzeit*, which leaves nothing unchanged, even the ontological. Which is to say that time effects differently as it assumes a new image. The change introduced by the emergence of the time of the new is not merely one of

¹⁷¹ What Ranke draws from and promotes is a logic of immediacy, one that would find its way into early Wittgenstein and Bertrand Russell's logical atomism. As an example, Ranke writes: 'I see the time approaching when we shall base modern history, no longer on the reports even of contemporary historians, except insofar as they were in the possession of personal and immediate knowledge of facts; and still less on work yet more remote from the source; but rather on the narratives of eyewitnesses, and on genuine and original documents' (Ranke, L. (1905), *History of the Reformation in Germany*, New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. pp. xi). In contradistinction to Adorno's 'actual objective processes', Ranke's, and following him, Russell's, anti-Hegelianism assumes that what something 'is' can be deduced from the given, or that which has presence. Abjuring the conditions under which life is lived however, what is possible necessarily accords with conditions antithetical to life and which do not appear.

¹⁷² Koselleck draws on the following quotation from one of Napoleon's satraps to suggest of the sense in which the future, under the conditions of *Neuzeit*, would be both created and new: 'for in a state like ours, founded on victory, there is no past. It is a creation, in which – as in the creation of the universe – everything that is present is but raw material in the hand of the creator by whom it is transformed into existence' (op. cit. p. 39). As will become important, what is effaced in this futural orientation is not the past *tout court*, but the past's plurality and contestability, which invokes an unwitting logic of repetition.

meaning therefore. Instead, it must be considered as material in the sense that the very being of the existent is transformed. To the extent that the future became a site of creation with the interruption of history's continuity, the material itself is opened up as a site of creation. This opening, in which the future becomes unprecedented, is predicated upon the separation of time's dimensions. Only as discontinuous does the future become a task and a question, one concerned not merely with meaning, or the semantic, but the ontological¹⁷³.

And yet, to the extent that modernity became and has remained Kantian, such interruption has converted into the reactionary form of a continuous discontinuity, which could otherwise be named the time of the commodity. Not itself subject to change, the transformative time of *Neuzeit* has assumed the form of a transcendental principle, which means the future is predetermined, invoking what Osborne, drawing on Hegel, refers to as 'bad modernity' despite the negation of tradition that *Neuzeit* signals. In this, the time-consciousness of modernity, as Osborne names it, is replaced by the continuity of historical time and the 'restitution' of a dead form of tradition¹⁷⁴.

Marked by a singular ontology, and unhinged from phenomenal change, this continuity of discontinuity allows for time's precise quantification. In the separation of past, present and future, time assumes the form of the unit. As Espen Hammer has argued 'the pre-modern embeddedness of time in cycles of natural reproduction and labour gives way to a conception of lived, everyday time as inherently quantifiable – that is, as essentially indefinite repetition of commensurable unities'¹⁷⁵. As a

¹⁷³ Followed here is the position taken by Andrew Benjamin. He writes in his *Towards a Relational Ontology* that the event 'identifies an ontological position comprising a founding irreducibility. What this means is that at the origin there is already more than one. However, the key point here is that this is not a claim concerning meaning. Pluralism in the context of this project is an inherently ontological term. It is therefore a claim made exclusively on the level of existence. Interpretive plurality, incorrectly understood as semantic relativism, is the result of an original ontological irreducibility' (Benjamin, A. (2015) op. cit. p. 3). Consequently, the intensification of the present occurs not by way of competing interpretations, or claims to meaning, but the co-presence of ontological difference, which necessitates the bringing into relation of the both the One and the other in a relation of non-relation. Both a communicative rationality, and a hermeneutic approach, are absent of a means with which to effect such an intensification, as difference is located in the discursive itself, a plurality, it can be claimed, that is predicated upon a plural being. In other words, the reason that divergence over meaning and interpretation may abound is because of a founding ontological plurality.

¹⁷⁴ Osborne, op. cit. p. 115

¹⁷⁵ Hammer, E. (2011) *Philosophy and Temporality from Kant to Critical Theory*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 47

container 'indifferent to its content', time is standardised such that it becomes a reified object, both exchangeable and manipulable. Hammer writes:

Since a container of this sort can be described in terms of ideal properties that are indifferent to its content, this entails, however, that modern time can emerge as a time of repetition, a perpetual reproduction of identical temporal units (seconds, minutes, hours, and so on) that, with the invention of the chronometer, allows for calculation, coordination, and exactitude in matters of social life, technological development, research, as well as in our orientation in and to nature in general¹⁷⁶.

As a container, time is the same at one point on the chronometer as at another such that the content that fills it assumes homogenous form, its very existence predicated upon being commensurate with the parameters of unitary time. It is in this sense that existence assumes a singular ontology, which, in turn, informs homogenous experience. Time, in its becoming ordinal, accords with the either/or logic of a bad positivism that reduces existence to empirical presence, the co-presence of difference precluded. Consequently, a return is made to cardinal time and its circuitry of circadian rhythm, this time informed by the day, the hour and the minute rather than the season such that time appears to have accelerated, what Hartmut Rosa refers to as a 'shrinking' of the present¹⁷⁷.

The standardisation of time has the effect of rendering the experience of the present fleeting, a momentary 'now' that emerges and then disappears into the past, to be replaced by the next, empty unit of new time. In this, there is a confluence of what has typically been described as the difference between the abstract time of the clock and the lived or concrete time prominent in phenomenological approaches to time. In the persistence of a Kantian modernity, the latter has come to assume the contours of the former to the extent that experience is lived out in accord with the clock and its unitary understanding of time. In clock time, both past and future are marked by their lack of presence such that the present accords with the contracted form of that which pertains in immediacy at any given time, which suggests the retention and protention

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.* p. 38

¹⁷⁷ Rosa, H. (2005) *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*, trans. Trejo-Mathys, J. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 99. Rosa suggests that if time is the measure of space - the time taken between things informing the perception of space - then space has 'shrunk to around a sixtieth of its former size since the eighteenth century' (*ibid.*).

invoked by Husserl, and from which Heidegger derives an ontology of time, do not figure under the conditions of *Neuzeit*¹⁷⁸. The clock is not merely an instrument, it also informs a particular ontology and thus figures as a determinant of existence. It is the contracted ontology of the clock, or what Osborne refers to as an ‘economy of abbreviation’, that the ultra-modernism of Adorno’s teacher rests upon. To the extent that the future is pre-determined by the successive time of the clock, what is to come is always already past. The new, confined to a fleeting ‘now’, is outdated the moment it appears, just as, to paraphrase Comay quoting Marx, the event always arrives on the day of its funeral¹⁷⁹. In successive time the belatedness of experience, its registering as such only after the fact, suggests that present experience is always one of lack, of its having already occurred: this is the logic of the commodity and the ‘eternal recurrence of the new’. As Gevork Hartoonian has written, ‘in the landscape of modernity everything is already history’¹⁸⁰, insofar, it should be added, that modernity remains Kantian, and thus successive. If the present only registers as such upon its becoming past, and the past figures only in terms of the conditions that pertain in the present, present experience is not only belated, but also homogenous.

Under the conditions of ordinal time the present is a mere interval, what the anthropologist Marc Augé has named a ‘non-place’ in which the subject cannot dwell because it is always on its way somewhere else, which turns out, insofar as the elsewhere is imaged, to be where it already is, that is, a perpetual present¹⁸¹. As Henri Lefebvre writes of the new towns that populate the fringes of cities the world over, ‘here, I cannot read the centuries, not time, nor the past, nor what is possible’¹⁸². The

¹⁷⁸ Osborne, op. cit. p. 47-52. In contrast to Osborne, the argument here is that abstract and lived time do not pertain in isolation from one another. Rather, the experience informed by lived time has assumed, under the conditions of *Neuzeit*, the abstract form of clock time, which, in turn, has reduced the notion of the present to that of the instant and its unitary understanding of time. The notion of the present, with its retentions and protentions, which Osborne contrasts, following Ricoeur, with abstract time and the instant, stands in need of recovery, a recovery, nonetheless, that would, to the extent it comes to form a new configuration of consciousness, eclipse abstract time. It is not, as Osborne argues, a matter of unifying these seemingly incommensurate approaches to time, but of invoking a transformation that effects a form of experience in which the instant no longer pertains as such.

¹⁷⁹ Comay (2011) op. cit. p. 145

¹⁸⁰ Hartoonian, G. “What is the Matter with Architectural History?”, *Walter Benjamin and History*, op. cit. p. 185

¹⁸¹ Augé, M. (1995) *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. Howe, J. London: Verso

¹⁸² He continues, ‘...the abstraction which rides roughshod over everyday life – the debilitating analysis which divides, cuts up, separates – the illusory synthesis which has lost all ability to reconstruct anything active – the fossilised structures, powerless to produce or reproduce anything living, but still capable of suppressing it...’ (Lefebvre, op. cit. p. 119-20).

non-place that is the present has no past and no future because it is uninhabitable despite the presence of things. The time of the ultra-modern, informing a particular experience that has nonetheless become universal in so-called Western democratic countries, can thus be linked to the notion of disenchantment, or what J.M. Bernstein refers to as an ‘affective scepticism’¹⁸³. The contraction of the present to an ephemeral ‘now’ has the effect of precluding what Bernstein terms ‘emphatic experience’¹⁸⁴, the latter, it is argued here, predicated upon being subjected to the ontological difference of a plural being that successive time precludes. Reduced to that which has presence, the new that is already old, experience becomes one of loss or absence, which in turn invokes the modalities of boredom and melancholia¹⁸⁵. Agamben, for instance, argues in his *Infancy and History* that the ascendancy of scientific method to the position of absolute truth has been accompanied by experience’s obsolescence, the latter, in its fleetingness, absent of authority and unable to make a claim on the subject¹⁸⁶. The proverb and the maxim, to follow Agamben’s argument, which draws heavily upon Walter Benjamin’s essay *The Storyteller*, exist only as quaint relics of the past, which means the experience that

¹⁸³ Bernstein, J.M. (2001), *Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics*, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 6

¹⁸⁴ Bernstein, J.M. (2006), *Against Voluptuous Bodies: Late Modernism and the Meaning of Painting*, Stanford, US: Stanford University Press, p. 7

¹⁸⁵ See, for example, Goodstein, E. (2005), *Experience Without Qualities: Boredom and Modernity*, Stanford, US: Stanford University Press. Goodstein writes of boredom that it ‘epitomizes the dilemma of the autonomous modern subject, for whom enlightenment has also meant fragmentation – for whom modernization and scientific progress have caused, in Max Weber’s term, the ‘disenchantment’ of the world such that history and religion can no longer anchor identity in the fabric of collective meaning’ (p. 3). Boredom figures for Goodstein as both a cause and effect, both objective and subjective, in the sense that it is both a form of ‘resistance’, in psychoanalytic terms (warding off the incessant momentariness of the present by withdrawing from it), and suggests of the poverty of experience of which the subject is an after-effect. Time, Goodstein herself notes, is central in this regard because it figures in the production of the present and determines the experience (or lack thereof) had. As an interval on the way to somewhere else, the present, as rendered in terms of ordinal time, both bores and is boring.

¹⁸⁶ Agamben (1993) op. cit. The absence of affect raises the question of the relation between a liberal pluralism which maintains the subject at a distance from the world, and fundamentalism, which attempts to stave off such distance via the reawakening of immediacy, what Terry Eagleton, commenting on Žižek’s *Trouble in Paradise* describes as the difference ‘between those who believe too little and those who believe too much’ (<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/nov/12/terry-eagleton-trouble-in-paradise-absolute-recoil-zizek-review>). For Žižek, the two positions cut across one another in the sense that they both figure as differing reactions to a present in which all subjects suffer at the hands of capitalism, including the other, who, despite being excluded from it, must nonetheless endure its pervasive effect. The effect of modernity, including its reactionary forms, is not confinable to so-called Western democratic countries. What is excluded from any totality, as the discussion of the rabble and Frank Ruda’s critique of Hegel will maintain in chapter 4, is also, at least to a degree, its after-effect.

they attempt, or once did, convey, has become outdated¹⁸⁷. To the extent that subjective experience evades scientific observation, experience, along with the subject, is extricated from the decision-making process. The subject is subjected to power, but cannot wield it in turn, as what the subject experiences cannot be translated into the measure with which power governs¹⁸⁸. This is not to say however that subjective experience continues to pertain despite the obsolescence of its measure. Rather, the very measure that informs subjective experience has itself been replaced. What is subjective has been displaced, as Agamben argues, onto the universal instrument and number. And yet, it is precisely this experience of loss and displacement that for Agamben is untranslatable, the consequence being that it evades the attempt to know it. In becoming empty and homogenous experience follows time in its loss of intensity despite the apparent acceleration of time's passing.

It was noted earlier that time has both its image and its effect. It is with its image that one must begin. Its effect however extends far beyond its appearing. Indeed, it could be argued that the effect of successive time is the reverse of its image. In the ticking of the hands of the clock is the seemingly endless movement into the future. However, what has been argued so far is that successive time precludes the possibility of a future. Its proper image, if it must have an image, would be one drawn from Beckett's *Godot*. As the 'fundamental motif of the whole of his work', the gesture of walking in place at the end of *Godot* 'reacts precisely', Adorno suggests, to what is the inextricability of progress from its impossibility. Beckett's narratives, Adorno argues, 'are marked as much by an objectively motivated loss of the object as by its correlative, the impoverishment of the subject'¹⁸⁹. In the time of the new, both subject and object assume homogenous form, the lack of ontological difference that marks the latter also inscribed upon the former. What Adorno introduces, in turning to Beckett, is the problem of the spectator.

¹⁸⁷ Or as Peter Osborne writes, 'the established forms of memorative communication are archaic, but the new forms of communication do not have any memorative content' (op. cit. p. 137).

¹⁸⁸ Agamben writes, 'the scientific verification of experience which is enacted in the experiment – permitting sensory impressions to be deduced with the exactitude of quantitative determinations and, therefore, the prediction of future impressions – responds to this loss of certainty by displacing experience as far as possible outside the individual: on to instruments and numbers' (op. cit. p. 17).

¹⁸⁹ Adorno, T.W. (1997) *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Hullot-Kentor, R. London & New York: Continuum, p. 30

“Nothing happens. Nobody comes, nobody goes. It’s awful”

The reactionary politics of continuity effaces what is modern about modernity whilst also being unable to escape the modern. As a consequence, the subject informed by a Kantian modality suffers from what Rebecca Comay names the trauma of non-synchronicity¹⁹⁰. Despite time’s image suggesting of the separation of its dimensions, the very attempt to imbue time with the logic of either/or, a logic that precludes the co-presence of ontological difference, has collapsed any distinction into a homogeneous and empty time extending into an infinite horizon of the same. To live out the present is to be caught between a past that is no longer present despite continuing to insist, and a future that never arrives despite already being present; always both too late and too early. The anachronism of this traumatic structure is a consequence of clock time, not its counter-measure. It thus should not be rendered a transcendental principle, as this merely affirms the effect instilled by successive time.

Emerging from this traumatic structure is what will be named the spectator. The latter, following Freud’s diagnosis of the neurotic, repeats what it does not know it is an after-effect of, a repetition that occurs in the ‘non-place’ of a present circumscribed within the singular ontology of the contracted ‘now’. Unable to grasp or relate to what nonetheless effects it, that is, brings it into being, the subject is both haunted by [heimgesucht], and assumes the look of, the uncanny [unheimlich], such that it cannot dwell in the present, suffering instead from homelessness [Heimatlosigkeit]. Circumscribed within this triumvirate of German terms that informs the work of those ‘masters of suspicion’, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, the spectator figures as the instantiation of a modern malaise. The otherness of the other, or what could be named the untimely, *is* uncanny as a result of the reduction of existence to the pre-determined parameters of standardised time. Bound to conditions of possibility that exclude the untimely, the experiencing subject fails to recognise what nonetheless presses upon it. The untimely figures, but it does not appear as such; it presses, but cannot be brought to hand. To repeat the earlier formulation, it both is and is not. Insisting in the present despite both lacking empirical presence and belonging to the past, the untimely, under the conditions of *Neuzeit* and the momentary ‘now’, assumes

¹⁹⁰ Comay, R. & Nichols, J. op. cit. p. 314

the temporality of *Nachträglichkeit*, which, as Gerhard Richter writes, continually puts into question ‘the experience of the now as one of unmitigated immediacy’¹⁹¹. The untimely thus gestures towards what remains despite the separation of time’s dimensions. It is precisely the absence of afterness from experience, its not being recognised as ‘intended’, as Walter Benjamin suggests, for the ultra-modern, which condemns the present to repetition. The continued exclusion of the untimely reduces the subject to spectator, who has both excused itself from the objective processes of which it is an after-effect, and is unaware that it has done so, which precludes the possibility of the immanent production of new historical forms, and thus a future.

The life of the spectator is one that could be described, in following the work of Andrew Benjamin, as absent of relationality¹⁹². Despite being an after-effect of relations that press upon it, which must be approached in terms of a plural being, the spectator presumes that it pertains prior to the world in which it exists, whether as consciousness or some other form that designates subjectivity. The inner self becomes in a time of constant flux the last remaining vestige of immutability into which the subject withdraws as a means of evading the problem of homelessness that accrues from disorientation. What the spectator does not know is that its very withdrawal, its appearing before itself as prior and distinct, is a result of objective processes that extend beyond the reach of the subject in the sense that they are not empirically given in the present. It is this exceeding that gestures towards the plurality of relations of which a singularity is effected by. The subject, as with any existent, is an after-effect of Hegel’s ‘formative movement’, which not only consists of moments marked by ontological difference, but their co-presence. Which is to say that any existent, term, or concept is constituted not merely by the conditions of allowing (and thus what is allowed) in the present, but also the differing and contested conditions that belong to the past (including both the actualised and effaced) from which the present emerged. The subject is thus the after-effect of an event that

¹⁹¹ Richter, op. cit. p. 15

¹⁹² See Benjamin (2015) p. 2. What must be insisted upon at this juncture is that relationality refers not to the being-in-relation of relations, but rather, the relating of non-relations. It is only in terms of the latter form of relationality that the possibility of the co-presence of ontological difference abounds. In the dialectic, to return the discussion to Hegel, the moment of unfamiliarity in which Spirit loses itself occurs only by way of its being effected by a non-relation, or what could be otherwise described as that which does not accord with handed-down bloodlines. The dialectic will be taken up again in the following chapter.

determines both the conditions of possibility that belong to the present and the figuring of what presses in experience.

By withdrawing into the self the spectator denies the effect of affect. The spectator attributes its resistance to the alms of nature that press upon it to the strength of the ego rather than recognising the contracted, timely experience that effaces being's plurality as a result of specific historical circumstances, named here as a Kantian modality, or *Neuzeit*. Resistance, in Freudian form, can also manifest as a resistance to the pressing of the world that would enable the repetition of the same to be overcome, and which is suggestive of conditions that belong not to the individual alone, but the present in which it has its being. The isolated, atomistic individual is a product, not an essence. The subject finds itself spectator rather than assuming such a position. As Frank Ruda has argued, the absolute subject, uncoupled from what presses upon it, is determined in its indifference, an indifference it mistakes for the freedom to choose. Rather than subjective agency, indifference suggests of an inability to act. Indifference, Ruda writes, 'is a result of a becoming-indifferent of the very agent that was supposed to act'¹⁹³. Drawing on Kant, he makes the claim that to act indifferently is to be causally or heteronomously determined. 'Indifferent actions... function like the effect within or of a chain of causalities, and are therefore, actions that have the same status as mere causal mechanisms', he writes¹⁹⁴. Determination, in this instance, travels in a single direction from cause to effect, the actions performed by an indifferent subject the after-effect of a cause from which it is absent. Despite being effected by relations, the subject does not effect what it is determined by. It thus stands in what Andrew Benjamin has referred to as a relation of non-relation, which is different from a relating of non-relations¹⁹⁵. Relationality is predicated upon a notion of mutual determination such that the subject determines what it is produced by. Under the conditions of successive time however, determination moves only from cause to effect such that the subject, as spectator, undergoes a formative movement, but cannot 'undo' what is done as it is precluded from bending back upon itself and recovering the plurality of which it is an after-effect. Although it may turn back, as the nostalgic mode attests, the past that appears

¹⁹³ Ruda, F. "How To Act As If One Were Not Free: A Contemporary Defense of Fatalism", *Crisis and Critique*, (2014) vol. 1, no. 1 p. 176

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.* p. 178

¹⁹⁵ Benjamin (1993) *op. cit.* p. 1

before the spectator is absent of the event. The spectator does not secure or obtain whatever freedoms fall to it such that the freedom to choose is no freedom at all.

This is precisely why one must move from the Kant of the third *Critique* to Hegel. With Hegel, mutual determination becomes a potentiality that pertains not only in the domain of nature or the aesthetic (as with Kant), but also in the domain of labour, of culture. Despite being relational in the sense that every singularity stands in relation to a plural being, this is not the same as a relational ontology in which such determination is mutual or reciprocal. Only via the latter does the possibility of an intensive present prove possible. What remains, and what has been portrayed here, following Andrew Benjamin, as a task, is the actualisation of this potentiality, the occurrence of which would beget a future that, insofar as the present is not yet mutually relational, is neither known nor can be imaged. The Hegelian future remains still to come despite having already arrived.

‘Made in Germany’¹⁹⁶

What is inaugurated with Kant, and what continues to insist in the present, is the anachronism of modernity, an anachronism belied by the effect of time countering its image. As Rebecca Comay has argued, experience in the present is not only too late, but also too early. Writing on the relation of the precocious Germans to the enthusiastic French around the time of the French Revolution, she describes the former as predecessor, successor and contemporary to the latter all at once¹⁹⁷, ‘racing forever ahead of an event to which it can never catch up’¹⁹⁸. To the extent that modernity has remained within what Comay describes as the Kantian theatre, such non-synchronicity or temporal misalignment has something of a universal quality to it. Not only are we all a little bit German, to paraphrase Comay, we are all living out the sins of the father, which is to say that we are all still grappling with the problem of spectatorship, both its necessity and its crippling persistence, that defined those ‘temporal misfits’ who experienced the spectacle of the French Revolution only vicariously and second-hand. The modality of spectation, a specifically German cure

¹⁹⁶ Freud, “Negation”, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Vol. XIX*, trans. Strachey, J. London: The Hogarth Press

¹⁹⁷ Comay (2011) op. cit. p. 1

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.* p. 2

and affliction, continues to insist in a present that appears decidedly nonspecific.

What remains is the task of finding a ‘way-out’ of what Kant named a ‘self-incurred immaturity’, one that both accepts the necessity of a certain distance that allows for the raising of the head, but nonetheless insists that the subject position obtained is no end.

The wager to be made in the chapters to follow is that the terms of this paradox, the way in which it is lived out, are not only mutable, but that thinking, in philosophical guise, is both needed and capable of opening up the possible transformation of such terms. This is not to argue for a return to a prelapsarian unity between thought and reality, the Ideal and the Real, culture and nature, particular and universal, subject and object, and modernity’s various other contradictions, but what might be framed, in Benjaminian parlance, as a ‘slight shift’ in which the repetition compulsion born of an irreversible time does not, to misappropriate Foucault, continue ‘quite like that’. To take the transcendental turn with Kant is to deny the possibility of unmediated experience, a direct one to one relationship between subject and object. To go further and follow Hegel is to allow of the transformation of this relation, which, as chapter 4 will argue, does not necessitate conceiving of ‘Absolute Knowing’ in terms of an end of history narrative.

Central to the latter is time, which, approached as an instantiation of what Adorno terms an actual objective process, remains mutable despite its obstinacy. To the extent that time’s effect is absent from its image, as argued above, the ‘structural trauma’ that Rebecca Comay links to the time of the new precludes the possibility of comprehension in the present such that disorientation becomes the mark of the spectator. And yet, it is precisely the anachronism of experience (albeit one that evades the subjective grasp of phenomenological method) that opens up the plurality of being and the intensification of the present. Whilst philosophy can intensify the present, it cannot on its own bring about a future owing to the materiality of the diremptions and contradictions that mark modernity. The anachronistic time of *Neuzeit* is material despite its ideal character. The possibility of a future stands in need of a counter-measure, but the latter is not the future itself. The transformation of time that would allow what could be named an untimely present is not an image of a future to come, but the means with which such a future would emerge.

Chapter 2

An Outside That Is ‘Also’ In: Hegel’s Critique of Kant

The scene had fundamentally changed. The six-week march to Paris had become a world drama [hat sich zu einem Weltdrama ausgewachsen]. Mass murder has become a boring monotonous daily business [die Massenschlächtereie ist zum ermüdend eintönigen Tagesgeschäft geworden]... Bourgeois rule is caught in its own trap, and cannot ban the spirits that it has invoked [die Geister, die man rief, kann man nicht mehr bannen]... The show is over... And the public, with a disturbed face, goes about its daily tasks [das Publikum mit verdrießlichen Gesichtern dem Tagesgeschäft nachgeht].

Rosa Luxemburg

It will be shown that thought [Gedanke] and the universal [Allgemeine] are just this, namely to be itself as well as its other [Er selbst und sein Anders ist], that its reach extends over [übergreift] the other, and that nothing escapes [entflieht] from it.

Hegel

“Haven’t you crossed the limit?”¹⁹⁹

The starting point for Hegel, which will become, of course, only a means of looking back in order to show that a beginning has already been made, and is in fact no beginning at all, is an affectless boredom that he locates in the empty universalism that marks the life of the Kantian spectator²⁰⁰. Hegel identifies his present as a ‘birth-

¹⁹⁹ Badiou, A. (2009) *Logic of Worlds*, trans. Toscano, A. London, New York: Continuum, p. 535

²⁰⁰ Kant himself, as Peter Fenves’ notion of a *late* Kant suggests, was not unaware of the sense in which the Critical Philosophy ends in an empty universalism. Disconnected from the phenomenal in its reasoning, the subject of the Critical Philosophy, and Kantian modernity more generally, stands at a distance from a world of objects mediated by its faculties of cognition, a distance that precludes the possibility of the subject standing in a mutually determining relation with the incommensurate, which Kant locates in the pressing upon the subject of untimely forms found in both nature and art, as detailed in the third *Critique*. In a sense, Kant himself suggests of the link between his own work and that of Hegel by diagnosing the time of the new as a form of repetition that follows from the absence of emphatic experience and the failure of both the first and third *Critiques* to allow for the incommensurate beyond the ephemeral, aesthetic moment. What (late) Kant shows in his anthropological work is the trauma that accompanies the relating of subject and object that manifested with the Critical Philosophy. It is here that he speaks of the ‘nameless pains of boredom [zu Alltäglich]’ that accompany what has been framed as the ‘mere life’ of the spectator, Kant making the quip that ‘the English hang themselves in order to pass the time’, the Germans, of course, not subject to the same affliction having already had their spiritual revolution (Kant, I. (2012) *Lectures on Anthropology*, eds. Wood, A. & Louden, R. trans. Clewis, R. et. al. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, p. 425). That is, he shows such a life as a failed configuration that stands in need of

time' [Zeit der Geburt], which, it will be suggested, is doubly significant, referring to both the presence of the time of historical change and of a dialectic standing on the precipice of a new configuration of Spirit, the emergence of which is predicated upon the emptying out that Hegel attributes to the Kantian philosophy in which the One, as unified subject, encounters the other, which figures as a relation that exceeds the Understanding and demands a reconfiguration of consciousness. In this, the familiar has become unfamiliar via the breaking of the chains of tradition, leaving the subject, at least initially, in the thrall of the 'endless pains of boredom' that Kant invokes in his anthropology.

This empty universalism, in which objects of experience are divested of their familiar content, follows from the immediate experience of what Hegel refers to as 'pure being'. The latter is both historically specific, in the sense that the dialectical process unfolding was occurring for the first time, and logical, in that its movement accords with the parameters of the dialectic outlined by Hegel in the *Science of Logic* and volume one of the *Encyclopaedia*. Which is to say that as both a historical event and a logical moment in the unfolding of the dialectic, the 'pure being' that marks the beginning of the *Greater* and *Lesser Logic* also manifests as the empty universalism of the Critical Philosophy. In this sense, Kant figures as a moment of the dialectic, one in which a destructive faculty of Understanding, and its logic of either/or, predominates both an aesthetics and a faculty of Reason that attempts to counter such division and destruction. Modernity, in Kantian form, can thus also be construed as a time in which efficient causality materially governs, which has the effect of rendering such time one of spectatorship and 'mere life'²⁰¹. A Hegelian modernity, opened up

transformation. It is the very recognition of this failure that becomes, in Kant's wording, a 'spur to activity' [Stachel der Tätigkeit] (ibid. p. 446). This spur, with its suggestion of a sting or barb, evokes a form of experience in which the denial of the effect of affect cannot be maintained. Kant frames this spur as a form of 'unavoidable pain' [nicht entgehen Schmerz] (ibid. p. 425) that ensures progression 'towards something better' [zum Bessern fortzuschreiten] (ibid. p. 425). The full appraisal of this move by Kant, and the extent to which it introduces an approach that differs from the three *Critiques*, must await future work. However, it can be said that late Kant, to an extent, pre-empted a number of Hegel's challenges to his work, the most significant of which is Kant's reneging on the absolute distinction drawn between the various dichotomies that mark the Critical Philosophy, which, it can be claimed, is precisely what beget the 'brain-cramp' of which Kant speaks, and which can be read as a symptom of the co-presence of ontological difference.

²⁰¹ This shift from Kant to Hegel invokes a movement from what Raheel Jaeggi, in another context, suggests is the question of "how should we act?" or "what should we do?" to "what lets or makes us act?" (Jaeggi, R. "No Individual Can Resist": Minima Moralia as Critique of Forms of Life', *Constellations*, (2005) vol. 12, no. 1, p. 66). Not only phenomenal experience, but practice, becomes with Hegel conditioned and directed, which follows from his collapsing of the *absolute* distinction

with the coming of *Neuzeit*, but subsequently effaced in the reawakening of the forces of tradition that precluded movement beyond Kant, is predicated upon the destruction and division wrought by a Kantian modernity, yet it need not end in the mere aporia of metaphysical dichotomy, and the temporality of a continuous discontinuity.

The historical specificity of the dialectic follows from an understanding of modernity as the emergence of a new totality, one constituted by way of a ‘culture’ of time, as Peter Osborne has claimed, as chapter 1 detailed. Indeed, it could be argued that the dialectic only emerged as such with the coming of modernity, only on the basis of the lifting of the head from the mist of guilt, as detailed in the previous chapter.

Dialectics is a claim both about and from within modernity. This is not to suggest that no historical change took place prior to modernity, but that such change assumed a certain form with modernity’s emergence. Moreover, what will be argued throughout is that with the coming of this new time, historical change itself becomes everyday. Which is to say that the dialectic, to the extent that it suggests of a logic of historical change, also becomes a potentiality that figures in the everyday despite its absence from phenomenal experience²⁰².

between the sensible and intellectual. It is this move that suggests of the materiality of what in Kant is confined to the spontaneity of the intellect and the spontaneity of what in Kant is given sensory impression. The either/or logic of an efficient causality is not evaded by way of a faculty of Reason that ‘takes leave’ of the phenomenal, which suggests of the need of a different approach to the problem (and materiality) of spectatorship. The latter, although both necessary and persistent, will nonetheless be subject to reconfiguration. As Rebecca Comay writes of Hegel, he does not exactly renounce the ‘oral phantasm’ that he attributes to the Kantian spectator, but he does, ‘in a characteristic hyper-transcendental move’, both prolong and overcome the schema that informs the spectator ‘by turning the critical bite back on itself’ (Comay, R. ‘Hegel’s Last Words: Mourning and Melancholia at the End of the Phenomenology’, in *The End(s) of History: Questioning the Stakes of Historical Reason*, eds. Nichols, J. & Swiffen, A. (2013) :London, New York: Routledge, p. 143). It is this, it will be argued, that opens up the possibility of transforming the material by way of the reorientation of consciousness.

²⁰² As in Osborne’s portrayal of Walter Benjamin, whose notion of the everyday is a ‘metaphysical conception of historical experience’ (Osborne, P. (1995), *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*, London: Verso, p. 180), Hegel is also concerned with the figuring of the historical, and, more specifically, historical change, in the logic of the dialectic, in the everyday. Or rather, he is concerned with (and this is what the coming of a Hegelian future would allow) actualizing the logic of historical change such that the given becomes comprehended conceptually, as opposed to the Kantian representation, a difference that will be addressed towards the end of the chapter. Of course where Benjamin and Hegel differ is in the importance that the former attributes to the sociological, Osborne suggesting that Benjamin ‘forgoes a directly conceptual approach in favour of the construction of images’ (ibid.). Hegel, conversely, approaches the everyday, in the first instance, discursively, the construction of the image (or rather, ‘gallery of images’, as in the conclusion of the *Phenomenology*) occurring via the universal. If Benjamin is a ‘micrologist’ Hegel is firmly a ‘macrologist’. And yet, the latter designation does not, it will be argued, preclude the possibility of the co-presence of ontological difference, which can be contrasted with the non-discursive form of Benjamin’s dialectical image. A proper appraisal of the two must await future work.

As an ontological claim, it remains the case that such potentiality only proves effective to the extent that it is actualised, which, in Hegel's sphere, demands 'laying hold of the divine', as will be argued in chapter 4. Modernity, so construed, is thus a time of historical change despite being itself predicated upon historical change. What is peculiar about modernity is not just that time became a 'historical force', in its own right, but that the change associated with time, or what could otherwise be described as the change of change itself, became and has remained contested, every moment, as Walter Benjamin has it, that in which the messiah may enter, should the requisite conceptual labour be performed²⁰³. When Hegel speaks of his present as a 'birth-time', this must be taken not as a claim about a present confined to specific dates, Germany around 1800, for instance, but of the time of the new more generally, which continues into today. Again, this is not to claim that world historical change becomes constant, but rather, the potentiality of such change emerges as everyday despite the continuity of discontinuity, as detailed in the previous chapter, which renders such change programmatic and thus not world-historical at all.

To repeat the claim from the opening chapter, there are both progressive and regressive politics of time that abound in *Neuzeit*. Although historical change both occurred and becomes an everyday potentiality, it remains the case that civil society, in the time of the new, has remained Kantian and dichotomous via the effacement of such potentiality. The emergence of dialectics has allowed what might be construed as reconciliation in thought alone, dialectical flux appropriate to thought, but not attributable to civil society more generally. However, as the argument to be unfolded in the chapters to follow, the very dynamism of thought opens up the possibility of reorientating consciousness towards the 'inconsistency'²⁰⁴ of what is material and obstinate. The wager to be made here is that such a reorientation becomes the means with which a transformation of the interplay between the Ideal and the Real could occur, a transformation that dislodges the material in such a way that the Kantian moment of modernity's dialectic no longer proves metaphysical and permanent. Although internal to historical change, the dialectic must nonetheless be taken as

²⁰³ Benjamin, W. (2007) "Thesis on the Philosophy of History", *Illuminations*, ed. Arendt, H. trans. Zohn, H. New York: Schocken Books, p. 264

²⁰⁴ Adorno argues in this *Hegelbuch* that it is the very 'inconsistency' of Kant, his refusal to allow of easy dialectical sublation, that proves an important counter to Hegel (Adorno, T.W (1993) *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Weber-Nicholsen, S. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, p. 11).

historically specific, which means it is neither an origin nor method, as becomes clear in Hegel's discussion of the notion of beginning. The dialectic will be approached instead as invoking the co-presence of ontological difference, and thus the intensification of the present, as outlined in the opening chapter.

A Knotted Line

A beginning, despite being predicated upon presupposition (the event of which the given is an after-effect), cannot be made except in immediacy²⁰⁵. The 'pure being' of a beginning is, initially, without determination, which, Hegel argues, renders it an empty abstraction, 'its difference from nothing... a mere opinion' [eine bloße Meinung]²⁰⁶. As immediate, a beginning is not comprehended in terms of the configuration of Spirit in which the singular has its existence. Presuppositions are not given, but must instead be attained via a process or movement in which the given is shown to be mediated, which Hegel refers to as a 'formative movement' [bildende Bewegung]²⁰⁷. What appears in any beginning only manifests as determinate by way Spirit's 'bending around' 'back into itself', the end both determining and determined by the beginning²⁰⁸. In immediacy the presupposed can neither figure in the given nor be known, which is why Hegel diagnoses the Critical Philosophy as being enclosed within the immediate despite the mediation introduced by way of the faculties. As will become apparent, it is Kant's blindness towards what his deduction of the categories presupposes, his misrecognition of what manifests historically as

²⁰⁵ A discussion of 'beginnings' in Hegel can be found in Johnston, A. (2014) 'Where to Start?: Robert Pippin, Slavoj Žižek, and the True Beginning(s) of Hegel's System', *Crisis and Critique*, no. 3, pp. 370-418. For Johnston, arguments concerning the 'true beginning' remain blind to the circularity of Hegel's system. Both Pippin and Žižek attribute the beginning of Hegel's system to a particular moment: Pippin the 'Doctrine of the Concept', Žižek the 'Doctrine of Being'. In regards to the former, Johnston suggests that attributing a beginning to the 'Doctrine of the Concept' entails '... elevating Kant's transcendental unity of apperception to the status of grounding primordial moment of Hegel's philosophical edifice as a whole' (ibid. p. 404). In this, what is a moment of the dialectic is rendered the ground of the dialectic, a move that then enables Pippin to read Hegel through, and in accord with, Kant's notion of the transcendental unity of apperception, which, as Johnston shows, necessitates ignoring the various Hegelian arguments put forth against the possibility of ground. In regards to Žižek, Johnston argues that the attribution of an 'Ur-beginning' to the 'Doctrine of Being' not only entails a reading at odds with Hegel, but also with his own work.

²⁰⁶ Hegel, G.W.F. (2010) *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline - Part 1 - The Science of Logic*, trans. Klaus Brinkmann and Daniel O. Dahlstrom, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 139

²⁰⁷ Hegel, G.W.F. (1977) *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Miller, A.V. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 17, trans. amended.

²⁰⁸ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 228

ahistorical, which renders his work both absent of necessity and prone to the fanaticism that plagues what Derrida named the metaphysics of presence²⁰⁹. Like the enthusiastic spectator, Kant, in his futural orientation, could not think the incommensurate past that necessarily figures, as a presupposition, in the present. In turn, the boredom to which his subject succumbs becomes perpetual owing to its non-relation with the other, the latter not merely allowed by way of the distinction drawn between the sensible and intellectual, or the phenomenal and noumenal, but that which both presses upon the subject and evades the faculties and categories with which the subject experiences that pressing. The ‘nameless pains of boredom’ follow from the reduction of the present to a singular being, absent of both the contestation had and the one to come.

There is, in the reading of Hegel to follow, an insistence upon the necessary relation between Hegel's historical propensity, or anamnesis, and his logic, which further suggests of a shared metaphysics, albeit one that is both subject to rupture and not reducible to the epistemological insofar as the *a priori* and *a posteriori* necessarily determine each other. Another means of thinking this claim is to assert that there can be no logic without ontology, and no ontology without the material, or what Hegel calls *Realphilosophie*, the separation of being and logic itself an historical occurrence that figures in the production of the life of the modern. As Joan Stambaugh has suggested, Hegel's logic is onto-logical in the sense that it is concerned with being, or what Hegel frames as substance²¹⁰. Being, in the determined form of *Dasein*, which he contrasts with the immediacy of *Sein*, is both logical and historical, marked by a logic of becoming in which objects emerge and pass away, including the historically differentiated configurations of Spirit in which objects have their particular existence.

Drawing on Adrian Johnston's reading of Hegel, there is, in what is to follow, an insistence upon a necessary dialectic involving the metaphysical, historical and the material. That which appears to transcend history manifests by way of history. It is only via the ‘labour of the concept’, to adopt the Hegelian formulation, that the logical emerges from the historical. However, owing to their dialectical relation, the

²⁰⁹ See, for example, Derrida, J. (1982) “Ousia and Grammê: Note on a Note from Being and Time”, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Bass, A., Brighton, England: The Harvester Press, pp. 29-68

²¹⁰ Stambaugh, J. (1974) “Time and Dialectic in Hegel and Heidegger”, *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 4, no. 1. p. 89

historicality of the existent nonetheless allows for ontology, one that only manifests from what Johnston names a ‘contextually situated standpoint’²¹¹. This means that neither logic nor the material can be said to be prior to one another. Johnston continues, ‘with the *Logic*’s circularity,... Being, its false start [as abstract nothingness], is truly recovered first as spatio-temporal objective reality (i.e., the start of *Realphilosophie* with nature), an intelligible reality whose intelligibility is made possible by the Logic itself (as a metaphysical, but not yet real, beginning)’²¹². If the *Logic*, in both its *Greater* and *Lessor* forms, is a series of failures, it is with the movement to *Realphilosophie*, and the philosophy of nature, that being is first recovered in determinate form. However, it is only in having undergone the labour of the concept, and its attendant failures, that *Dasein* manifests in spatio-temporal reality.

Although this onto-logic would seem to deny the particularity of the historically real, it is the movement of the dialectic that opens up and allows figure what would otherwise remain excluded by a logic of efficient causality. As Adorno has argued, and as will be detailed in the chapters to follow, it is the very speculative nature of the Hegel’s dialectic, its reach extending over the other, that allows for the figuring of difference. The claim then is that the ontological is plural in the sense that internal to being, and the onto-logical, are the disruptions and distortions of history and culture, the events of the past that despite being past continue to figure in the ontological constitution of the present. Being cannot be confined within the parameters that belong to the subject despite the subject figuring, as will be argued at a later point, as a determinant of the ontological, precisely because the subject cannot summon past event via ‘mere reflection’. Which is to say that the Hegel to be presented here invokes a notion of Spirit that, although remaining post-Kantian, and thus maintaining Kant’s critique of metaphysics, is not reducible to any one of the historical, material or metaphysical beginnings that mark his work. There is more to Hegel because there is more to the dialectic than either a logic or an ontology.

The problem that Hegel confronts, and which forms the central discussion of chapter 3, is that the gap opened up between the historical and logical, between the actual and

²¹¹ Johnston (2014) op. cit. p. 408

²¹² *ibid.* p. 409

the rational, a gap that figures as a moment in the movement of the dialectic, but is not its absolution, appears to have revealed the limits, or what Marx would call the poverty, of philosophy. In the time of the new the dichotomies that mark the Critical Philosophy remain in force. Insofar as the Critical Philosophy figures for Hegel as a ‘birth pang’ that gestures towards the actualisation of a new configuration of Spirit in which such dichotomies would be overcome, their continuing insistence suggests that either the unity of the actual and the rational has yet to be achieved – reconciliation remaining futural, a mere potential – or the irreconcilability of the oppositions that mark *Neuzeit* is itself rational, Absolute Knowing a matter of reconciliation with the irreconcilable. If Hegel can be said to have overcome Kant philosophically, this overcoming has not been accompanied by a concomitant transformation in the social conditions that pertain in the time of the new. Determinate negation, which figures as the means with which the rational is actualised, has seemingly failed to negate the irrational, which suggests of a certain philosophical impotence²¹³.

As will be argued in the latter stages of this chapter, it is the actualisation (a notion that awaits a proper delineation) of what Hegel recognises in the third *Critique* as a time of reciprocity that becomes the task of post-Kantian philosophy if a future is to be prove possible. It is this time that allows for the recovery of the past and the co-presence of difference, which figures, in contradistinction to the aesthetic path pursued by Kant, as a determination, and negation, of Spirit and the ‘actual objective processes’ that determine the living out of a life. In contradistinction to Kant’s beautiful voice, rendering reciprocity onto-logical rather than a mere ‘husk’ is intended to produce Absolute Knowing insofar as the time of reciprocity allows for the recovery and sublation of Spirit’s various failed attempts to unify subject and object, the rendering of that failure constitutive of objects themselves opening up their transformation. That the successive time of the new continues to figure as an organising principle of not only the present’s institutions, but also sensuous

²¹³ Robert Kaufman speaks to such impotence when he argues for a more Kantian rather than Hegelian Adorno. ‘What seems more interesting is the relevance today of Adorno’s translations of Kantian constructivism, when the very currency of an older, even if retooled, critical negativity seems at least temporarily to have been integrated into late capitalism’ (Kaufman, R. “Red Kant, or the Persistence of the Third “Critique” in Adorno and Jameson”, *Critical Inquiry*, Summer 2000, vo. 26, no. 4. p. 723). Hegel’s negativity, which Kaufman contrasts with Kant’s formalism, has lost, if it ever had, the ability to invoke both otherness and change. Or as Peter Osborne has put it, ‘the European spirit (Geist) can no longer find itself in the ‘absolute dismemberment’ of which Hegel writes in the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, however hard it may continue to try’ (Osborne, op. cit. p. 40).

experience, symbolic and conceptual comprehension, and self-consciousness (without, at the same time, exhausting them), suggests of the emergence of a tear between the rational and actual, and subject and object that remains despite the movement of philosophy beyond the limits of the Critical Philosophy²¹⁴. In Hegel's assertion that 'physical perception and a finite Understanding are not enough', that 'we must see with the eye of the concept, the eye of Reason...', is the recognition of the discord between the subject that emerged with the Critical Philosophy and the discursivity that informs Spirit. The latter's 'bending around' 'back into itself', which Hegel's dialectical method attempts to induce, has not (yet) dissolved the effect of *Neuzeit* that leaves the subject a mere spectator confined to Kant's *Wohnhaus*, a building in which the subject remains bound despite gaining windows, as Hartmut and Gernot Böhme have it²¹⁵. The subject's immersion in both Spirit and itself has not beget the freedom that reciprocal time promised, there remaining an other that can be neither comprehended nor sublated, owing, it will be argued, to the continuing effect of a successive form of time that binds the subject to Freud's 'repetition compulsion'.

Hegel's approach to the present can thus be understood as a contestation over time, Spirit torn between the successive time of the first *Critique* and the reciprocal time of the third. Rather than opposing absolutely a time of cognition, and its successive form of time, to a time of nature, and its time of reciprocity (as in Kant), Hegel understands such separation as maintaining the present in a state of stasis and an empty universalism. In order to 'lay hold of the divine', as Hegel demands, these competing times must be brought into relation, which would have the effect of reinvoking the event that is the coming of modernity, and the intensification of the present, by imputing the logic of historical change back into the metaphysical divisions concretised with Kant. Otherwise, in a present dominated by the governance of the Understanding, the potentiality contained in a notion of reciprocal

²¹⁴ Which is precisely, as claimed in the introduction, why Kant lives on as something like Hamlet's ghost, a living on that demands a return to Kant despite, as Badiou has it, this being a sign of sickness. Leaving Kant behind can be confined to neither the philosophical nor the socio-historical, Kant's shadow still falling, as Adrian Johnston has argued, 'over Badiouian philosophy' (Johnston, A. (2008) "Phantom of Consistency: Alain Badiou and Kantian Transcendental Idealism", *Continental Philosophy Review*, vol. 41, p. 345).

²¹⁵ Böhme, H. and Böhme, G. (1996) "The Battle of Reason with the Imagination" *What is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-century Answers to Twentieth-century Questions*, ed. Schmidt. trans. Kellner, J. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 432

time remains what Hegel refers to as mere ‘chaff, or a ‘husk’²¹⁶; a counter-measure that fails to convert from one-sided principle into a new configuration of consciousness. The ‘sensible intelligibility’ of the Kantian aesthetic, despite appearing as other, does not for Hegel remain unmoved by consciousness, and vice versa. Being brought into relation with such otherness leads to the transformation of consciousness and the sublation of the other, which becomes the very means with which ‘potentiality’ [Möglichkeit] becomes ‘actuality’ [Wirklichkeit]²¹⁷. As Hegel writes, ‘existence [Dasein] in general is partly appearance [Erscheinung] and only partly actuality [Wirklichkeit]’²¹⁸, which means the actual is always more than itself, always also appearance, and thus always also potentiality, which can only ever emerge, for the first time, as an appearance. It is in the actualisation of the potential that a future emerges that is not simply the extension of an ‘indifferent’ and ‘undifferentiated’ present, but which has nonetheless remained unrealised in Kantian modernity despite already having appeared on the scene.

Before turning to the contested nature of Hegel’s modernity in chapter 3, the concern of this chapter will be to trace the outlines of Hegel’s Kant critique, which, at the same time, opens up a means of approaching Hegel’s understanding of time and Hegel more generally. This approach will occur via a reading of the first part of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, which forms one of Hegel’s most succinct treatments of the Critical Philosophy. The reading focuses on Hegel’s transformation of that which remains with Kant indeterminate and non-relational into the determined and

²¹⁶ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 68

²¹⁷ In contrast to an argument advanced by Iain MacDonald, potentiality is not for Hegel subordinated to actuality (MacDonald, I. “Adorno’s Modal Utopianism: Possibility and Actuality in Adorno and Hegel”, *Adorno Studies*, (2017), vol. 1, no. 1. p. 2). The very possibility of the latter, it will be argued, is predicated upon something first emerging as potentiality despite Hegel’s repeated framing of the potential as mere ‘chaff’, or a ‘husk’. What Hegel recoils from is the impossibility, in the Kantian architectonic, of the one-sided converting into the objective, which Kant’s split of the Understanding and Reason precludes. Although Hegel is the thinker of the rational and not one of the *Seyn-Sollen*, it is the retroactive aspect of his thought that allows for potentiality. The latter refers not to what will or should be, but what belongs to the past despite not having become actual, which is the contraction upon which dialectical movement depends. It is only via a dialectic of potentiality and actuality that something exists in terms of Hegel’s notion of *Dasein*, or determined being. As will be shown, because what is ‘actual’ ‘contains within itself opposite determinations’, the potential figures as a moment in the dialectic of the actual. It is not the case however that Hegel establishes a hierarchy here, the potential subordinated to an actuality that will always already have sublated the potential. Invoking what will be termed a logic of reciprocity, it is only in terms of each other that either figures. It is precisely this insistence upon potentiality that informs the possibility of the co-presence of ontological difference.

²¹⁸ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 33

relational, a possibility that follows from his rendering consciousness a dialectical process that passes through moments of unity and disunity, which, in turn, allows for a form of comprehension that is not just epistemological, but also ontological in the sense that circumscribing the limits to the present necessitates the production of that which exceeds it. To get there however, one must go back to Kant.

Kant's 'Homely Abode'

As a beginning, albeit one that has already begun, it is worth briefly outlining the contours of the Critical Philosophy, with an emphasis placed on the aspects that Hegel will discern as problematic. What is at stake in the Critical Philosophy, at least in the first *Critique*, is the possibility of obtaining knowledge of the world, a knowledge that for Kant must evade the contingency of empiricism and the emptiness of rationalism. Kant sought to counter the scepticism of Hume via his notion of the faculties of cognition, or conditions that allow, which are situated outside the effects of time and space. The very possibility of securing the certainty of knowledge rests for Kant upon extricating the faculties from the transient and fallible domain of appearances, which opens up the thinking of what Kant names the transcendental²¹⁹. Central to Kant's architectonic is the tracing of a relationship between the two domains, which is accomplished by way of a faculty of Imagination [Einbildungskraft] that translates sensory impressions received by the faculty of Sensibility [Sinnlichkeit] into an image formed in accordance with the categories that belong to the faculty of Understanding [Verstand]. Insofar as knowledge is dependent upon these three transcendental faculties and the sensory impressions drawn from the phenomenal, it can be reduced to neither an abstract concept nor an inductive generalisation derived from sensory impressions. Drawing a distinction between the transcendental and phenomenal allows Kant to argue that although knowledge begins with what is given in experience (the sensory impressions), the givenness of the empirical is dependent on the faculties

²¹⁹ Again, Kant draws a distinction between the 'transcendental' and the 'transcendent'. The former refers to 'not so much... objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects in so far as this is to be possible a priori'. The transcendental does not 'signify something passing beyond all experience, but something that indeed precedes it *a priori*', and which 'is intended simply to make knowledge of experience possible' (Kant, I. (2004) *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Hatfield, G. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 125). And yet, the transcendental will remain problematic for Hegel because it remains indeterminate and thus not subject to the negativity of consciousness.

of cognition, which belong to the domain of the transcendental. The immediate is thus mediated despite appearing immediately. Only via the forming work of the transcendental faculties can the subject apprehend sensory impressions and, via their schematic organisation gain knowledge about objects from which such impressions emerge²²⁰.

By introducing the *a priori* into the cognitive process, Kant mounts a critique of both empiricism and rationalism. A strict empiricism, which denies the existence of the transcendental, lacks a means of explaining how it is that knowledge, understood synthetically (that is, not contained within its concept), can be obtained. In the transcendental turn taken by Kant, objectivity is not merely given, which suggests of the necessary contribution of that which allows for appearances despite not itself appearing. Empiricism then, on Kant's view, takes the given as the exhaustion of reality, which in turn invokes an epistemology absent of necessity. For Kant, perception cannot perceive itself perceiving, which means cognition cannot be reduced to what is perceivable. To recall, he writes in the first *Critique*, 'for where would our experience itself get its certainty if all rules in accordance with which it proceeds were themselves in turn always empirical, thus contingent?'²²¹ Whilst the forming work carried out by the *a priori* faculties cannot be perceived they must nevertheless obtain if experience is to be possible. In their absence, experience would lack necessity such that what is perceived could be mere illusion. Equally, in the absence of sensory impressions, the faculties, despite their *a priori* status, would be mere empty forms, and the resultant subject a windowless monad for whom experience is no more than a play amongst contentless concepts. The speculative postulation of a transcendental domain is aimed at ensuring the certainty of knowledge whilst also maintaining the necessity of the phenomenal in order to gain a window to a world of material objects, which, as Kant understands it, entails the two stems of knowledge, the empirical and rational, forming a unity.

²²⁰ For an elaboration of the cognitive process and Kant's attempt to deduce the conditions that allow and the concomitant categories that inform Kant's schematism, see Longuenesse B. (2006) "Kant on a Priori Concepts: The Metaphysical Deduction", in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant and Modern Philosophy*, ed. Guyer, P. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 128-168.

²²¹ See Kant, I. (1998) *Critique of Pure Reason*, eds. & trans. Guyer, P. & Wood, A. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 155-156

The distinction drawn between the transcendental and phenomenal also allows for a faculty of Reason not circumscribable within the causal chain in which objects of experience have their being. Reason is predicated upon a different relation to the phenomenal than the faculties of cognition in that its functioning does not involve the ‘taking up’ and ‘combining’ of sensory impressions, or what Kant refers to as syntheses. In contrast to the spontaneity of the Understanding, which subsumes sensory impressions beneath concepts, Reason, at a distance from the phenomenal, is not a faculty of determination. As Kant writes in his political work, Reason takes leave [geht aus] ‘of known objects of experience’²²² and thus remains indeterminate. The absence of determination is concomitant with a notion of freedom predicated upon a contraction of relations that reduces the given to a timely image, which in turn allows for Reason’s transcending of the phenomenal. Freedom is thus freedom from the limitations imposed by sensory impressions that press upon the subject, a limitation that Kant ascribes to the causal chain of an efficient causality. If the cognitive faculties that produce determinate knowledge remain bound to the causal chain of the phenomenal, Reason is not limited to this form of lawfulness. It is thus with Reason that the possibility of morality lies, as the latter is conceivable for Kant only insofar as it abjures the affect instilled by the phenomenal, which would otherwise reduce thinking to the spontaneity of the Understanding, a faculty that does not engage in reflection because it lacks the ability to ‘linger’ [weilen] over the given. In the absence of sensory impression, the faculty of Reason does not engage in knowing, only thinking, producing what Kant terms ‘regulative principles’²²³. Which is to say that the very possibility of reasoning is predicated upon setting limits to experience. Both the possibility of the *a priori*, and a morality not limited to the habitual, is a function of the difference that Kant maintains between the transcendental and phenomenal, which also informs the distinction drawn between sensibility and intellect. What is established is not one, but two categories of being: the being that is transcendental that belongs to the faculties, which cannot be known as such, and the being that is empirical that belongs to sensory impressions schematised into a timely image.

²²² Kant, I. (1991) *Political Writings*, ed. Reiss, H.S. trans. Nisbet, H.B. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 239

²²³ See Kant, I. (2000) *The Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Guyer, P. trans. Guyer, P. & Matthews, E. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 274, for a discussion of such principles.

Prelude to the Critique of Kant

A means of approaching Hegel, of developing a thematic, and of understanding his relation to Kant and the critique of the Critical Philosophy that informs his work, can be found in a passage taken from Luce Irigaray, who writes:

But now everything has moved inside the house the subject has made, or is. And whether the scene seems set inside, or outside, whether in his room or his study, sometimes enjoying a fire fancied to be burning in baroque coils of smoke or else gazing out through the/his window, at the still in(de)finite space of the universe, the action is always inside his house, his mind. And what or who can now put it outside? Only a messenger of revolution perhaps? Or else the fact that this hearth is made of glass and that those glasses - rather tarnished by age, their brilliance dimmed, having always in fact been unsilvered or blackened by smoke - mirror so deadly a boredom that, whatever one's firm intent, one might finish by wishing to die - to die of love, were that still possible - rather than just have things go on. Forever²²⁴.

There is here an invocation of the spectator, framed as the contemplative man of letters, envisaging death as a way out of the absence of affect that manifests as the impossibility of love. Having erected the walls from within which he gazes at the infinite via a now tarnished window that keeps the action within the confines of his house, the dimming of affect is registered as an 'incessant' problem in a similar vain to Kant's *Anthropology* despite Kant being the target of Irigaray's criticism. There appears to be no end to this boredom, as even death stands in need of finitude. And the citing of the baroque, considered in light of the work of Walter Benjamin, suggests of the emptying out and the ruination that accompanies the attainment of a 'room with a good view', but also the staking of (symbolic) life in which the head is lifted [sich... erhob] '...from the mist of guilt'²²⁵, a staking that another life is itself predicated upon despite the emptiness, or speechlessness, that is its companion.

The way out for Irigaray assumes two possible forms: the messenger of revolution, or a boredom that threatens to go on forever. These are themes also apparent in Hegel's

²²⁴ Irigaray, L. (1985) *Speculum and the Other Woman*, trans. Gill G. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, p. 213

²²⁵ Benjamin, W (1978), *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, New York: Schocken Books, p. 307

work. But whereas for Irigaray the opening occasioned by the baroque has long closed, the lifted head seeing nothing but its own 'blackened' reflection, Hegel locates here the possibility of a birth emerging from death such that the dimming of life, the absence of the effect of affect, is only a transition. In place of a crippling self-reflection, Hegel seeks to bind together the two escape routes that Irigaray invokes; the boredom of affectless experience shown to be only a transition to a new shape of Spirit²²⁶. If for Hegel the empty universalism of the Critical Philosophy is a transition, albeit a necessary one, the spectatorship of a timely life will cede its place (should the requisite labour occur) to a new shape of Spirit that the boredom of spectation prefigures. For Hegel, the emptiness of Reason can only be a temporary state of affairs, as the experience of lack engendered by separation becomes itself the content of a form of thinking that is necessarily transformed in thinking over what is not merely a principle of Reason, but content. In this, the recovery of the event from which an empty universalism emerged takes place, which reinvokes the co-presence of ontological difference in the present. As Hegel writes in the opening to the *Phenomenology*:

Besides, it is not difficult to see that ours is a birth-time [Zeit der Geburt] and a period of transition to a new era [Übergangs zu einer neuen Periode]. Spirit [Geist] has broken [gebrochen] with the world it has hitherto inhabited and imagined [Welt seines Daseins und Vorstellens], and is of a mind to submerge [hinab zu versenken] it in the past, and in the labour [Arbeit] of its own transformation [Umgestaltung]. Spirit is indeed never at rest but always grasped [begriffen] in its forward movement [fortschreitender Bewegung]. But just as the first breath drawn by a child after its long, quiet nourishment [Ernährung] breaks [abbricht] the gradualness of merely quantitative progress [Fortgangs] - there is a qualitative leap [qualitativer Sprung], and the child is born - so likewise the Spirit in its formation [bildende] matures [reift] slowly and quietly into its new shape [Gestalt], dissolving [auf... löst] bit by bit the

²²⁶ Obviously, this raises the question of gender in Hegel. One could certainly argue that any new shape of Spirit that is to emerge from a Kantian modernity will remain masculine despite, in other respects, being new. The feminist critique of philosophy, as evinced in the work of Irigaray, would thus insist on such a shape being a mere continuation rather than the interruption of domination. The question then becomes, does a totality constituted by time allow of a configuration in which domination did not await the feminine? Indeed, the very framing of history as being predicated upon contestation suggests of the continuation of a certain line of masculine thinking. What will be argued in what is to follow however, is that a 'culture' of time does not in-itself side with domination. Rather, it is successive time, and thus a Kantian modernity, in which pain and suffering awaits the particular. A totality constituted by a different time, but still nonetheless within the parameters of modernity, holds out the possibility of the particular not being determined in the same way.

structure [Baues] of its previous world, whose tottering state is only hinted at by isolated [einzelne] symptoms. The frivolity and boredom [Langweile] which unsettle [einreißen] the established order, the vague foreboding [unbestimmte Ahnung] of something unknown, these are the heralds [Vorboten] of approaching change. The gradual crumbling [Zerbröcklen] that left unaltered the outer expression of the face of the whole [Physiognomie des Ganzen] is cut short by a sunrise [Aufgang] which, in one flash, illuminates the structure [Gebilde] of the new world²²⁷.

The moment of crisis, signalled by a 'boredom' and a 'vague foreboding', is for Hegel a transition rather than a newly obtained shape of Spirit. Boredom does not merely gesture towards an abstract emptiness produced by a particular configuration of consciousness; it also reintroduces an affect that effects into the life of Spirit. In line with Kant's argument in the *Anthropology*, the absence of the effect of affect may nonetheless prove effective, that is, constitutive of a new configuration. Boredom is suggestive of a present, and a configuration of consciousness, in which a gap has emerged between subject and object, the sensible and intellectual, finite and infinite, which renders thinking contentless. However, recognition of this emptiness necessitates Spirit turning back upon itself, its own contested, and thus plural, past, becoming the content of present thinking. The very comprehension of the boredom of the present necessitates the recovery of the contested past from which the present emerged.

As will become clear, the conditions that allow are for Hegel capable of becoming the content of thought, the 'established order' negated by a plural past. This possibility rests upon Hegel's historical approach to Spirit, his looking back at the past not merely as an accumulation of objects, deeds and occurrences, but as marked by mutations in what Robert Sinnerbrink refers to as the very 'patterns of knowledge' and 'cognitive and practical attitudes' that manifest in the present when the owl of Minerva takes flight²²⁸. For Hegel, as will be shown, the becoming content of both the past content and form of thinking is not without its effect, precisely because such a past is not itself singular. The emptiness and boredom of spectatorship provokes a turning back in which consciousness becomes the content of its own thought, which cuts

²²⁷ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 6

²²⁸ Sinnerbrink, R. (2007) *Understanding Hegelianism*, Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing, p. 16

across the content/form divide and renders the transcendental the material of thinking itself. The question that arises with Hegel, and which will be addressed in the chapters to follow, is whether the past thinking (as both form and content) that becomes the matter of present thinking allows of the co-presence of ontological difference, and thus the intensification of the present, or whether such recovery can only occur by way of the singular ontology of a metaphysics of presence, and thus an absence of ontological difference.

For Hegel, crisis (neither economic, nor moral, but ontological) is thus a 'herald' [Vorbote] of a future yet to come, a future, moreover, in which a qualitative leap is made such that the past shape of Spirit is both dissolved and carried forward in the *Aufhebung* of the negation of negation. This is what Hegel's invocation of the knotted line suggests. As Andrew Haas has written, transformation 'along a knotted line is not a smooth transition from one quantity to the next, not the continuous motion of a seamless polymorphism'. It is instead, he suggests, a 'radical shift from one form to a completely foreign, strange other, to another being and a new, surprising, unforeseeable world'²²⁹. Haas goes on to suggest that the connection between differing configurations is no connection at all, but it is precisely this lack of continuity that allows for the figuring, by way of recovery, of difference in the present.

The world with which Spirit has broken, a world that the subject inhabited and imagined, is both submerged [versunken] in the past *and* in the labour through which Spirit transforms itself. Spirit's prior shape, according to Hegel, is neither forgotten nor left behind. It is submerged in the past, but also in the labour that occurs in the present such that its presence cannot be confined to the past. On Hegelian terms, the past is both a repository of Spirit's prior configurations, and manifests in the present by way of the labour of the concept, which is, as Michael Inwood points out, 'the account of the whole course of its development rather than any single phase of it'²³⁰. Although it must be added that Inwood's definition lends itself to a reading of Hegel in which he succumbs to the parousia of absolute presence. As will be argued in the

²²⁹ Haas, A. (2000), *Hegel and the Problem of Multiplicity*, Evanston, Illinois; Northwestern University Press, p. 156

²³⁰ Inwood, M. (2002), *Hegel Dictionary*, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, p. 76

chapters to follow, it is not the *whole* course of a concepts development that must be recovered, but the co-presence of ontological difference that, as the projection of dialectics back onto the past, gives rise to historical change. ‘Development’, as *Entfaltung*, is not constant, but occurs via radical shifts and leaps²³¹. Such co-presence invokes a plural being, and a knotted line, rather than the past of a concept known on terms that belong to historicism in which historical movement seems to occur all on its own, which leads to the maintenance of the idea of a ‘big Other’, as will be argued in chapter 5. The only way in which a relation between differences holds is via the very incommensurateness of relations. ‘The difference’, Haas writes, ‘that forms the non-relation between kinds [that] opens up as their relation, constitutes their specific ratio via the leap’²³². If approached by way of a singular ontology, there can be no relation because there is no differentiation. It is in labouring therefore that the past, as it figures in the present, is produced as incommensurate, and the forward movement into a different ‘shape’ [Gestalt] of consciousness gained.

Although the physiognomy of the transition assumes the countenance of the past, the future indicated only by ‘isolated symptoms’, it is precisely by focusing excessively on past countenance that the ‘gradual crumbling’, which, in a flash, makes a qualitative leap, appears as the continuance of the ‘established order’ rather than its interruption. In other words, Hegel will accuse Kant of evincing a blindness towards what Luxembourg refers to as the ‘disturbed face’ [verdrießliches Gesicht], the difference and change that leaves its mark, but is not yet articulated, nor can remain a mere aesthetic ‘husk’. The reference to physiognomy, which Kant invoked in the second half of the third *Critique*, suggests that Hegel understands the Kantian conditions that allow as a product of mistaking a time of transition for the perpetual, which follows from the ban that Kant places on knowing objects noumenally, that is, as in-themselves rather than just appearances. The limits imputed into knowing preclude the possibility of recognising the mutation of history and the intensification of the present that will usher in the transformation of the conditions that allow that manifest

²³¹ Comay, for instance, writes of the dialectical process that ‘this pleating or bunching of consciousness is at once the product and the condition of its dialectical unfolding or “development” (*Entfaltung*)’ (Comay, R. (2013) “Non-Metaphysical, Post-Metaphysical, Post-Traumatic (Response to Lumsden, Redding, Sinnerbrink”, *Parrhesia*, no. 17, pp. 50-61. Which is another way of saying that development is not linear, but, in Comay’s words, ‘veering in a different direction, including sideways, backwards, and all too often nowhere’.

²³² Haas, op. cit. p. 156

in the conditioned. In his blindness, Kant rendered consciousness immutable. He was, in this sense, both wrong and could not have been right, as the flash that illuminates the structure of the new world had not yet occurred, or at least, appearing only at dusk, could not be recognised as such because of the separation of form and content maintained by Kant, which precludes comprehension of the whole. It is Kant's exclusion of Spirit's past that both renders his categories empty and leads to the conclusion that the dichotomies invoked are both *a priori* and immutable.

Kant Critique

Hegel's critique of Kant focuses in on the 'in kind' difference that, in the splitting of being in two, opens up an 'incalculable gulf' [unübersehbare Kluft]²³³ between the transcendental and phenomenal, between knowing and thinking, cause and freedom, the One and the other, subject and object. It is this gulf that, whilst suggesting of the co-presence of ontological difference, actually precludes, as the previous chapter argued, the possibility of relating to the untimely, whose figuring in experience is predicated upon the transformation of the conditions that allow that remain unmoved in the separation of subject and object. The idea of community or interaction is in Kant a matter of simultaneity²³⁴. What enters into a reciprocal relation is predicated upon its chronometric contemporaneity, its empirical co-presence, its at the same time character. Contemporaneity is instead a matter, to follow Rebecca Comay's reading of Hegel, of non-synchronicity, what is co-present both that which is no longer and that which is still to come²³⁵. As argued in the opening chapter, the figuring of an incommensurate past and an imageless future (as opening) in the present, are the conditions upon which historical movement is predicated.

²³³ Kant (2000), op. cit. p. 63

²³⁴ See, for instance, his discussion of simultaneity and succession in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic', where he writes, 'for simultaneity or succession would not themselves come into perception if the representation of time did not ground them *a priori*. Only under its presupposition can one represent that several things exist at one and the same time (simultaneously) or in different times (successively)' (Kant (1998) op. cit. p. 162). Difference for Kant manifests either successively, or simultaneously, but not both at the same time. To the extent that difference pertains simultaneously, it must fill up different space. There can be no experience, from a Kantian perspective, in which the incommensurate occupies both the same time and space despite not being circumscribable to a present determined by way of the clock. This has the effect of effacing the incommensurate, its very existing precluded by the *a priori* forms that determine what figures as sensory impression.

²³⁵ Comay, R. (2011) *Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 2

Hegel draws on a line of critique found in Schelling by arguing that the separation that Kant invokes renders Reason, or what for Hegel is thinking, lifeless. From the Kantian cleft emerges a form of reasoning that is without content (and thus merely formal), and a form of knowing that precludes comprehension of the relation that holds between consciousness and its object: both Reason and the Understanding, in Kantian form, prove deficient. Which is to say that in rendering the faculties transcendental, the possibility of relating to the 'is', as that which determines the being of the existent, is precluded, the subject confined, in its knowing, to the finitude of the conditioned phenomenal. Not only is Kant blind to the historicity of the 'is' in the sense that he mistakes its transitioning for the permanent, by splitting being in two he also reduces experience to the repetition of Hegel's 'bad infinity' in which change is only predicative, the conditions that allow remaining fixed.

For Hegel, the Critical Philosophy precludes the comprehension and transformation of the 'is' that dialectics determinately negates and thus puts into motion. Insofar as the transcendental can, on Kant's terms, only be thought, but not known, it remains a mere postulation not grounded in the concrete domain of the phenomenal. The Kantian categories, disconnected from their own past, are without substance, remaining in the mode of 'pure being'. Lacking in the substance derived from having undergone dialectical movement, the categories that determine existence cannot be differentiated from nothing because both are without content. If the phenomenal remains contingent, and thus cannot, at the risk of succumbing to scepticism, determine the faculties, thinking becomes an exercise in fantasy, disconnected from the concrete materiality of historical being. Absent of content, it remains on the far side of the 'incalculable gulf' that Kant's blindness, and the abstract universalism that Hegel links to the French Revolution, opens up.

The problem can be traced to the way in which Kant seeks to maintain the unity of the transcendental and phenomenal. In order that the postulates of Reason do not descend into transcendental illusion, which threatens in the taking leave of known objects of experience, Kant binds the form assumed by the objective to the categories despite Reason's ability to exceed such limits. The tendency to read as objective what is 'excessive' to the subjective conditions of cognition means the objective must not for Kant be comprehended on terms that belong to Reason. Where the principles of

Reason 'outstrip' the Understanding, 'we should', he writes, 'conceive of all objects in accordance with the subjective conditions for the exercise of our faculties necessarily pertaining to our (i.e., human) nature'²³⁶. This enables Reason to extend its reach beyond the causal chain that belongs to the phenomenal whilst agreeing with the transcendental conditions that necessarily pertain if the possibility of synthetic knowledge is to be maintained. The very taking leave of Reason is predicated upon the reduction of the objective to the timely, schematised image.

For Hegel however, the categories are themselves also empirical despite Kant's claiming of transcendental status. In thinking the categories transcendently, that is, without a history of dialectical or formative movement, Kant necessarily draws from that which has presence. In turn, the limitations placed upon the objective, insofar as it must accord with the categories of the Understanding, are the limitations of the empirical present. In the endeavour to ensure the concreteness of objects of experience, Kant, in effect, reduces them to the given. There can be no experience that exceeds the timely image for Kant because the Understanding, as Kant readily admits, 'cannot follow' Reason in its taking leave of the given²³⁷. The movement engaged in by Reason is denied to the Understanding, which has the effect of limiting possible experience to the parameters of present existence.

This has two consequences. Firstly, to avoid illusion, the objective must accord with conditions that are given. Hegel argues that thinking the objective in terms of presence represents a failure to think philosophically. He writes, 'philosophy should at least have had the effect on the method of doing logic that the thought-determinations [Denkbestimmungen] in general or the usual logical subject matter (concepts, judgements, etc.), would no longer simply be taken up from observation [aus der Beobachtung genommen] and thus gathered up merely empirically [bloß empirisch aufgefaßt], but that they be derived [abgeleitet] from thinking itself'²³⁸. Thinking, from Hegel's perspective, whilst exceeding the limits of the Understanding, nonetheless has its content, which it furnishes itself. As Stephen Houlgate writes, Hegel understands the task of philosophy as deriving the basic categories of thought

²³⁶ Kant (2000) op. cit. p. 273

²³⁷ *ibid.* p. 271

²³⁸ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 86

from ‘the spontaneous activity of thought itself’²³⁹, that is, as being derived via the same process that marks the Kantian Understanding and its cognition of objects of experience. To mistake the given form of the categories for the transcendental, and insist upon the objective agreeing with such form, is to circumscribe what ‘is’ within the limits of the Understanding, which does not constitute the philosophical insofar as it does not, in Kantian form, involve thinking about thinking. In his asceticism, which follows from the contraction of relations that marks both categories of being, Kant guards against the incommensurate by rendering thinking contentless. Inadvertently, the given present becomes the limit of a faculty of Reason that for Kant must exceed the chain of efficient causality and its phenomenal objects.

Secondly, the Kantian categories do not meet the requirements that Kant himself places on limitation. Because what Kant takes to be transcendental has in fact, according to Hegel, a ‘merely psychological-historical’²⁴⁰ foundation, the categories cannot function as a limit that tempers Reason’s tendency towards illusion because they are, in the Kantian framework, marked by the contingency of the empirical present. On the one hand, the limit that Kant inscribes upon Reason is merely taken up from the empirical. On the other, even this limit does not suffice because its empirical basis renders it contingent. Hegel argues that one is either confronted by a limit that reduces the functioning of Reason to the empirical parameters of the present, or this limit is revealed as contingent and Reason becomes limitless, that is, it succumbs to what Kant himself refers to as ‘fanaticism’ [Schwärmerei]²⁴¹. Reason, as a consequence, is either reduced to the empirical, and fails to think the ‘is’, or transcends into illusion owing to the absence of necessity, its freedom that of the Kantian ‘turn-spit’ or Hegelian ‘bad infinity’ in which the inability of the subject to recognise limitation dissolves the negative upon which historical movement is predicated²⁴².

²³⁹ Houlgate, S (2007) “Substance, Causality, and the Question of Method in Hegel’s *Science of Logic*”, in *The Reception of Kant’s Critical Philosophy: Fichte, Schelling and Hegel*, ed. Sedgwick, S. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 233

²⁴⁰ Hegel, G. (2010), p. 83

²⁴¹ Kant (1991) op. cit. p. 236

²⁴² In order for the regulative principles of Reason to prove efficacious, Kant must rely on a notion of action as informed by duty. Kant writes that ‘the action which is morally absolutely necessary can be regarded physically as entirely contingent (i.e., what necessarily should happen often does not)’ (Kant (2000) op. cit. p. 273). As a consequence, the moral, as a command to act, remains what Kant names a ‘should-be’ [Seyn-Sollen] (ibid). Otherwise, Kant suggests, what should be already would be, what

By splitting being in two, Kant constructs his 'homely abode' upon the precarious grounds of a transcendental domain undermined by the contingency of the psychological-historical whose lifelessness gives it the look of the transcendental. What Kant considers marked by necessity is for Hegel a reflection of a contingent present that introduces relativism into the functioning of Reason. Rather than Reason 'outstripping' the phenomenal, what presses upon the subject, and informs action, exceeds a faculty of Reason that remains disconnected from the incommensurate, the latter both pressing upon and evading the subject's cognitive capacities.

In the Critical Philosophy, the ban Kant places on knowing the noumenal opens up a division between knowing and being, subject and object. Although the noumenal cannot be known, it continues to figure in the life of the subject, albeit in a manner that the subject necessarily remains blind to. Insofar as the being of an object is for Hegel, as will be shown shortly, a matter of becoming, the transformation of an object, beyond the merely predicative, remains for the Kantian subject a mythical occurrence that alludes comprehension²⁴³. Hegel, by contrast, frames both thinking and being in terms of dialectical movement. To repeat the earlier claim, Hegel's dialectical logic is not merely a method for knowing the world, and thus the basis of an epistemology, but is also ontologically productive. This means that he provides an account not just of the primary categories of thought, which he understands Kant as having pursued, but also of the constitutive determinations of being, a difference that

'is' predicated upon the reception of sensory impressions, and thus an already given existence. There is for Kant only the possible and the actual, which must be held apart from one another. In turn, what 'is' cannot inform the moral, because it is necessarily inscribed within a causal chain, which means the duties to which the subject is to adhere must remain subjective principles. What was argued in the opening chapter however, and which informs Hegel's critique here, is that action supervenes onto the ontological in that it is only in the pressing upon the subject of that which counters a given existence that action is not reducible to the limitations of the given. Kant's categories of possibility and actuality prove problematic because they are informed by the either/or logic that denies the co-presence of ontological difference that Hegel's notion of 'non-being' allows. Absent of the negative, Kant cannot invoke the intensification of the present upon which action is predicated such that any command or duty fails to effect a different subject.

²⁴³ In contrast to the Kant presented here, Kant's *What is Enlightenment?* essay suggests of a form of knowing not limited to the functions of the Understanding. In arguing that the movement from an age of enlightenment to an enlightened age is consequent upon 'daring to know', this knowing would appear to be predicated upon more than the knowledge acquired by way of the Understanding. In other words, Kant seems to impute into Reason the capability of knowing, which, if his account of knowledge as involving a synthesis of conditions and the conditioned is maintained, suggests that Reason is capable of rendering its own past the content of its present thinking in a similar manner to Hegel. In turn, this opens up the possibility of the conditions being determined and transformed in their relating to their own past.

enables objects to be approached not merely as appearances, but as they are in-themselves. Alison Stone writes that ‘dialectic is not only a method... because dialectic also obtains ontologically – but, for that very reason, dialectical thinking is the right method for grasping reality, and thus dialectic is a method in part’²⁴⁴. The dialectic is not merely the form of thought, but also the structure of reality, which not only renders the latter the appropriate means of grasping the former, it also means, to the extent that thinking forms part of any dialectic, that consciousness produces the reality that it grasps²⁴⁵. The categories with which thinking occurs also structure the object. It is not the case however that objects merely reflect the structure of thinking that belongs to the subject, but rather, thought and being are both dialectically organised. For Hegel, to again quote Stone, ‘the world has its own organizing structure, not imparted by mind; the tensions within that structure propel the world to develop, through the realm of nature, into mind. The world necessarily becomes mind, but it does not necessarily derive its structure from mind’²⁴⁶. This of course raises the spectre of teleology, Stone’s formulation suggesting not only that objects undergo a process of development irrespective of the subject, but that such development ends in the unity of subject and object, history playing out as the increasing unification of the two. This issue will be addressed in the chapters to follow, but for now, it suffices to say that to deny the dialectical movement of the objective is to also renege on thinking, as thinking, for Hegel, occurs dialectically.

In deriving the supposedly transcendental faculties from the psychological-historical, the ontological, that is, the thinking of the ‘is’, remains absent from the Critical Philosophy. The ban placed on the noumenal is a direct result, in Hegel’s estimation, of thinking’s absence, an absence that renders Reason indeterminate and ineffective. ‘The categories’, Hegel writes, ‘are therefore incapable [unfähig] of being

²⁴⁴ Stone, A. (2014) “Adorno, Hegel and Dialectic”, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, vol. 22, no. 6, p. 1124. To follow Stone’s argument, it could be said that Hegel is not only onto-logical, but also what could be called onto-epistemological in the sense that knowing is ontologically constitutive as well as ontology constituting the knower and thus its knowing.

²⁴⁵ It is precisely this unity, which informs objective idealism, that will be called into question by Hegel’s various interlocutors in chapter 3. Adorno argues, for example, that objects are only partly structured in accord with thought such that there always remains an aspect of the object that thought cannot grasp via its discursive medium. This means that what Hegel construes as objective is for Adorno merely the subjective aspect of an object, actual objectivity evading the conceptual forms with which the subject comprehends its world. This opens up a different understanding of reconciliation in which unity is a matter of allowing for the difference that cannot be subjectively captured yet necessarily pertains. See Adorno’s *Negative Dialectics* for a sustained treatment of these issues.

²⁴⁶ Stone, op. cit. p. 1122

determinations of the absolute, something that is not given in a perception, and, for that reason, the understanding or knowledge by means of the categories is unable [unvermögend] to know *things in themselves*²⁴⁷. Lacking in content, the Kantian categories can neither assume the form of a determinant of thinking, and thus facilitate further dialectical movement, nor allow objects to be known. The ontological remains blocked to the Kantian subject because the 'is' of which the given is an after-effect is excluded from thought. This lack applies not just to the subject's knowledge of objects however, but also itself such that the limitations of knowing preclude the possibility of self-reflection at the level of the whole, which, for Hegel, is the means with which change occurs. As a consequence, the being of objects cannot be unified with the knowing of the subject. Insofar as the being of an object is dialectical, that is, subject to historical transformation via the co-presence of difference, the subject, at least in its self-understanding as both subject and object, remains unmoved. Moreover, if the possibility of subjective transformation depends upon self-reflection, the inability of the subject to reflect upon its dialectical past means its present form becomes perpetual²⁴⁸. This is why Hegel diagnoses the Critical Philosophy, the realisation of which he equates with the French Revolution and the Terror, as an empty universalism in which there is neither a limit to the ravings of Reason nor a means of expanding experience beyond the timely image and the logic of spectatorship²⁴⁹. Both, it would seem, preclude the possibility of consciousness undergoing further dialectical movement.

²⁴⁷ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 88

²⁴⁸ A question raised at this juncture is whether the subject necessarily engages in the type of self-reflection that begets transformation, or whether Hegel's understanding of the subject ends in reification, its becoming fixed, and the end of historical movement, in situations where reflection is blocked? A key point to be pursued in chapter 3 is whether Hegel can think history's stagnation, or whether he understands history, and the subject embedded within it, as necessarily subject to change, irrespective of the conditions that pertain in any present. This proves pertinent in the discussion of modernity, which, it has been argued, has become perpetual with the prevalence of a successive form of time. If dialectical movement is predicated upon Spirit's turning back around back into itself, it is not yet clear whether such reflection necessarily pertains, or can be sublated such that no further movement occurs. This is the question of the efficacy of negation upon which Hegel stands and falls.

²⁴⁹ As Rebecca Comay has suggested, the subject that becomes imbued with an abstract universalism is unaffected, in a relational sense, by surrounding events, even the fall of the guillotine becoming, in the end, no spectacle at all (Comay (2011) op. cit. p. 80). The relational approach maintained throughout means that although such events affect, its effect is denied by the absolute subject. The result, as Comay herself argues, is that such affect, despite the subject's denial, returns in other, distorted forms in the sense that there is always an economy of libidinal excess, the subject becoming imbued with what Luxemburg refers to as the 'disturbed face'. Being-in-relation with that which presses upon the subject does not sublate such affect, but instead takes the form of an allowing in place of denial. In this, a different form of reconciliation is maintained, on in which affect morphs into effect, and transforms the subject. This argument will be pursued further in the following chapter.

The tending towards epistemology rather than ontology renders the former, to follow Hegel's critique further, incoherent. Insofar as he sets out to establish the possibility of knowing, Kant must, according to Hegel, both know and not know, both establish the conditions of knowing, but not allow that these conditions are knowable. 'It is', Hegel writes, 'one of the main viewpoints [Hauptgesichtspunkt] of the *Critical* philosophy that, prior to setting about to acquire knowledge of God, the essence of things, etc., the *faculty of knowing* [Erkenntnisvermögen] itself would have to be examined [untersuchen] first in order to see whether it is capable [fähig] of achieving this; that one must first come to know the *instrument* before one undertakes the work [die Arbeit unternahme] that is to be produced [vermittelt] by means of it'²⁵⁰. This leads to the situation of both engaging in knowing and maintaining that such an engagement is only preliminary to that engagement. One sees over the 'incalculable gulf' but maintains that what is seen cannot be seen, only indeterminately thought²⁵¹. Hegel gives examples of what the Kantian approach to knowledge amounts to; acquiring familiarity with the chemical, botanical or zoological properties of nutrients before being capable of eating, or, as Scholastic sought to do, learning to swim before entering the water²⁵². For Hegel, entering the water is a necessary part of learning to swim, which suggests that even this seemingly preliminary task is constitutive of the act of swimming. Again, one has always already begun when one makes a beginning. Inquiring into knowing, likewise, is constitutive of what it means to know. Thinking about thinking is also a form of knowing, the form, moreover, that is proper to philosophy.

In working out the conditions for knowledge prior to their being put to use, Kant necessarily withdraws the faculties of cognition from the domain of experience as a means of establishing their legitimacy. This withdrawal creates a relationship of domination wherein objects become knowable only by assuming the form demanded by Kant's pre-determined understanding of the process of cognition. In turn, knowing in no way determines the faculties with which one knows. Insofar as the abstract 'I' of

²⁵⁰ Hegel (2010) op. cit. pp. 30, 38

²⁵¹ As will be shown later, this is precisely what Hegel diagnoses as the fault of Kant's approach to the notion of reciprocal causality in the third *Critique*. In short, the recognition of reciprocity in the organism is predicated upon its being seen as such, not merely thought.

²⁵² Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 38

apperception unifies what is received by Sensibility, what is experienced is determined by a form that has its source in the transcendental subject²⁵³. The 'I' is, Hegel contends, 'the melting pot and the fire by which the indifferent manifoldness is consumed and reduced to unity'²⁵⁴. As Steven Shaviro suggests, writing of Kant, this establishes a 'self-referential system' that 'can only be influenced from the outside to the extent that the external perturbation is coded as 'information' in the system's own predefined terms'²⁵⁵. There is a necessary agreement between the conditions that allow and the conditioned that is allowed because what is allowed only exists as such in its agreeing. William Desmond has written that this 'dominance' of the Understanding in the Critical Philosophy means that the determined 'become fixated and hence cannot do justice to the passage between determinations or beyond them'²⁵⁶. Again, insofar as the faculties of cognition remain fixed, determined objects necessarily assume a particular form, a form that precludes an opening up of the passage between the pressing of an object in experience and the subject's comprehension of that pressing. Recognition of the fact that the movement from affectation to comprehension is marked by a passage that is itself subject to transformation becomes lost to consciousness, which is a marker of a conservative politics of time.

In maintaining a metaphysical distinction between form and matter, the latter is rendered both indifferent and undifferentiated. This is because what something 'is' depends upon matter gaining a form that subsequently imbues it with difference. 'By this means', Hegel writes, 'we get the one matter in general [die eine Materie überhaupt] in which the difference is posited as external to it, that is to say, as mere form. The construal of things as having altogether one and the same matter and as being diverse merely externally, i.e. in terms of their form, is quite customary for the reflecting consciousness'²⁵⁷. As Hegel suggests here, the very separation of form and

²⁵³ Which can be framed, as in the discussion of Marx in the opening chapter, as the 'rich' laying claim to the alms of nature in a manner that reduces the incommensurate to the measure with which the phenomenal is approached.

²⁵⁴ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 86

²⁵⁵ Shaviro, S. (2009) *Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze and Aesthetics*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, p. 85

²⁵⁶ Desmond, W. (2011) "Between Finitude and Infinity: On Hegel's Sublationary Infinitism", *Hegel and the Infinite: Religion, Politics and Dialectic*, eds. Žižek, S., Crockett, C. & Davis C. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 120

²⁵⁷ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 195

content, and subject and object, renders the material, which for Kant is confined to the phenomenal side of the 'incalculable gulf', ontologically singular.

Approaching matter as an inert singularity, the Understanding, as an imposition of the intellect, misconstrues difference as emanating from its forming work, which is precisely what informs a discursive totality that is construed as produced in its entirety by social labour. As a result, the Kantian subject encounters no negative. Because the phenomenal is absent of difference, the determined composition of lines invoked by the Understanding is substituted for difference, mere appearances exhausting the totality of phenomenal existence. Difference is thus confined to an intellect that remains blind to itself such that there is difference in neither the phenomenal nor transcendental. In other words, the experience of difference is reduced to distinctions drawn between objects subsumed beneath concepts, which invokes an either/or logic. As Hegel writes, 'with the omission of its diversity [Weglassung ihrer Verschiedenheit], the manifold determinations are pulled together [zusammengezogen] into one'²⁵⁸ such that the object becomes a contraction of relations that are nonetheless qualitatively the same, the very possibility of being taken up and combined by the intellect depending of the assuming of a certain quality. Whatever eludes this quality fails to figure as constitutive of an object. Reflecting back upon itself the subject reduces what appears, and thus what it thinks over, to 'only one of the manifold parts', the part recognised by a particular measure. In this, existence appears absent of the untimely such that it also fails to figure in experience. That which goes unrecognised affects the subject, but it cannot relate to this affecting, being determined and not determining. This is what it means to be affected, but not effected, the latter referring to a relationship of reciprocity in which the pressing of the incommensurate upon a subject is comprehended such that its effect is actualised.

Approaching the phenomenal with measure in hand reduces the given to the timely image outlined in the opening chapter. It is, Hegel writes, 'as if one could set forth on a search for truth equipped with spears and clubs'²⁵⁹, the object sought known before it is encountered and only encountered insofar as it agrees with the measure used to

²⁵⁸ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 177

²⁵⁹ Hegel, G.W.F. (1896) *Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Vol. III*, trans. Haldane, E.S & Simson, F.H, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, p. 428

count. Untouched by time, the faculties that enable one to know are reduced to an instrument that can be trained on any experience in order to grasp it. Hegel describes the Kantian faculties as both an 'instrument' [Werkzeug] and a 'medium' [Mittel] that mediates the relation between subject and object²⁶⁰. This amounts to an instrumentalising of both the 'I' and the 'is', which renders the relations apprehended, and the given that results, fixed in advance. There is, in the placing of a ban on knowing the conditions that allow, no relation in the Critical Philosophy between consciousness and its object aside from that granted by the frame of contemplation with which the spectator observes the world passing by its window. The two stand apart, separated by what Hegel terms, as a slight variation on Kant, an 'insurmountable gulf' [unübersteigbare Kluft], 'the infinite *remaining* absolutely on the other side and the finite on this side'²⁶¹. This raises the question of how the limitations of cognition can be invoked absolutely if the very postulating of, and coming to limitation, suggests that it has already been breached²⁶².

For Hegel, one enters into the process of knowing before being able to work out just how it is that one knows. Inquiring into the possibility of knowing necessitates that such inquiry already constitute a form of knowing. As Simon Skempton writes of Kant, his 'philosophy is caught in a performative contradiction whereby his own critical approach to the study of knowledge is not itself submitted to critique, and the criteria applied by this approach are not applied to the approach itself, or to themselves, and are thus simply presupposed'.²⁶³ If the *a priori* cannot be known on Kantian terms, then it stands to reason that it cannot ground a theory of knowledge. Thinking about thinking is necessarily, from Hegel's perspective, a manner of knowing. What Kant excludes in limiting knowing to the form of thinking that belongs to the Understanding, and what the next section attends to, is the sense in which the content of thinking need not be limited to sensory impressions. 'The

²⁶⁰ The doubling introduced here by Hegel, as both instrument and medium, suggests, if the two can be held apart, that to take the transcendental turn with Kant, and thus to insist on the mediatedness of experience, is to allow that such mediation need not occur by way of the instrument that informs Kantian experience in the first *Critique*. It is a distinction that becomes important in differentiating Kant from Hegel in that it opens up a thinking of the 'is' as both mutable and as pressing, in its plurality, upon a subject rather than remaining indifferent.

²⁶¹ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 151

²⁶² In Hegel's words, 'something can be known [gewußt], even felt to be a barrier [Schranke], a lack [Mangel] only insofar as one has at the same time gone beyond it [darüber hinaus ist]' (Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 107).

²⁶³ Skempton, S. (2010) *Alienation After Derrida*, New York: Continuum, p. 65

activity', Hegel writes, 'of the forms of thought and their critique must be joined in knowing'²⁶⁴ such that thinking itself, in its prior configurations, assumes the content of present thinking. Which is to say that thinking about thinking is a determined activity. In this, the difference between the transcendental and empirical cannot be located in the latter's ability to assume the content of thinking, as this ability also belongs to the former. Instead, difference becomes with Hegel a matter of internal differentiation between the phenomenal and intellectual content that belongs to Spirit. There is for Hegel only one form of thinking such that the difference between philosophy and what he names 'ordinary thinking' is a matter of their respective contents. The distinction between the two domains maintained by Kant leaves Reason empty, a *caput mortuum*, a dead-head, that 'abstracts from all determinations of sensation [Gefühlsbestimmungen]' in its denial of the effect of affect²⁶⁵. In the Kantian theatre, to adopt Comay's description of modernity, the baroque head, lifted from the mist of guilt, is decapitated, the *unübersehbare Kluft* effecting a life of 'incessant' boredom absent of difference and the negative upon which, Hegel claims, change is predicated.

Rearranging the (Antique) Furniture

The reconfiguration of Kant found in the *Encyclopaedia*, which will be detailed in this section, retains the critiques of both empiricism and rationalism that belong to the Kantian philosophy. In this sense, Hegel's work must be approached as operating in the space opened up by Kant's critique of both the naivety of immediacy and the illusions of metaphysics, which means experience and knowing can be reduced to neither blind intuitions, nor empty concepts, the latter a problem that, Hegel argues, Kant failed to overcome owing to his insistence on two (non-relating) categories of being. For Hegel, the lifeless form that Spirit assumes in the Critical Philosophy is a temporary state such that the affectless boredom of *Neuzeit* figures as a transition rather than an attained historical configuration; Kantian modernity is not yet modern despite its revolutionary character, and *Neuzeit* is not the time of modernity, but its precondition, a diagnosis Kant himself seems to have made in the both the anthropology lectures and the *What is Enlightenment* essay.

²⁶⁴ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 84

²⁶⁵ *ibid.* p. 89

The separation of the transcendental and phenomenal opens up a gap not only between subject and object, but also experience and knowing. In the time of the new, the subject gains the capacity to know, in a Kantian sense, everything that appears within the frame of contemplation with which it relates to objects of experience. At the same time however, the configuration of consciousness that such knowing is predicated upon suggests of the loss of emphatic experience, the emergence of *Erlebnis* in place of *Erfahrung*, as Walter Benjamin will frame modernity²⁶⁶. One knows, but cannot feel or experience that knowing beyond the cursory timely image such that the known proves ineffective and always already consigned to the past²⁶⁷. What emerges is the problem of what J.M Bernstein refers to as ‘affective scepticism’²⁶⁸ in which the spectators placing of the world at arms length, upon which the lifting of the head depends, precludes what is known from figuring in experience in a manner that invokes change. If the continuing of both conditions and behaviour that prove barbaric is a marker of a Kantian modernity, a different means of provocation, beyond both Kant’s epistemological and practical domains, must be sought. Otherwise modernity remains inscribed within the logic of Freud’s ‘repetition compulsion’, its subjects acting out what they do not know they are subject to, the actual objective processes that govern the living out of a life, but do not themselves appear in experience.

²⁶⁶ See, for example, the short-piece “Poverty and Experience”, in Benjamin W. (2005) *Selected Writings: Vol. 2, Part 2 (1931-1934)* eds. Jennings, M., Eiland, H. & Smith, G. trans. Livingston, R. & Others, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, pp. 731-36

²⁶⁷ Agamben has argued that Kant himself suggests of the poverty of experience in the time of the new in his discussion of the efficacy of ideas of Reason in the experiential domain. Kant refers to the figuring of the transcendental in the empirical as ‘asymptotical’, which are ideas that can only be followed ‘by approximation, without ever reaching them’ (Kant (1998) op. cit. pp. 601-02). Such ideas, which are intended to regulate experience, have an ‘indeterminate validity’. Agamben reads the asymptotic status of the ideas of Reason as indicative of experience more generally in the Kantian and modern setting. With the emergence of the scientific worldview, the relations recognised in judgement assuming Newtonian form, the subject is transformed from one that has experience to one that undergoes experience (see Agamben, G. (1993) *Infancy and History: Essays on the Destruction of Experience*, trans. Heron, L. London: Verso, p. 23). It is in the former that the internalisation of what is experienced occurs as an effecting, which, in turn, allows for the preservation of the past and the forming of tradition. This distinction can also be found in Hegel, who maintains that despite the conditions of *Neuzeit* it is still possible to comprehend or have to hand [begreifen] experience in a manner that accords with the notion of *Erfahrung*. It is the latter upon which the possibility of moving from a Kantian to a Hegelian modernity is predicated. More on this will follow in the chapters to come.

²⁶⁸ Bernstein, J.M. (2001) *Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics*, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 6

Approaching this incongruity dialectically, the opening of a gap between experience and knowing, which for Hegel manifests *as* the Critical Philosophy, only remains an incongruity insofar as the gap is understood as invoking an 'in kind' difference between the transcendental and phenomenal. It is precisely this gap that renders knowing ineffective. As two sides of an historical whole, the transcendental and phenomenal are necessarily, to a sufficient extent, commensurate on Hegelian terms. This is because the differentiation of one from the other depends upon the other, as will be shown at a later point in Hegel's discussion of causality. To frame their differing as invoking distinct notions of being is to render their relating a non-relation²⁶⁹. With Hegel, being in relation with demands, at some level, a shared being, despite, as the earlier invocation of Andrew Haas' work suggested, this relation being one of discontinuity. In contrast to the separation that he reads as the marker of the Critical Philosophy, Hegel approaches being as contained within the single domain of Spirit. Being, as Spirit, is not two, but one²⁷⁰.

This conception of Spirit, which reaches over the other in order to grasp it, demands that differentiation be located within this single domain. The doubling of thinking, which Kant frames in terms of the ascending series that belongs to Reason, and the descending series that belongs to the Understanding, is replaced in the Hegelian dialectic by a single form of thought; Reason and Understanding become thinking in general. Thinking that is philosophical assumes the same form as ordinary thinking, which he locates in the functioning of the Kantian Understanding and its cognising of objects of experience. Philosophy is not foreign to ordinary consciousness, but is instead a 'peculiar' manner that is differentiated from the ordinary in terms of Hegel's

²⁶⁹ To repeat a distinction drawn in the opening chapter, a relating that is a non-relation, as manifests with Kant's 'in-kind' divide, must be held apart from the relating of non-relations, the latter referring to the pressing of incommensurate difference. The first, it will be argued, ends in stasis and the end of history. The latter however is precisely that upon which the intensification of the present by way of the co-presence of ontological difference depends.

²⁷⁰ This is of course the aspect of Hegel that Deleuze, along with Nietzsche, Whitehead, Russell and Popper, read as totalitarian. The starting point for what can be named philosophies of affirmation is the already present difference that is a marker of existence. For Hegel, conversely, every beginning occurs in a vacuum owing to the abstract nature of the given that accords with reflecting consciousness. The possibility of difference is predicated upon dialectical process such that the affirmation of the given necessarily gives rise to contradictions that drive the subject beyond the given. Difference cannot for Hegel be merely given, as existence is predicated upon being-in-relation with, and being determined by, what is ontologically other. What will be defended in the chapters to follow is that Spirit that is not two, but one, does not necessitate the effacement of the incommensurate, and thus the possibility of the co-presence of ontological difference. Which is to say that Spirit is ontologically plural despite its oneness.

notion of comprehension. He writes, 'now insofar as philosophy represents a peculiar way of thinking [eigenthümliche Weise des Denkens], in virtue of which thinking becomes a knowing that comprehends things [begreifendes Erkennen], its thinking will be *different* from the thinking at work in everything human... even though it is identical with the latter such that *in itself* there is only *one* thinking'²⁷¹. Philosophy is not another kind of thinking, it does not think a different category of being, or demand another form, but is instead a mere 'peculiar' manner of a thinking that is proper to the human being, and that the human being, qua human being, is already engaged in. If for Kant the possibility of ascending to the position of the rational involves a refusal of the ordinary and the extrication of thinking from the phenomenal, the rational for Hegel cannot be reduced to a thinking that takes leave of the phenomenal in the sense that its possibility is predicated upon the having of content. 'The *content* that fills [erfüllt] our consciousness', he writes, 'of whatever kind it may be, makes up the *determinacy* [Bestimmtheit] of the feelings, intuitions, images, representations, of the ends, duties, etc., and of the thoughts and concepts'²⁷². The indeterminacy of Kantian Reason does not satisfy the conditions of thought in the dialectic because thinking, insofar as it relates to what is being thought, is necessarily determined. As Hegel writes, 'for where there is no determinateness, knowledge is also not possible. Pure light equals pure darkness'²⁷³. The determinate form of cognition found in the Critical Philosophy, and which produces knowledge, is imputed by Hegel into the functioning of Reason, which suggests of a form of thinking both different from a Kantian modernity, yet the same. In turn, Reason does not merely think, but rather, by standing in a determinate relation to content, knows.

Invoking a notion of being shared by thinking and knowing transforms the way in which history figures in the philosophical and the philosophical in history. History, and the affects of time, cannot be held apart from thinking insofar as the circumscribing of the experiential that allows for a transcendental faculty of Reason suggests of an asceticism that in Hegel's account of Spirit is a mere transition, and thus historical. Proper to the domain of Spirit is the necessary *and* contingent, the conditions that allow and the conditioned that is allowed. Thinking the philosophical

²⁷¹ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 29

²⁷² *ibid.* p. 30

²⁷³ *ibid.* p. 77

thus becomes a matter of thinking these conditions, or what Hegel names consciousness, within Spirit, which demands contending with the historicity with which such conditions are necessarily imbued owing to the impossibility of circumscribing absolute limits to knowing. It is this historical character of consciousness that renders the conditions that allow knowable in various historical configurations. In contrast to Kant, for whom perception cannot perceive itself perceiving, Hegel opens up the possibility of, if not perceiving, then *comprehending* past configurations of consciousness, or conditions that allow²⁷⁴. The difference between philosophical and ordinary thinking is thus a matter of the content to which they relate, the former able to overcome the limits of the latter by making the conditions that allow that manifest in the past the content of present thinking.

Whereas the cognition of objects entails for Kant the sensory impressions received by the faculty of Sensibility being subsumed under a concept, the peculiar thinking that Hegel frames as philosophy makes thinking itself its content. Intuitions, feelings, representations, etc. are determined by conditions that, Hegel argues, '... convert themselves [schlagen sich] into part of the content...' ²⁷⁵. In ordinary consciousness, Spiritual material, that is, what belongs to thinking, is 'clothed in and combined' with what Hegel terms 'sensuous content' ²⁷⁶. This suggests of a relation between form and content, the conditions and the conditioned, which is neither schematic nor instrumental. Content necessarily has its form in-itself, as one of its particular moments, which counters the toothless content to which the Kantian Understanding relates. Hegel writes:

For the contrast of form and content, it is essential to keep in mind that the content is not formless [formlos] but instead has the form within itself just as much as it [the form] is something external to it. A doubling of the form presents itself; at one time, insofar as it is reflected in itself, it is the content and, at another time, as not reflected

²⁷⁴ This raises the question as to whether Hegel's idealism remains within the terms of spectatorship. For Edith Wyschogrod (and Heidegger for that matter), past configurations of Spirit figure as the content of present thinking in the form of the image, which suggests Spirit can, to an extent, perceive itself perceiving precisely because the conditions that allow appear before Spirit, which suggests Hegel is actually pre-critical. The extent to which Hegel remains spectral will be taken up in the chapters to follow (see Wyschogrod, E. (1998) *An Ethics of Remembering*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 120).

²⁷⁵ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 30

²⁷⁶ *ibid.* p. 31

in itself, it is the external concrete existence, indifferent to the content. What presents itself here in itself is the absolute relation [Verhältniß] of content and of form, namely, their turning over [Umschlagen] into one another, so that the content is nothing but the form turning into [Umschlagen] content and the form nothing other than the content turning into the form²⁷⁷.

The form cannot be confined to the intellect and the content cannot be confined to the phenomenal. Approached as a dialectical process, content can only be separated from form, and vice versa, by treating each moment as discrete. By considering concepts in their formative movement rather than just their presence, however, form and content are brought into relation rather than maintained as separate, the very possibility of one predicated upon the other. As Hegel argues, form is double, in one moment identical to the content, at another, indifferent and at a distance. As a process, form is thus both the same as its content and differentiated. Thinking the philosophical becomes an exercise in making 'the unmixed thoughts themselves'²⁷⁸ the object of thinking, an exercise that, Hegel claims, demands leaving the comfort of the familiar. This suggests of a moment in the formative movement of a form in which it can be approached as distinct from its content, a moment in which the non-identity between the two unnerves. 'On closer inspection', he writes, 'it will turn out, in the last analysis, that what is initially designated as content has, for a cultivated consciousness, no other meaning than that of having the form of thought [Gedankenmäßigkeit]'²⁷⁹. In this, past measure, or form, becomes the content of present thinking. Philosophy is the historically situated thinking about thinking; a situating that imbues what appears to be outside of time with historically differentiated content, which is derived from the unfamiliarity that accompanies form's separating from content. For Hegel, the ability of thinking to make of its own past configurations the content (which is nonetheless form) of its thought enables a relating to difference, and thus an expansion of present thinking beyond the timely image with which past appears in immediacy. As an after-effect of its own differentiated past, thinking is a matter of thinking over 'actuality' [Wirklichkeit]; thinking's present an after-effect of its own past. In other words, past configurations of consciousness, or forms 'turned over' into content, are nonetheless both determined

²⁷⁷ *ibid.* p. 200

²⁷⁸ *ibid.* p. 31

²⁷⁹ *ibid.* p. 201

and determining in the attainment of a presence that accompanies their being brought into relation with thinking that occurs in the present.

Insofar as the present configuration of Spirit is an after-effect of its past forms, rendering thinking the content of thinking imbues the philosophical with necessity despite Hegel no longer maintaining an absolute distinction between the *a priori* and *a posteriori*. Past configurations are necessarily the content of present thinking because the latter only exists in present form as a consequence of its past; a different past would invoke a different present, but that past is necessarily the content of the present. In his blindness to the historicity of thinking, Kant was forced to input necessity into conditions recognised as present, a move made redundant by the Hegelian dialectic in its concern with the past configurations that determine the present. 'The true', Hegel writes in the *Encyclopaedia*, 'insofar as it is *concrete* [concret], exists only through unfolding itself with itself [sich entfaltend]'²⁸⁰. Being cannot be separated from that which manifests historically, as something 'is' only insofar as it has a past (and thus a plural being), which means it has necessarily undergone a formative movement that extends beyond a singular ontology.

This approach means that the past is not reducible to the contingency of sensuous content, but is instead marked by a necessity that figures as the content of philosophical thinking. The concern with past occurrence that informs historicism lacks the means of demonstrating the necessary relationship between past and present, a demonstration that would preclude the reduction of the present to that which appears. Historicism, as a form of empiricism that looks back, reduces the past to 'the one matter in general' despite approaching the past as discrete, that is, as single moments circumscribable within particular limits. Hegel writes that 'empirical observation indeed affords us perceptions of changes *following upon one another*, or of objects, or of objects *lying side-by-side*, but no connection involving necessity'²⁸¹. Thinking for Hegel is neither without determination, nor merely arbitrary. Rather, thinking determines itself by relating to the necessity of its own past configurations. The principle of Spirit, its 'unalloyed selfhood', is thinking²⁸², a thinking imbued with

²⁸⁰ *ibid.* p. 43

²⁸¹ *ibid.* p. 82

²⁸² *ibid.* p. 39

an historical weight that can only be abjured by way of interpreting the separation of thinking and knowing in the time of the new as invoking two categories of being whose separation is fixed.

As will be shown, the sense in which change is for Hegel predicated upon the possibility of relating to difference means that the splitting of being in two invokes a non-relation that precludes change rather than the relation of non-relation that informs the event as outlined in the opening chapter. In Hegel's estimation, the 'incalculable gulf' that marks the experience of the spectator cannot be recovered within the parameters established by the Critical Philosophy. Indeed, one must destroy the 'homely abode', or, in Irigaray's wording, 'rearrange the furniture', in order to allow of a relation between subject and object, which, in turn, opens up the possibility of the co-presence of difference.

Spirit's Odyssey

The inscription of a single being into both thinking and knowing suggests that differentiation is internal to Spirit rather than coming from a beyond or outside. In denying the efficacy of an exterior, which can only figure as a non-relation in the Levinasian sense, the contradictions identified by Kant that mark the separation of thinking and knowing become the means with which Hegel differentiates the philosophical and ordinary thinking, which feeds into the distinction he draws between representations and concepts, between 'understanding' [verständiges Denken] and 'comprehending' [begreifendes Denken]. Hegel co-opts the Kantian antinomies and argues that they apply not just to the four objects of cosmology, but to 'all objects of all genera, in all representations, concepts and ideas'²⁸³. Contradiction, for Hegel, cannot be evaded. '[T]here is simply nothing anywhere', he writes, 'in which a contradiction [Widerspruch], i.e. opposite determinations, could not and would not have to be pointed out, for the understanding's process of abstracting violently [gewaltsame] holds on to one determinacy, while striving to obscure [verdunkeln] and eliminate [entfernen] the consciousness of the other [andern]

²⁸³ *ibid.* p. 94

determinacy that is contained in it'²⁸⁴. Allowing for a relation between the factions of Kantian being opens up the possibility of the simultaneity of the antinomic or incommensurate that is the marker of every object.

Where Hegel differs from the Kant of the first *Critique* is in the sense that simultaneity is not predicated upon the filling of different spaces, or categories of being. The antinomic exists at both the same time and in the same space, despite, in his historical turn, the co-present being temporally misaligned, which is precisely what enables and necessitates the locating of a shared being, or what the opening chapter referred to as a plural ontology in which ontological differences both co-exist and constitute one another in their very difference. The dialectic is not therefore a mere 'logic of illusion' [Logik des Scheins], as Kant frames claims to knowledge that take leave of phenomenal experience, because it remains bound to the concrete, which is not reserved for the empirical, but instead refers to that which is recovered from Spirit's formative movement.

The incompatibility that Kant discerns between thought and appearance leads, Hegel argues, to the framing of Reason as deficient, and thus prone to illusion, in the sense that its thoughts do not agree with what appears in experience as cognised by the Understanding. Again, in the expansion beyond the given generated by Reason, the Understanding does not follow such that what presses in experience remains restricted to the given, which gives the impression that Reason is lacking in the concreteness that belongs to the Understanding²⁸⁵. '[T]he deficiency is blamed', Hegel writes, 'on the thoughts, such that they are held to be insufficient [unzulänglich] because they do not adequately correspond to what is perceived and to a consciousness that restricts itself [sich beschränkenden] to the scope of perception [Umfang des Wahrnehmens], a consciousness in which the thoughts are not to be found'²⁸⁶. By separating thought from the workings of the Understanding, which is the limit of epistemology, Kant concludes that Reason does not equate to experience, a non-correspondence that leads

²⁸⁴ *ibid.* p. 145

²⁸⁵ Which is also one of Badiou's criticisms of Kant. As Adrian Johnston writes, 'Badiou balks at Kant's invocation of the ostensible "limits of possible experience" insofar as this boundary-line partitioning noumena from phenomena entails the prohibition of constructing a rational ontology' (Johnston (2008) *op. cit.* p. 348).

²⁸⁶ Hegel (2010) *op. cit.* p. 92

to the condemnation of thought, and a withdrawal back into the certainty of the empirical.

To the extent that the hylomorphic form that belongs to the Understanding is suggestive of the scientism and its logic of efficient causality that marks 'mere life', a hierarchy has been established in which the more speculative character of the thinking that belongs to Kant's faculty of Reason is censured in favour of the Understanding, which becomes the governing force that determines what is and what is not. It is the predominance of the Understanding that precludes the figuring of an incommensurate past in the present. Alison Stone writes that '... in abstraction or 'understanding' (Verstand) some category obtains – in our thinking and in the objective world – in 'abstraction' from whatever processes have generated it'²⁸⁷. This could otherwise be described as a contraction, or withdrawal, that severs the category from that which its transformation is predicated upon. 'The real source of transcendental illusion', writes Frederick Beiser, in reference to Hegel, 'lay in amnesia, forgetting the origin, context and development of our ideas'²⁸⁸, or what is better, the event. It is this forgetting that excludes the historical transformations that consciousness has undergone, which, in turn, gives it the appearance of fixity because the contestation of which the cognitive faculties are an after-effect does not figure in the determination of existence invoked by such faculties. In the same way that capitalism erases its own past by way of a logic of the eternal return of the same, the new is, as Benjamin's rag-picker knows, 'the same old rubbish'²⁸⁹, the consciousness that marks a Kantian modernity is configured in such a way that it effaces the plural being from which it is itself predicated upon. In place of amnesia, Hegel pursues instead, as Adorno suggests, a method of anamnesis in which the past incarnations of Spirit are allowed figure in the present via recollection²⁹⁰.

The co-presence of the incommensurate, or what for Hegel is 'opposing determinations', is not a matter of a deficient faculty of Reason, but a necessary

²⁸⁷ Stone, op. cit. p. 1122

²⁸⁸ Beiser, F. (1993) "Hegel's Historicism", *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, ed. Beiser, F. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 273

²⁸⁹ Benjamin, W. (1997) *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Jephcott, E. & Shorter, K., London: Verso, p. 165

²⁹⁰ Adorno, T.W (1993) *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Weber-Nicholsen, S. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, p. 3

moment in the movement of the dialectic. In denying the efficacy, as in Kant, of the incommensurate, the given is rendered immutable, the 'gradual crumbling' appearing as the continuation of the 'established order', and history a straight rather than knotted line. The antinomic cannot, from a dialectical standpoint, be reconciled via positing a category mistake, which is Kant's means of evading contradiction and thus contestation. In the Hegelian dialectic the locating of a shared being that belongs to both the intellect and the sensible renders contradiction actual despite appearing to collapse, and thus efface, difference. Specifying the correct category to which a claim pertains, an approach pursued by Kant, has the effect of relegating difference to a beyond that cannot subsequently figure in phenomenal life, which precludes the possibility of difference both being known and effective. It is this absence that renders difference a 'caput mortuum', a non-relation that cannot figure in the life of the spectator. For Hegel, difference cannot be maintained by splitting being in two, which means it can be neither located in a transcendental domain detached from the phenomenal, nor portrayed as a 'beautiful voice' that evades the subject's capacities of comprehension despite assuming phenomenal form. In contrast to the third *Critique*, where Kant allows for a relation of reciprocity, the form that belongs to an object, Hegel suggests, also belongs to the intellect in the sense that, considered as Spirit, both the One and its other are moments of a whole that is nonetheless ontologically plural. As Adorno has written:

If Kantian philosophy, which Hegel, for all his polemics, presupposes, tries to tease out the forms of the spirit as constituents of all valid knowledge, then Hegel, in order to do away with the Kantian separation of form and content, interprets any and every existing thing as something that is at the same time spiritual²⁹¹.

There is no sensible domain that precedes universal mediation for Hegel. One begins with the universal and only summons the particular after the fact. Differentiation accrues instead, in the *Encyclopaedia*, from thinking becoming unfamiliar to itself, by, in Hegel's words, Spirit 'losing [verliert] itself in the fixed non-identity [feste Nichtidentität] of its thought'.²⁹² The necessity of contraction, the Understanding determining the limits to an object via schematic measure, means that otherness is not

²⁹¹ *ibid.* p. 57

²⁹² Hegel (2010) *op. cit.* p. 39. This process will be outlined in the following chapter in terms of an 'early' and 'late' negation.

external to thinking, but internal. The very possibility of cognising an object of experience via the application of a concept to received sensory impressions is predicated upon the exclusion of thinking's past configurations, which would otherwise contradict the form that cognition assumes in the present and thus allow for the co-presence of that which the Understanding must exclude in order to know. In making its own past configurations the content of its present deliberations, thinking necessarily, in Hegelian form, comes into relation with difference. As noted earlier, this difference accrues from the plural being that the various historical configurations that Spirit has assumed and of which it is an after-effect depends. It is this plurality enables consciousness to become 'caught up in its opposite', as Hegel puts it²⁹³. In contrast to a thinking satisfied with 'merely understanding' [verständiges Denken], philosophical thinking, via the comprehension of its own past, suffers a loss of familiarity precisely because the historical configurations that are its content appear, in Spirit's bending back around, to not be its own, or as foreign to consciousness. Whereas for Kant difference is a matter of the distinction drawn between the transcendental and phenomenal, or the conceptual confines within which different objects are circumscribed, it emerges for Hegel between the One and its other, the I and the not-I, the familiar and the unfamiliar, such that it can be confined to neither the intellect nor the phenomenal, neither form nor content. From the point of view of the Kantian Understanding, the other is a limitation that renders knowing finite precisely because it cannot be known. By construing the not-I literally, that is, as not its own, consciousness, Hegel suggests, 'comes to an end', an end the Critical Philosophy could not proceed past. In turn, the plural and contested past that is consciousness' own is denied, which renders the being of an object, in Kantian parlance, an 'unknown root' [unbekannte Wurzel]²⁹⁴. Consciousness stops, Hegel writes, 'where it is connected to its other and is thus limited by the latter'²⁹⁵. Rather than invoking a limit that cannot be breached however, the One's encountering of the other suggests that the finitude of the finite is derived from its other, which 'is its negation, and presents itself as its boundary'²⁹⁶. This means that the other is internal to the being of the One precisely because the oneness of an object depends upon the

²⁹³ *ibid.* p. 39

²⁹⁴ What remains open at this stage is whether the dissolution of Kantian limit renders knowing absolute in the sense that even the 'unknown root' of which Kant speaks becomes available to the subject. Again, this will form the concern of the chapters to follow.

²⁹⁵ *ibid.* p. 69

²⁹⁶ *ibid.* p. 69

limitation invoked by its other, which is not singular, but plural in the sense that it is also an after-effect of contestation and the event. Hegel writes that 'something is what it is only within its limit and due to its limit. Hence one must not regard the limit as something that is merely external to existence [Dasein]; rather it permeates existence as a whole'²⁹⁷. What appears to consciousness, including itself, is an after-effect of relations that do not immediately appear. As Hegel writes in the *Philosophy of History* lectures, 'being... is immediate to the extent that we remove the relationship'²⁹⁸. The very possibility of appearing is dependent upon a plural being, which, although not immediately appearing to belong to an object, figures as the negation that allows something to figure as singular. An approach that denies the efficacy of incommensurate relations thus precludes the possibility of knowing what appears before consciousness, as the negation of the given is precisely what determines the given and enables it to be known. This is why Spirit's reach must, as Hegel puts it, 'extend over its other'; only by way of its plurality can something be comprehended as singular.

What is required therefore, in order for this boundary to be surpassed, and the repetition of a Kantian modernity to be overcome by further formative movement, is consciousness recognising its other as constitutive of its being rather than distancing itself from the incommensurate as a means of preserving the circumscribed domain of knowing. The significance of the Kantian antinomies, Hegel argues, is that being caught up in its opposite is shown to be inherent to thinking 'when it wants to gain knowledge of the infinite'²⁹⁹. There is, Hegel maintains, a 'higher need' [höhere Bedürfnis]³⁰⁰ of thinking that precludes satisfaction with mere *verständiges Denken*. This need, which becomes a 'drive' [Trieb], is what Hegel describes as a 'felt contradiction', which enters the subject 'into the activity of negating [the] negation...'³⁰¹. Consciousness is driven to 'tarry' [verweilen] with the negative, which, in turn, brings consciousness into relation with its other such that it is no longer 'at home with itself' [beisichsein]³⁰². Consciousness encounters the incommensurate

²⁹⁷ *ibid.* p. 147

²⁹⁸ Hegel, G.W.F. (1988) *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Hodgson, P. trans. Brown, R.F., Hodgson, P. et al. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 158

²⁹⁹ Hegel (2010) *op. cit.* p. 94

³⁰⁰ *ibid.* p. 94, trans amended

³⁰¹ *ibid.* p. 277

³⁰² *ibid.* p. 39

because it is not satisfied with the immediacy of appearances. The latter, as 'pure being', is devoid of all content. It is a contraction of relations in which what appears is the absolute in-itself, the non-relational, which Hegel frames as 'pure indeterminacy, something inexpressible' and thus nothing [Nichts]³⁰³. Yet consciousness cannot remain with nothing, the 'felt contradiction' driving thought further. There is, Hegel argues, 'the drive to find in being [Seyn] or in both [that is, in nothing - CW] fixed meaning [Bedeutung], which 'expands [weiter führt] being and nothing and gives them a true, i.e. concrete meaning'³⁰⁴. Hegel describes this expansion as a 'necessity' [Nothwendigkeit], which suggests that Spirit cannot dwell in pure, indeterminate being. The empty universalism of a Kantian modernity is for Hegel uninhabitable. Consciousness necessarily goes beyond both being and nothing by looking for a fixed determination with which it can differentiate itself from nothing. Being and nothing are thus moments of the dialectic, moments that are necessarily sublated by way of a negation that determines being and in so doing differentiates it from nothing, and vice versa. The solution necessitates a third moment, a moment in which the emptiness of being that renders it nothing is incorporated into a notion that allows for both the sameness and difference of being and nothing³⁰⁵. In both the *Science of Logic* and the *Encyclopaedia*, this is the moment of becoming, the movement to which reveals being and nothing as moments that are internal to one another and thus necessary relations whose being brought into relation opens up the possibility of change by way of the *Aufhebung*. What is nothing must, on Hegelian terms, be admitted into consciousness as something, which means

³⁰³ It is this 'pure being' that Heidegger frames as prior to all thinking and knowing. Nothingness for Heidegger is the datum from which the given emerges. This suggests of an indeterminate being that is the 'unknown root' [unbekannte Wurzel], or source of that which thinking and knowing depend upon, which, in turn, suggests that subjective thinking and knowing must always remain incomplete. As a groundless ground, or anoriginal origin, the unknown root invokes a form of time in which the present is always already marked by that which is past, yet has not already been. Heidegger is thus concerned with what Frank Schalow has called a 'pre-reflective organizational level of intelligibility', which figures as an experience prior to conceptual mediation (Schalow, F. (1992) "Time as an Afterthought: Differing Views on Imagination", *Philosophy Today*, vol. 36, p. 74). In contrast, Adorno has argued in his *Hegelbuch* that there is no such thing as a pre-reflective level of intelligibility to which one can attribute primacy. He writes, 'what the individual holds to be primary and irrefutably absolute is derived and secondary, down to every individual piece of sensory data' (Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 63). It is conjecture over such pre-reflective possibility that the battle lines between Kant and Hegel can be drawn.

³⁰⁴ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 139

³⁰⁵ Again, it is this determination of nothingness that for Heidegger proves impossible. Such a negation necessarily omits the *Ursprung* from which the given emerges. By rendering nothing determined, the opening in which difference may emerge is discontinued. For Heidegger, this precludes the possibility of the event in the sense that whatever comes to pass does so only on terms already established such that its newness is excluded from comprehension.

the other cannot remain an indeterminate abyss, as this precludes the possibility of becoming, and thus dialectical movement.

Negative Determination

The means with which such movement is occasioned is derived from Hegel's notion of 'tarrying' [verweilen] with the negative, a formulation found in the *Phenomenology*³⁰⁶. Tarrying imputes plurality into what appeared as singular because it forces the recognition of the 'nothing' [Nichts] that, in the experience of 'pure being', is both there and not there, insisting but excluded. Coupled with the need to move beyond 'pure being', consciousness is forced to allow this nothingness to figure as constitutive of what 'is'. Again, what forms the limit of something is for Hegel internal to it. The process of tarrying has the effect of transforming the given, what 'is' now marked by a constitutive nothingness that contradicts it. The figuring of what counters the One means the latter no longer accords with the handed down bloodlines of a singular ontology. Consciousness feels, Hegel maintains, 'as if it had lost the ground [der Boden entzogen wäre] in which it is otherwise so firmly rooted and at home [festen und heimischen stand]. When it... no longer knows [weiß es nicht] where in the world it is [wo es in der Welt ist]'³⁰⁷. In contrast to the 'mere reflection' that characterises thought that takes leave of the phenomenal in the Kantian idiom, Hegelian thinking, which turns to the otherness of an unfamiliar past in order to substantiate what it experiences as empty and abstract, invokes a relation with that which threatens the subject's contented dwelling. The 'pure beholding' of Kantian reflection that, as Heidegger maintains, 'would never be able to discover anything like what is threatening'³⁰⁸, lacks a means with which to invoke otherness because it is precluded from recognising its unfamiliar past as its own, which becomes for Hegel a store of difference that does not merely pertain as incommensurate, but is recovered, and brought into relation, in the labour of the concept. In other words, Kantian

³⁰⁶ Here he writes, 'Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being' (Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 19). In Kant's physiognomic approach the negative does not appear because the other belongs to the intellect rather than the phenomenal, which means it cannot affect, or determine the intellect. Absent of the negative, there can be no 'turning over' [umschlagen] for Kant such that the given proves immutable.

³⁰⁷ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 31

³⁰⁸ Heidegger, M. (1996) *Being and Time*, trans. Stambaugh, J. New York, US: State University of New York Press, p. 130

spectatorship evinces no 'way-out' because the frame of contemplation through which the world appears is unmoved by that which appears. There remains a 'need' however that for Hegel leads consciousness beyond the walls of its 'homely abode' into territory where it encounters the other.

For Hegel, the very possibility of differentiation is not to be found in maintaining the spectator at a distance from the phenomenal, but in the recognition that the other that the spectator stands at a distance from becomes, in its differing, the very means with which thinking absolves the contradictions in which it finds itself. This demands that consciousness, in encountering the unfamiliar, and the not-I, 'not let go of itself'³⁰⁹ by denying that the other is not also its own. To tarry is to insist that no matter how threatening the incommensurate may appear, it cannot be effaced via disavowal. The goal, in first having lost its ground, is for consciousness to then 'bring about the resolution [Auflösung] of its own contradictions [Widersprüche]'³¹⁰. Allowing for the figuring of contradiction places consciousness in a relation with the incommensurate such that the immediate unity of 'pure being' transforms into a mediated disunity, marked by the co-presence of the One and its plural other. Consciousness must 'become familiar' [bekannt zu werden] with what is now unfamiliar, but in a way that 'is entirely different from [ganz andere], indeed even opposed to [entgegengesetzte], the way one is already'³¹¹. The entire efficacy of the Hegelian approach would seem to rest upon the wager that the One coming back to itself by way of the other necessarily leads to its transformation.

This for Hegel is precisely what 'determinate negation' allows, the transformation of 'being' [Sein] into 'determined being' [Dasein]³¹², a movement that must be procured via conceptual labour, the bending back around the working through of philosophical thinking. Neither modesty, which suggests of truth being something that only God

³⁰⁹ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 39

³¹⁰ *ibid.*

³¹¹ *ibid.* p. 47-48

³¹² For a history of the notion see, Stern, R. "'Determination is negation': The Adventures of a Doctrine from Spinoza to Hegel to the British Idealists", *Hegel Bulletin*, (2016), vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 29-52. Stern suggests that although Hegel specifically references Spinoza as the source of the notion, 'for Hegel the negation that comes with determination is necessary for being in any genuine sense, whereas for Spinoza the negation that comes with determination is a privation of being, a way of not being' (p. 29). This means that for the former being is constituted by the negative whereas for the latter negation figures as the denial of being. This aspect of Spinoza would of course come to inform Deleuze's hostility towards Hegel.

has access to, nor a conviction that one already knows the thing-in-itself, will suffice³¹³. Hegel argues instead for a 'bitter labour of Spirit' in which the conditions that allow are set in motion, but are not given as such³¹⁴. As Alison Stone has argued, in the Hegelian logic, the third moment, that of speculation, necessarily differs from the two moments it unifies. She writes:

... precisely because each third category (e.g. becoming) unites its two predecessors, it differs from them as they were before they were combined into a unity. Just as reconciling, each reconciling structure differs from the elements that it reconciles. In this respect being and nothingness (for instance) remain partially outside the reconciling structure, and so their antagonism is not fully reconciled by it after all³¹⁵.

The reconciled variant necessarily differs from its prior form, as the reconciling structure transforms that variant in reconciling it with its other. This applies equally to logic as it does to the domain of history. Historical movement is predicated upon a third moment that unifies two opposed predecessors, as the *Phenomenology* attempts to demonstrate. History is a matter of the 'resolution' of contradiction in which the negation of the negation produces a third that necessarily differs from the preceding two despite allowing for them. As Stephen Houlgate suggests, the production of a third is concomitant with and different from the substance that produces it. Change is thus 'the active producing (and destroying) of things that is one with the coming into being (and passing away) of those things themselves'³¹⁶. This means that Hegelian history is not history proper, but is instead an account of the movements from one historical configuration of consciousness to another, and thus a thinking of the event. According to Žižek, Hegel consciously leaves blanks in his philosophical reconstruction of history precisely because he is only concerned with history that is world-historical, history that ushers in a new shape of Spirit, or is at least bound up with such movement. The Mongol's destruction of much of the Muslim world, for instance, evinces no meaning in the sense that it did not give rise to a new shape of

³¹³ On modesty Hegel writes: 'God is the truth; how are we to know him? The virtues of humility and modesty seem to conflict with such an undertaking', and, on the immediate possession of truth: 'Here, then, it is not modesty that holds off from knowledge and from the study of the truth, but instead the conviction that one already possesses the truth in and for itself' (Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 48).

³¹⁴ *ibid.*

³¹⁵ Stone, op. cit. p. 1123

³¹⁶ Houlgate (2007) op. cit. p. 236

historical life³¹⁷. Again, the extent to which particular historical phenomena can be disregarded as lacking in world-historical efficacy will become a central topic in the chapters to follow.

Insofar as such an encounter transforms consciousness, the way in which the other figures in the life of the subject is also transformed. If, via schematic measure, an object figures in a timely manner, that is, absent of the incommensurate, the transformation of consciousness allows that which was previously denied existence to figure in experience. It is via such 'strenuous conceptual work'³¹⁸ that Spirit both occasions internal differentiation and invokes a movement into a new historical configuration. Philosophy, as thinking about thinking, is precisely a reaching over of its other that also transforms, in its unfamiliar encountering, the means with which it relates to its object. The conditions that allow cannot remain the same if brought into relation with past configurations of consciousness, as being-in-relation, as a form of knowing, demands that consciousness relate to its past in a different manner, which is concomitant with the transformation of the conditions that allow. Hegel describes this dialectical movement as a 'process of going beyond [Hinausgehen] the finite towards the infinite', a 'leap [Sprung] that is made into the infinite by breaking off [Abbrechen] the series of sensory [events]'³¹⁹. Allowing for a plural ontology, and their co-presence, revokes the limits to being and knowing established by Kant, which, in turn, gestures towards the infinite insofar as the figuring of something in the life of the subject cannot be contained within schematic measure. But rather than this requiring some exterior motivator or cause, 'all this is thinking itself, this transitioning [Übergehen] is nothing but thinking', Hegel writes³²⁰. Thinking about thinking entails relating to a past imbued with difference that is nonetheless thinking's own, a past that consciousness goes beyond whilst also incorporating this past into its present form. Consciousness does not already have the content by which it is determined before itself, but rather it must be produced via an undergoing such that self-consciousness cannot be merely given.

³¹⁷ Žižek, S. (2011), "Hegel's Century", *Hegel and the Infinite*, op. cit. p. xi

³¹⁸ *ibid.* p. 224

³¹⁹ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 97

³²⁰ *ibid.*

The transitioning of Spirit is precisely what Hegel names the *Aufhebung*, which he describes as 'on the one hand something like a clearing out of the way or negating.... [And] on the other hand... something like preserving... taken out of harm's way and put in a safe place'³²¹. The doubling that occurs in the thinking about thinking does not merely revoke the configuration of consciousness that obtained prior to the *Aufhebung*, which figures as the negation of tradition and opens up a space for a new configuration, it also preserves thinking's past forms in the new configuration, albeit in altered form. In turn, the figuring of an object in the present is not limited to a single configuration of consciousness, each particular object constituted by the plural being that informs past configurations of Spirit. Hegel suggests that the process is akin to the ungratefulness of eating, which 'consumes [Verzehren] that to which it owes its being'³²². The possibility of the new not being a mere repetition of the old, which would appear to be the case owing to the preservation of past form, only abounds by way of consciousness first losing itself, via reaching over its other, and then coming back to itself, which occurs in thinking becoming familiar with the unfamiliar in a manner that leads to the transformation of both. This suggests that with the emergence of each new shape of consciousness, that which was previously preserved figures in a manner that is now different. It is precisely this reconfiguration that allows for difference to figure, the past of which the present is an after-effect expanded beyond the limits that prescribed its initial figuring. Spirit, in losing itself in its other, comes back to itself by way of recognising this otherness as its own, as both the for- and the in-itself. It is the 'thinking nature' of Spirit 'to become conscious of what it is, and, in having thus become an object, to be at the same time already elevated above [erhoben] it and to be in itself a higher stage [höhere Stufe]', Hegel writes³²³. By making its own past an object via a process of determination, thinking transforms the way in which the past configurations of consciousness figure in the present. Knowing, by way of relating to an other that is nonetheless Spirit's own, sublates the past in which Spirit was imbedded such that it emerges in a new shape that both incorporates its own now reconfigured past and goes beyond it. As Hegel writes of the history of philosophy, 'just as one must admit that all philosophies have been refuted, it must also be maintained that no philosophy has ever been refuted or is

³²¹ *ibid.* p. 153

³²² *ibid.* p. 41

³²³ *ibid.* p. 42. Derrida will take issue with this seemingly fated return, which will be detailed in the following chapter.

even capable of being refuted³²⁴. What Hegel demands here is the recovery of that which past philosophies remained blind to despite being predicated upon, the negation of the past that accompanies its being rendered an object of experience enabling its reconfiguration rather than its eradication.

This suggests that internal to the Hegelian dialectic is the necessity of both negating and reconfiguring Hegel's own work, the very possibility of which only emerges with a time of reciprocity. Modernity does not signal history's coming to a standstill therefore, but the emergence of a shape of Spirit, and concomitant consciousness, in which dialectical movement becomes everyday. Only in modernity does such infinite restlessness, and the restlessness of the infinite, to draw on Mark C. Taylor's formulation, become possible³²⁵. What belongs to modernity is the emergence of a gap between the finite and infinite, a gap in which the new may figure. In this way Spirit remains bound to tradition without being reduced to a mere link in a chain of causality. It raises its head, but staves off decapitation by way of recognising that what it raises itself above is its other, its own and the means with which such a raising occurs. To insist on the noumenal is to inscribe the in-itself upon an otherness that is nonetheless thinking's own. It is thus a form of self-renunciation that leaves Spirit fixed in its aloofness, unable to make contact with anything that differs from its present configuration. One is left with the abstraction, that is, the non-relation, of 'mere reflection'. The plural being that cuts across any and every division means that the in-itself always already, despite emerging as foreign, belongs to a Spirit that is both in- and for-itself, both irreducible to, and in relation with, its past. It is this process that enables both differentiation and unity within the singular domain of Spirit.

'The harvesting of time as a whole'³²⁶

Central to such plurality is time. The dialectic, as a logic of historical change that is nonetheless specific to modernity, brings with it its own temporality. Only to the

³²⁴ *ibid.* p. 138

³²⁵ Taylor, M. (2011), "Infinite Restlessness", *Hegel and the Infinite*, op. cit. pp. 91-114. And whilst an infinite restlessness would seem to prove possible with a Kantian modernity, it is only by way of a Hegelian one that the restlessness of the infinite is maintained.

³²⁶ Schiller, F. (1797), sketch for "Deutsche Grosse", in Kelly, G.A. *Idealism, Politics and History: Sources of Hegelian Thought*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 83

extent that the dialectic becomes everyday however does such time come to inform everyday experience. This gives it something of a strange quality, which points to the dialectic being both a potential and yet actualisable only with the coming of modernity. The time that belongs to the dialectic, to the extent that the latter's movement is predicated upon the co-presence of ontological difference, is one that allows for the relating of different temporalities. The empty universalism of 'pure being', for instance, is predicated upon a successive form of time in which the tenses are maintained as discrete. However, if, as Hegel claims, comprehension means to become conscious of the concept that is the 'principle of all life', time itself must allow for the co-presence of the differing temporalities that inform the various moments of the dialectic. In contrast to the past orientation of Greek ethical life, the present orientation that marks the coming of the Holy Son, and the futural orientation of Enlightenment thought, Absolute Knowing demands a temporality in which all three orientations belong to Spirit at the same time³²⁷. It is only via such a meta-time that philosophy in its Hegelian form becomes possible. And yet, because it is also the temporality of historical change, whose potentiality becomes, with the coming of modernity, everyday, this meta-time is not merely metaphysical. Indeed, its very figuring in the everyday is predicated upon the bending back around and working through, that is, the social labour, that produces the objective processes that govern the living out of a life. Which means it is the process of becoming conscious of dialectic that also produces the time that informs the dialectic.

And yet, there is another aspect to the dialectic that suggests it's figuring rests not merely on social labour, that it was/is playing out as the logic of historical change despite the lack of comprehension. Each configuration of Spirit that belongs to the past is marked by a certain lack insofar as consciousness, as it pertained at the time, remained limited to the temporal orientation that informed its experience. Jean

³²⁷ As argued in the opening chapter, the figuring of the future in the present does not demand that the former be imaged. Indeed, the very possibility of a future is predicated, it was argued, upon the absence of an image. Which is to say that the future may still figure in the present as imageless, which is the space in which the new would emerge. Similarly, to suggest that Absolute Knowing entails the figuring of the past in the present does not reduce that figuring to a notion of the past that belongs to historicism. What becomes important therefore is not just the co-presence of past, present and future, but the quality of their figuring. However, time still proves important in this respect because it is only on the basis of what will be named a reciprocal notion of time that the co-present figures as ontologically different, which counters Heidegger's suggestion that Hegel remains within the parameters of an ordinary understanding of time. Hegel's meta-time, the time of historical change, is neither conventional, nor ahistorical.

Hyppolite states this in the following way: '[i]t is enough to take several chapters of the *Phenomenology* to see that each moment is indeed the result of a development of which consciousness itself is unaware'³²⁸. This lack of awareness, the dialectic going on behind consciousness's back, so to speak, suggests that past configurations of consciousness had not yet obtained a position from which Spirit's becoming could be comprehended. It is only by way of such comprehension that the relation between subject and object, between a conditioned life and that which conditions, becomes dialectical. The meta-time of the dialectic is not merely an objective process that informs life therefore, but is also transformed by way of the relation in which social consciousness, and its labour, stands to that time. The claim about modernity put forward here is that it is only with the coming of modernity that a dialectical relation between subject and object becomes possible, which is also the means with which the dialectic itself becomes actual. The past, present or futural orientations that marked Spirit's prior configurations could not suffice alone despite the movement between them, from a Hegelian position, occurring by way of dialectics. Their very possibility is predicated upon contestation and dialectics despite effacing the dialectic in their becoming.

In order to comprehend, via the concept, the whole course of Spirit's development (remembering that the 'whole' is taken here to refer to a plural ontology and a plurality of ontologies), consciousness stands, for Hegel, in need of what can be named a reciprocal or relational notion of time, which accords, in certain respects, with Kant's depiction of both art and the organism in the third *Critique*. The futural orientation of the Critical Philosophy (Kant maintaining a ban on graven images) does not allow for Hegel Absolute Knowing, despite the raising of the head, and the dissolution of the binds of tradition, that it provokes. Instead, the separation figures as a 'birth-time' from which a new configuration of Spirit will emerge, an emergence that Kant begins to chart in the third *Critique* with the invocation of what Taylor calls an 'inner teleology'³²⁹. In the movement from the first to the third *Critique* is a movement towards a modernity that Kant could not yet account for. Futural orientation, as the opening chapter argued, conceives of the three tenses as discrete, an

³²⁸ Hyppolite, J. (1974) *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit"*, trans. Cherniak S. & Heckman, J. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, p. 25

³²⁹ Taylor, op. cit. p. 100

‘external teleology’ in which Spirit’s past and future appear commensurate with the present insofar as there remains something (the transcendental faculties, for example) that transcends the domain in which successive time passes. From the point of view of this orientation, the possibility of a future is predicated upon leaving behind that which manifests in the past and present. Time is successive in the sense that the future is discontinuous with the past and present, which necessitates the postulating of a domain that transcends time if the unity of history is to be maintained. In other words, successive time suggests of a discontinuous continuity, the difference between past, present and future determined by the arrival and passing away of objects, occurrences and deeds. This means that not only the different tenses, but also that which manifests within them, appear as external to one another. Time is, by way of such an approach, ‘empty and to be filled with matter from the outside’, a ‘receptacle’, as Hegel describes it, ‘in which everything is placed, as in a flowing stream’³³⁰. Representations, which must be distinguished from concepts, ‘may indeed appear to be somehow successive in time, but their content as such is not represented as being encumbered by time, as transient and alterable in it’³³¹. The content, despite coming into being and passing away, figures as the same because of the continuity of form. As Hegel writes, ‘... that things merely are does not by itself help them’. ‘Time’, he continues, ‘takes care of what is, and soon it will likewise not be’³³². As a receptacle, time itself does not change despite change also occurring. This is what Michael Murray describes as mathematical time, which depends upon a calculable unit of measurement, which is repeatable, reiteratable and identical through history³³³. In turn, the present configuration of consciousness, and its concomitant time, appears both perpetual and immutable, the content that figures in the present indifferent to historical change and undifferentiated from past and future.

In successive time, representations remain either ‘at a standstill’ [bleibt... stehen], reduced to that which is merely given (‘right is right’ and ‘God is God’, as Hegel puts it³³⁴), or rendered accumulative through the addition of predicates, which are ‘strung

³³⁰ Hegel, G.W.F. (2004) *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline, Part 2: Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Miller, A.V. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 35

³³¹ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 52

³³² *ibid.* p. 87

³³³ Murray, M. “Time in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*”, *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 34, no. 4, p. 685

³³⁴ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 52

together, remaining outside one another, despite the bond assigned to them in the subject possessing them'³³⁵. The future thus becomes either the mere repetition of the past (right remains right and God remains God), or emerges with the addition and subtraction of predicates that gives the impression of change. In both instances, the present remains ontologically undifferentiated from past and future, the 'is' unmoved by history's movement. The addition or subtraction of predicates reduces change to the quantitative, what Hegel refers to as a logic of either/or, such that the possibilities open to any present are limited to the figuring that presently pertains. In turn, the present is reduced to what is given empirically, which includes a past that figures in the present only in terms of already constituted singulars. In a Kantian modernity, the relation of the tenses is accumulative and external, the past and future that marks the present, if figuring at all, a mere addition to that which manifests as present.

As a means of evading the 'empty universalism' that marks the first *Critique*, Kant introduced in the third the principle of purposiveness without purpose, which attempts to regulate the subject's approach to objects³³⁶. This principle, which is underpinned by a reciprocal notion of causality in which what causes both affects and is effected, invokes a form of time that allows for the expansion of the given beyond the timely image. The introduction of a reciprocal notion of causality gestures towards the possibility of a present in which the being of an object is not reducible to its representation. Taylor writes of this transformation:

Though not immediately obvious, this formulation of inner teleology marks a tipping point in cultural and social history whose ramifications are still emerging. In hindsight it is clear that the nineteenth century began with the 1790 publication of the *Critique of Judgement*. The distinction between external and internal teleology is the philosophical articulation of the transition from a mechanical to an organic schema

³³⁵ *ibid.*

³³⁶ As a principle, purposiveness asserts that '...one can always presuppose a form that is possible for general laws cognizable by us'³³⁶, which becomes an '...indeterminate principle of a purposive arrangement of nature in a system [unbestimmten Prinzip einer zweckmäßigen Anordnung der Natur in einem System]' (Kant (2000) op. cit. p. 17). As Hegel writes in the *Encyclopaedia*, 'it is only in these kinds of [purposive – CW] representations that the Kantian philosophy shows itself to be speculative' (Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 103). In the logic of reciprocity, there is for Hegel a move beyond 'mere reflection'. It is at this juncture that Kant and Hegel come closest to one another.

for interpreting the world. What Kant discovered is the *principle of constitutive relationality in which identity is differential rather than oppositional*³³⁷.

In following Kant in the movement away from the mechanical and towards the organic, without, at the same time, succumbing to the romantic conception of a totality without negation that exists beyond its parts³³⁸, Hegel also advanced a relational form of time by way of a reconfiguration of the relation between cause and effect.

Hegel's approach to time can be located in his discussion of causality in the *Encyclopaedia*³³⁹. He begins by making the claim that the idea of a cause necessitates the idea of an effect, and vice versa. Simply put, to speak of a cause without an effect makes no sense, as a cause only pertains in relation to an effect. Necessarily, Hegel argues, the two can only be considered in relation. He writes:

If construing a content in a necessary fashion is what matters, then reflection at the level of the understanding makes it its business to reduce that content to the relationship of causality above all. Now this relationship, to be sure, pertains to necessity, but it is only the one side in the process of necessity which is just as much this, *to sublate the mediation contained in causality* and demonstrate itself to be a simple relation-to-itself. If one does not move beyond causality as such, then one does not have it as it truly is, but instead as a finite causality, and the finitude of this relation then consists in the fact that cause and effect are firmly maintained in their difference³⁴⁰.

Hegel evokes here the first *Critique's* concern with necessity by suggesting that from the point of view of the logic of succession, necessity pertains in a single direction,

³³⁷ Taylor op. cit. p. 101

³³⁸ Adorno speaks to this aspect when he writes: '[Hegel] does not make the parts, as elements of the whole, autonomous in opposition to it; at the same time, as a critic of romanticism, he knows that the whole realises itself only in and through the parts, only through discontinuity, alienation, and reflection...' (Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 4).

³³⁹ There are several other locations that an approach to Hegel's notion of time could begin. These include his discussion of causality in the *Science of Logic*, his notion of philosophical history in the *Philosophy of History* lectures, his explicit discussion of time in the 'Mathematical Mechanics' section of his *Philosophy of Nature*, along with his account of both 'revealed religion' and the 'master/slave' dialectic in the *Phenomenology*, each of which evince a notion of time that allows for the figuring of an incommensurate past in the present.

³⁴⁰ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 227

from cause to effect. If a cause precedes an effect it cannot also depend upon that effect because that would demand a non-sequential notion of time. The insistence upon succession, in the domain of experience, means for Hegel that the cause remains indeterminate because its actuality, that is, its having a determined content, lies with an effect whose presence logically excludes that of its cause. A cause that is successively related to its effect proves empty because its actuality depends upon what succession precludes; namely, the co-presence of cause and effect in which the latter also determines the former.

For Hegel, the emptiness of the cause, its indeterminateness when approached successively, suggests that it is actually contingent. In the absence of content a cause remains a ‘mere ought’³⁴¹ that can be neither known nor actualised, the latter demanding the interplay of form and content. As a means of evading the problem of contingency, Hegel makes the claim that the content of a cause is its effect. If an effect is determined, its being effected in turn determines the cause. A cause can only pertain in terms of its effect, which means the latter is not only effect, but also cause. In order for something to be a cause it must effect, an effecting that both determines and actualises the cause. ‘There is no content in the effect’, Hegel writes, ‘that is not in the cause, insofar as it is possible again to talk of a determinate content’³⁴². The content of the cause is merely the effect that it engenders. The very coming into being of the cause occurs by way of the effect. In effecting, the cause brings itself into existence.

Rather than construe the effect as contingent therefore, Hegel can claim that the very possibility of a cause necessitates the invocation of an effect and vice versa. Necessity does not merely pertain in the determination enacted by the cause upon the effect, but also depends upon the determination enacted by the effect on the cause. Stephen Houlgate, writing on the *Science of Logic*, suggests that ‘whatever depends upon the causality of another for its causal power, also plays a role of its own in making it possible for that other to exercise causality in the first place. The reason for this is that a thing can only exercise causality in having an affect on something and so

³⁴¹ *ibid.* p. 104

³⁴² *ibid.* p. 226

can only come to be the cause that it is in relation to that which it affects'³⁴³. What is necessary is reciprocal determination, a determination that is internally constitutive of that which relates. Necessity is linked to determination, as it is in determining and being determined that something necessarily 'is'. In other words, for something to be necessary it must be determined and if something is determined it is also necessary. It follows then that effecting, that is, bringing something into being, also determines the cause, which is necessarily effected by that which it effects.

Hegel's approach collapses the absolute distinction between cause and effect because it cannot be said that the cause is the origin of the effect; the existence of the former is predicated upon the latter. He writes that 'the cause is first actual and cause in the effect' such that what precedes also follows and what follows also precedes³⁴⁴. From the relation of cause and effect emerges Hegel's notion of reciprocity. It is this very relation that he refers to as a 'bending around' [umbiegen], 'back into itself', which sublates the linear progress of a movement from cause to effect, which otherwise gives rise to the 'bad infinite' [Schlecht-Unendliche]³⁴⁵. This notion of 'bending around' invokes what has been named a relational form of time. Insofar as a cause is also an effect, that is, an effect that bends back into itself as cause, what effects cannot be confined to a discrete tense. Indeed, this logic suggests of a founding irreducibility born of the untimeliness of co-presence. To rephrase Hegel's earlier claim, that things have merely been does not by itself help them. Time has taken care of what was, but soon, via a process of recovery, it will be again, only different. Which is to suggest that the figuring of the past in the present is constitutive of both such that the recovery of what was both determines and is determined by the present. To draw on a formulation used by Rebecca Comay, a reciprocal notion of causality informs an 'anachronistic' understanding of time in which what follows also has precedence and what precedes also follows³⁴⁶. The past is not only antecedent cause, but also present

³⁴³ Houlgate, op. cit. p. 242. Although Houlgate uses the term 'affect' here, it is the 'effect' of 'affect' that is of concern, the former referring to the pressing of the world upon a subject, the latter to that pressing figuring as constitutive. As has been argued throughout, an 'affect' only 'effects' to the extent that it is allowed figure in the life of the subject, which means transformation is predicated upon entering into a reciprocal relation with what presses in experience beyond the timely image of immediate experience. If an affect fails to effect, is merely maintains the subject in given form. Effect is thus concerned with transformation.

³⁴⁴ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 226

³⁴⁵ *ibid.* p. 228

³⁴⁶ Comay (2011) op. cit. p. 3

affect, which suggests that the present is an after-effect of a past that it nonetheless effects.

The figuring of the past in the present, and, conversely, the present in the past, allows for the co-presence of difference insofar as past and present, as Hegel maintains, are marked by different configurations of Spirit. These configurations do not merely follow one after the other however, but mutually constitute one another, a consequence that follows from Hegel's understanding of Spirit as not two, but One. Drawing on Hegel's claim that a reciprocal relation means to 'sublate [hebt... auf] the mediation contained in causality', philosophical thinking, in which Spirit's past configurations become the content of present thought, sublates the past that the present is an after-effect of, a sublation that, at the same time, determines the present by opening up the past as constituted plurally. This allows for the recovery of ontological contestation because, to the extent that the present is an after-effect of a differential past, that past is itself plural. The recovery of the past, which is also its determination, is the recovery of co-presence, and thus a past that historicism remains blind to in its concentration on a merely actualised past rather than that from which past configurations of consciousness emerged. An object that pertains in the present figures in terms of a configuration of consciousness that is not only an after-effect of prior configurations, but also determines, by way of actualising itself as an object in the present, the configurations of which it is an after-effect. A relational form of time allows for the figuring in the present of a past that from the point of view of the Kantian Understanding is incommensurate. It is precisely this figuring that begets the present in which it figures.

Chapter 3

A Gallery of Images: Hegel Redecorates

All is empty, all is the same, all has been.

Nietzsche

"Now we can say we've been there"

Walter Benjamin

Prelude to the Critique of Hegel

Having traced the outlines of Hegel's Kant critique, and his notion of a reciprocal time, the focus shifts in this chapter to the efficacy of the dialectic as a means of, if not overcoming, then at least invoking a re-orientation towards, the dichotomies that manifested in Kant's Critical Philosophy and the successive time of the new. If for Hegel Kant's philosophy remains a subjective idealism, the gap between subject and object, sensibility and intelligibility, the noumenal and phenomenal maintained, to what extent has Hegel succeeded in bridging such gaps, or in what way, if any, does such a bridging occur in his work? If it is allowed that what separates subject and object is a copula, Hegel's approach is to render this 'in-between'³⁴⁷ a form of mediation that both determines and is determined by that which it mediates. This 'in-between' is for Kant determined by the work of the Imagination in accordance with the categories that belong to the Understanding, which abide by the unity of Transcendental Apperception. Which is to say that the copula, which figures as a determination of the phenomenally existent, is schematised in accordance with consciousness, the relation between subject and predicate both administered and

³⁴⁷ This term is derived from the work of William Desmond, who adopts the notion of the 'metaxological' to refer to mediation between subject and object, the same and different. The 'metaxological' is the name he gives to a specific 'potency' in which relationality is characterised by an openness in which the One and the other stand in a relation of mutual determination. Here however, the 'in-between' has been adopted as a means of gesturing towards the space in which determination occurs, what could otherwise be named being, or the 'is'. In contradistinction to Desmond's theological position, the 'in-between' is taken here to refer to the relation that holds between subject and object, and subject and subject. The 'actual objective processes' at work in this space neither transcend the phenomenal nor are they themselves an object. See Desmond, W. (2014) *Desire, Dialectics, and Otherness: An Essay on Origins*, Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co.

reiteratable in the sense that the unity of apperception persists through time. For Kant, the 'is', as appearance, is determined by consciousness, but consciousness, in its indeterminacy, proves immutable.

Central to the process of cognition in the Critical Philosophy is Kant's inscription of a successive form of time within the faculty of Sensibility. The administration of relations that manifest in experience in accordance with Kant's successive time has the effect of precluding the co-presence of difference, the *at the same time* in which a confrontation and negotiation with difference occurs, which might otherwise be described as conflict. Taken together, the Kantian faculties impede the possibility of the new because, as conditions that allow, what is allowed is circumscribed within given parameters that are not themselves subject to change. There is what Arnold Schönberg described as a 'nibbling at dissonances', which reduces the experiential to the palatable via a three-fold syntheses that goes through, takes up and combines relations received as sensory impressions³⁴⁸. In turn, experience is rendered timely insofar as that which figures as present is given in immediacy, the Kantian conditions that allow reducing the material to empirical phenomena that, whilst determined, do not in turn determine the faculties, the latter predicated upon what in the opening chapter was described as a relating of non-relations, or what has otherwise been named the untimely. Not only is experience rendered indifferent and undifferentiated in the Kantian schema, there would appear to be no means of transforming the conditions of possibility that govern the phenomenal such that the timely experience engendered by the first *Critique* invokes a logic of repetition and becomes perpetual.

Hegel's approach, as the previous chapter showed, sought to extend the 'space of experience', to adopt Koselleck's formulation, beyond the parameters of a given configuration of consciousness via a notion of Spirit that both collapses the *absolute* distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal, and opens up the thinking of the past as both differential and contested insofar as it is discontinuous with the present despite persisting in it. This discontinuity stems not from the objects, deeds and occurrences that belong to the past, but the differing configurations of Spirit that manifest by way of them. With Hegel, the experiential is also historical, not limited

³⁴⁸ Schönberg, A. (2003) *A Schönberg Reader: Documents of a Life*, ed. Auner, J., New Haven & London: Yale University Press, p. 186

to the given present, nor fixed through time, the conditions that allow themselves subject to change. If for Kant the phenomenal cannot ‘follow’ Reason in its exceeding of the conditions of possibility that belong to *Neuzeit*, Hegel’s bending back and working through the past allows that thinking’s taking leave of the given is also substantive, the movement induced allowing objects to figure in a manner that exceeds their initial givenness.

As a prelude of what is to come, this is why Hegel argues in the *Philosophy of Nature* that time is the negation of space: time is that which determines the present by way of allowing for the manifestation of what is not given, which can be referred to as ‘non-being’³⁴⁹. It is in allowing for the latter that the ‘space of experience’ is extended beyond the confines of Kant’s *Wohnhaus*. Moving beyond Kant is predicated upon what has been named a reciprocal notion of time in which the present is approached as constellated by an untimely past, the sublation of which, as will be shown, is also its production. Insofar as a notion of reciprocity allows for a past that is neither given nor an immutable ground or origin, present experience is subjected to the untimely relations that are recovered in Spirit’s turning back upon itself, or ‘bending around’

³⁴⁹ Hegel frames time in the *Philosophy of Nature* as the ‘being which in that it *is*, is *not*, and in that it is *not*, *is*. (Hegel, G.W.F. (2004) *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline, Part 2: Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Miller, A.V. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 34). Space only becomes determined, and thus actual for Hegel, in its temporal negation such that any given presence is marked by both what it is and what it is not, which is its becoming. This argument is also apparent in the *Phenomenology*, specifically in Hegel’s discussion of the present. Here, he writes, ‘the Now is pointed to, *this* Now. “Now”; it has already ceased to be in the act of pointing to it. The Now that *is*, is another Now than the one pointed to, and we see that the Now is just this: to be no more just when it is’ (Hegel, G.W.F. (1977) *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Miller, A.V. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 63). As Hegel further writes in the *Philosophy of Nature*, ‘the not-being [Nichtsein] replaced by now, is the past; the being of not-being contained in the present, is the future. If the positive meaning of time, it can be said that only the present is, that before and after are not, but the concrete present is the result of the past, and is pregnant [trächtig] with the future’ (op. cit. p. 39, trans. amended). In place of ‘not-being’ [Nichtsein], the notion of ‘non-being’ [Unwesen], a term actually derived from Marx, will be used throughout this chapter because it better captures the sense in which the negative is not merely in opposition to being, but a form of being itself, albeit one that suggests of a notion of existence neither predicative nor substantial. A useful means of thinking the difference between a positive and negative notion of being comes from Joan Copjec, by way of Lacan: ‘The existence implied by the first [the verb *exister*, which is here taken to accord with being - CW] is subject to a predicative judgment as well as to a judgment of existence; that is, it is an existence whose character or quality can be described. The existence implied by the second [the phrase *il y a*, which is taken here to accord with the Marxian non-being - CW] is subject only to a judgment of existence; we can say only that it does or does not exist, without being able to say what it is, to describe it in any way’ (Copjec, J. (1994), *Read My Desire: Lacan Against the Historicists*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, p. 3). The claim then, which will be worked out in the course of this chapter, is that Hegel, despite his supposed (if not actual) tendency towards a Spinozist monism, actually invokes and depends upon a plural notion of being, whose internal relation is one of opposition, or what could be called a relation of non-relation, rather than a notion of the One as singular. Which is merely to say that the One is plural.

[umbiegen], as Hegel puts it. Or at least that is the possibility that the actualisation of reciprocity holds out, an actualisation that is both already and not yet in the time of the new, having appeared on the scene and failed to transition into what was described in the previous chapter as the onto-logical.

It is the temporal extension of the ‘space of experience’ that enables Hegel to conceive of the present in terms of the Absolute. Returning to the epigraph from the previous chapter, Hegel’s claim that Spirit’s reach ‘extends [übergreift] over the other, and that nothing escapes [entflieht] from it’³⁵⁰, suggests of a configuration of consciousness that has gone beyond the limitations Kant inscribed upon the faculties of cognition in which thinking’s content is reduced to the given, the latter absent of historical difference. Insofar as past configurations of consciousness can, in their recovery, be ‘comprehended’ [begriffen], what is other is necessarily subject to the determinations of Spirit, or the One. The other, as an untimely and plural past that nonetheless marks the present, is for Hegel conceptual, which means it does not evade comprehension, or figure only as sensible or intuitable.

There is a hint of such extension in Kant’s portrayal of the ‘beautiful voice’ as a ‘sensible intelligibility’ that evinces a form that does not accord with the schematism but nonetheless pertains, an existence that is both there and not there. Moreover, insofar as this beautiful form manifests phenomenally, the absolute distinction Kant maintains between the phenomenal and noumenal is subject to a breach that in Hegel comes to be formulated in more explicit terms³⁵¹. If for Kant collapsing this absolute distinction would be ‘absurd’ or ‘inconsistent’ [ungereimt], it is an absurdity that his own work gestures towards, particularly in the mode of a ‘late Kant’ for whom ‘the

³⁵⁰ Hegel, G.W.F. (2010) *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline, Part I: Science of Logic*, eds. & trans. Brinkmann, K. & Dahlstrom, D. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 52

³⁵¹ A Kantian rejoinder will take place in the conclusion to the thesis. The question to be raised is whether Kant’s notion of ‘sensible intelligibility’ allows for a being-in-relation with relations that Hegel’s move to a notion of Spirit as One appears to preclude. Although the position put forward follows Hegel in insisting that the existent is necessarily determined, Kant’s approach seems to allow for a space in which the untimely, as that which both belongs to the past without having been and continues to linger in the present, may manifest. What is raised in the movement from Kant to Hegel, and Hegel to Kant, is the extent to which their respective projects allow for non-being, and, moreover, the actualisation of a potentiality that is not recouped within a given order, but in some way transforms that order.

last revolution may not be the last, after all³⁵². From Hegel's perspective, to be consistent would, as Žižek's presentation of his own work attests, amount to a failure of the dialectic and its coming to a 'standstill' [Stillstand]³⁵³. Hegel's work figures not just as the negation of the first *Critique* therefore, which Kant's own aesthetic and anthropological work suggests of, but also the negation of the third *Critique* and its insistence that the breach of the dichotomies that manifested in the time of the new were only subjective or one-sided regulative principles left to struggle for ground in a phenomenal domain in which they do not belong. For Hegel, the Kantian 'block', to adopt Adorno's formulation³⁵⁴, precludes the possibility of relating to the other because it necessarily remains non-actual, and thus a mere moment that cannot transition into its other. In turn, the content of thinking is reduced to mere 'chaff' or a 'husk', which leaves the faculty of Reason lifeless, a '*caput mortuum*', or 'dead head'³⁵⁵, unable to comprehend the other, and thus a petrified being that stands in a non-relation to difference.

Absolute Knowing, conversely, reinvokes the event, which means it is geared towards ontological conflict rather than epistemology or normativity. Moreover, the recovery of the past is not an end in itself. Indeed, it is from the co-presence of ontological difference, which such recovery allows, that a future will emerge. A future is not obtained with Absolute Knowing and the conflict invoked. Rather, the latter figures as its prerequisite, not the already there of a future. To know absolutely is to provoke historical change.

³⁵² Fenves, P. (2003) *Late Kant: Towards Another Law of the Earth*, New York, London: Routledge, p. 6

³⁵³ In reference to what he names 'reflective understanding', which fails to move beyond the limitations of the given, Hegel writes that when it 'is concerned with the infinite in general, it tends to cling to the quantitative infinite progression above all... [I]t is the expression not of the true, but of the bad infinity that does not advance beyond the mere ought and therefore in fact remains at a standstill in the finite' (Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 165). The separation of the phenomenal and noumenal denies the possibility of the universal and particular being in relation, which, in turn, renders the universal empty, a mere ought that cannot be actualised. However, there is a certain ambiguity at play here, which will become clearer in the discussion of Rebecca Comay's work in the chapters to follow. The obstinacy of Kant, his consistency in maintaining the dichotomous, figures as a counter to the tendency towards portraying everything as subject to dialectical flux. The other 'standstill', that of Walter Benjamin, arises precisely in the failure of the dialectic to sublimate difference, which is also, at the same time, a refusal of a premature claim to reconciliation. In this, it suggests of the very otherness of the other, which endures beyond its being comprehended. See Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*, ed. Tiedemann, R. trans. Eiland, H. & McLaughlin, K. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p. 462 for his notion of 'dialectics at a standstill'.

³⁵⁴ Adorno, T.W. (2001) *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Tiedemann, R. trans. Livingstone, R. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p. 178

³⁵⁵ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 89

The interest of this chapter rests with the status of Hegel's conceptual and comprehended other, and the extent to which his work allows for what has been named throughout as the incommensurate or untimely. Insofar as Hegel maintains the possibility of knowing the other conceptually, the question becomes, does Hegel offer a 'way-out' of spectation, and thus a means of relating to an untimely past that cannot be represented (precisely because it was never present), or does his attempt to move beyond the subjective idealism of the Critical Philosophy merely extend the reach of consciousness beyond the grasp of Kant's ascetic subject and reduce otherness to the timely. In other words, does the past that is recovered via the labour of the concept, and the concomitant extension of experience beyond the given, remain merely representational, a remaining that would render the future closed insofar as it would be determined in advance by way of the timely image. Or, conversely, does Hegel pursue a different approach by maintaining the necessity of spectation, of being withdrawn, and argue for a coming to terms, that is, another means of reconciliation, with the impossibility of reconciliation beyond the representation, which nonetheless opens up the possibility of a reorientation of consciousness that in some way dislodges the spectator, or suggests of another mode of spectation. The aim, then, is to determine whether Hegel's past necessarily proves continuous with the present, which would signal a fault at the very heart of his approach, or whether the dialectic is capable of invoking the discontinuous and interrupting the movement of universal history, of exhuming the flesh of the past in its difference, the part 'broken loose at the expense of the whole', as Eva Geulen puts it.³⁵⁶ Central to this approach will be determining the extent to which a reciprocal notion of time allows for a present that evades the self-enclosed nature of the organism from which Hegel takes his model. Does Hegel's notion of time, as reciprocal, become a formal category or structure that reduces the other to a mere expression of its universality, there being, as Horkheimer suggested, no metaphysics of time³⁵⁷. Or does a reciprocal notion of time evade the problem of repetition by negating even itself such that the future remains still to come?

³⁵⁶ Geulen, E. (1991) "A Matter of Tradition - Late Marxism: Adorno, the Persistence of the Dialectic", *Telos*, Issue 89, p. 158

³⁵⁷ Horkheimer, M. (2005) "On Bergson's Metaphysics of Time", *Radical Philosophy*, no. 131, p. 13

In this chapter the work of Edith Wyschogrod, Theodor Adorno and Frank Ruda, who all take aim at the dialectic's tendency towards reconciliation and the effacement of difference, will be considered. The aim is not to establish a dichotomy, the for and against Hegel, so to speak, but rather, to follow the various strains of thought these approaches draw from his work in order to read Hegel against an ideal, or true "Hegel", a Hegel that is supposed to pertain in some manner prior to these readings and which solidified, via Marx, into the *Diamat*. That is, if Derrida's retort that reading Hegel is a task that can never be drawn to a close³⁵⁸, reading, re-reading, and recovering different Hegels figures as a necessarily *Ungereimt* continuation of his work, which, insofar as civil society remains unreconciled, is geared towards the critique of premature claims to reconciliation³⁵⁹. Hegel, as Andrew Hass has remarked, is not just permutable, but keeps permuting himself³⁶⁰, which suggests the permutation of his work, the circling back, the beginning (again), the re-reading and recovering, figures not as a post-Hegelianism, but as a repetition that nonetheless seeks to avoid reiterating a Hegel that belongs to a given past. Neither that Hegel, nor no Hegel, could be the mantra followed. In the same terms that Hass describes negation, retroactive dialectics, as it will be named, "makes us available' for what is coming, as it makes the coming available (in us, as us, for us, against us)"³⁶¹. The possibility of a future is not merely given, but stands in need of a recovery that makes the present available to potentialities that belong to the past but continue to insist in the present as that which never was.

Whether or not philosophy can make good on this promise remains to be seen. As Rebecca Comay asks, 'are we [as philosophers and moderns more generally - CW] condemned to play out some version, more or less sophisticated, of the beautiful

³⁵⁸ Derrida, J. (1981) *Positions*, trans. A. Bass, Chicago: Chicago University Press, p. 77

³⁵⁹ Foucault, of course, expresses a similar sentiment when he writes, 'but to make a real escape from Hegel presupposes an exact appreciation of what it costs to detach ourselves from him. It presupposed a knowledge of how close Hegel has come to us, perhaps insidiously. It presupposed a knowledge of what is still Hegelian in that which allows us to think against Hegel; and an ability to gauge how much our resources against him are perhaps still a ruse which he is using against us, and at the end of which, he is waiting for us, immobile, and elsewhere' (Foucault, M. (1981) "The Order of Discourse", in *Untying the Text: A Poststructuralist Reader*, ed. Young, R. Boston: Routledge, p. 74. The worry here is that thinking against Hegel necessitates taking up and using Hegelian resources such that the attempt to distance oneself from Hegel only ever brings one closer. If every claim against the dialectic is always already a moment of the dialectic, it would seem there is no way of either criticizing or leaving the field of dialectics (see, for example, Osborne, P. (1995) *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*, London: Verso, p. 41).

³⁶⁰ Hass, A. (2014) *Hegel and the Art of Negation*, London: I.B. Tauris, p. 1

³⁶¹ *ibid.* 120

soul', repeatedly failing to pass from melancholia to mourning?³⁶² The possibility of a negative reply, it will be argued, stands in need of the labour of the concept despite the repeated failure and stasis that is philosophy's ever-present companion. Which is to say, if modernity remains Kantian, as argued in the opening chapter, the 'way-out' of the time of the new necessitates engaging with Hegel in one way or another insofar as he figures as a different modernity, a different path, one that is both there but not there, repeatedly effaced by the Kantian 'highway'³⁶³. And yet, even the evasion of Hegel would seem to necessitate an engagement with Hegel, which suggests, moreover, that the possibility of a future demands a turning back to the past, not as that which has been, but as that which was marked by an ontological conflict that in the present seems impossible.

Organic Alienation, or the Return of the 'Old Devil'

There is a line of critique, particularly apparent in the work of Derrida and Foucault, but also Lukács, Heidegger, and Deleuze, which insists that Hegel's attempt to evade the problem of the representation, that is, the unity of subject and object as symbolic image, or symbolon, failed. Rather than overcoming the problem of the timely image and spectation found in Kant, the invocation of the organism as the basis of the dialectic suggests that despite turning to the past as a means of expanding the space of experience, this expansion merely extends the domain of the spectator beyond Kantian limits. The dissolution of limit does not transform Spirit, in this regard, but instead brings within the subject's grasp that which Kant's critique of metaphysics denied the knowing subject, which thus opens thinking up to the threat of illusion and the fanaticism that is its accompaniment. This line of argument focuses upon the reciprocal temporality that the dialectic appears to evince and which suggests of Hegel's organicism. In the temporality of the organism, whatever change befalls the organism remains within predetermined parameters insofar as it involves the

³⁶² Comay, R. & Nichols, J. (2012) "Missed Revolutions, Non-Revolutions, Revolutions to Come: On Mourning Sickness", *PhaenEx* 7, no. 1, p. 316

³⁶³ Kant, I. (1998) *Critique of Pure Reason*, eds. & trans. Guyer, P. & Wood, A. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 704. Kant writes here of turning the pathway of the Critical Philosophy into a highway.

unfolding of an origin that persists through time, what could otherwise be called a transcendental principle, which ends in a form of Aristotelianism³⁶⁴.

In the previous chapter, Hegel's notion of time was described in terms of reciprocal causality. Rather than invoking a linear time in which cause precedes effect, the model of reciprocity suggests that not only does the cause effect, that is, bring into being, the effect, the effect also effects the cause insofar as what precedes only pertains insofar as it is itself determined by what it effects. Consequently, that which 'is' can be reduced to neither presence nor a past cause that persists as present effect.

The question raised with such an organic model, in its circularity, is how the new can emerge? If Spirit, as the whole, is both cause and effect of itself, is it not condemned to mere self-flagellation, and the subjective idealism that Hegel attributes to Kant? To circumscribe past, present and future within the parameters of a transcendental principle (reciprocity) is to predetermine the figuring of the new such that it becomes the repetition of the same. It would seem that Spirit inhabits, as Catherine Malabou suggests, a 'vicious circle'³⁶⁵, the possibility of a future predicated upon turning back to a past that always already belongs to Spirit despite what is recovered in that turning back only appearing as such by way of the present. The question becomes: how can Hegel's conception of Spirit, in its reaching over the other, not reduce the latter to a representation, that is, a *re*-presentation, of an image it already harbours of the other? In other words, if Spirit is absolute, is the future necessarily the repetition of the past? This line of questioning introduces, of course, the problem of teleology.

³⁶⁴ As will be shown, Adorno suggests that in rendering time itself timeless, both Kant's subjective and Hegel's objective idealism fall prey to Aristotle's *Actus Purus* in which the principle that informs the given is not subject to change (Adorno, T. (2007) *Negative Dialectics*, trans. Ashton, E. New York: Continuum, p. 332).

³⁶⁵ Malabou, C. (2005) *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*, trans. During, L. New York, US: Routledge, p. 145. As the later discussion will suggest, Malabou's notion of 'plasticity', a notion she locates in and draws from Hegel's work, must also contend with the aforementioned problem of Aristotelianism. If plasticity figures as the governing principle of the present, it would seem that what manifests can do so only in terms of this plasticity, which means the future is necessarily a continuation of the past so long as both are marked by plasticity. So although plasticity may allow for change, it is limited to the parameters of a notion that already pertains in the present. However, and as will be argued more fully later, one way to approach this problem would be to suggest that whilst plasticity has emerged in modernity, its actualisation would also invoke a movement in which a new configuration of Spirit emerged, one in which plasticity itself would be rendered unrecognisable from the terms in which it figures at present. Although the risk remains that insofar as the new is predetermined via the parameters of a transcendental principle, the transformation that would render that principle other cannot occur.

Organicism is problematic because it is predicated upon what Althusser has called the ‘myth of the origin’³⁶⁶. The life of the organism involves a single unifying principle following a course of development in which its principle is realised, a process that when transferred to the domain of history effects a teleological understanding of history. In the organic domain the parameters of the tree, for example, are contained in the seed despite the transformations required in order for the seed to manifest as a tree. In Simon Skempton’s wording, what follows is an ‘outgrowth from the unified simplicity of an originary essence’³⁶⁷. The same logic, from Althusser’s perspective (as for Derrida and Foucault³⁶⁸), pervades the domain of Hegelian history. To recall the discussion of Hegel from chapter 2, dialectical movement involves Spirit first losing itself in the ‘unfamiliar’ [unbekannt] before returning to itself in the recognition that the unfamiliar is, in its being rendered conceptual, actually familiar. As an example, Hegel writes in the *Phenomenology*:

Spirit becomes object [Gegenstand] because it is just this movement of becoming an other to itself [Gegenstand seines Selbst], i.e. becoming an object to itself, and of suspending [aufzuheben] this otherness. And experience [Erfahrung] is the name we give to just this movement, in which the immediate, the unexperienced [Unerfahrene], i.e. the abstract, whether it be of sensuous [but still unsensed] being, or only thought of as simple, becomes alienated [sich entfremdet] from itself and then returns to itself from this alienation [Entfremdung], and is only then revealed for the first time in its actuality and truth, just as it then has become a property of consciousness also³⁶⁹.

³⁶⁶ Althusser, L. Balabar, E. (1970) *Reading Capital*, trans. Brewster, B. NLB, p. 63

³⁶⁷ Skempton, S. (2010) *Alienation After Derrida*, New York: Continuum, p. 2. Hegel himself frames the organic in the following terms: ‘That development (of natural organisms) takes place in a direct [unmittelbare], unopposed [gegensatzlose], unhindered [ungehinderte] manner. Between the Concept [Begriff] and its realisation [Realisierung] – the essential constitution of the original germ [Nature des keimes] and the conformity [Angemessenheit] to it of the existence derived from it – no disturbing influence can intrude [kann sich nichts eindrängen]’ (Hegel, G.W.F (1956) *The Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, J. New York: Dover Publications, p. 55). Spirit, however, as will be shown, is precisely that which is perturbed despite that intrusion manifesting by way of its own labour.

³⁶⁸ Derrida will be addressed below. Foucault, for his part, writes the following: ‘That which will not take long to die, that which is already dying in us (and whose very death bears our current language) is *homo dialecticus* – the being of departure, of return, and of time; the animal that loses its truth only in order to find it again, illuminated; the self-estranged who once again recovers the unity of the self-same’ (Foucault, M. “Madness, the Absence of Work”, *Critical Inquiry*, (1995), vol. 21, no. 2, p. 292). This is the Hegel that Malabou will frame in terms of the phoenix. It is precisely this Hegel that is argued against in what is to follow.

³⁶⁹ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 21

There are two aspects of Hegel portrayal of Spirit's movement that are important here. Firstly, the movement of Spirit is presented as developmental in the sense that the original unity is disturbed before being recouped in a return to unity. Spirit becomes other to itself before this otherness is sublated [aufgehoben], which suggests whatever the other 'is' it must nonetheless be commensurate with what negates it. It is this returning from alienation, and the negation of otherness, that appears problematic. Lukács, for instance, argues that the Hegelian dialectic begins with the loss of immediacy that pertained in some prelapsarian domain before the fall. He writes that 'the primal immediacy, the natural, has to be overcome and is overcome in the social praxis of man'. 'It is', he continues, 'replaced by a system of institutions created by man in the course of [its] own labours..., labours [that]... transform the human subject since they annul [its] original immediacy, alienating the subject from itself'³⁷⁰. The insinuation here is that Absolute Knowing involves a return to this 'original immediacy', the identity of subject and object in the prelapsarian. Lukács writes at another point in the same text that 'for the identical subject-object of absolute idealism, the return of absolute Spirit from its total alienation in nature and its partial alienation in history to the perfected knowledge of itself, is ultimately nothing other than the absorption of all objectivity into the mystified subject which has allegedly created it: viz. the annulment of all objectivity'³⁷¹. In contrast to Kantian idealism, which only devours the present, Hegel's 'objective' idealism consumes the entirety of history whilst consciousness remains unmoved. Insofar as the movement from a state of nature to that of culture is predicated upon labour, culture, as end, comes to be viewed as the product of labour. In this, Lukács contends, the labour of the subject stands in for objectivity; what pertains is the result of labour, which means the identity of subject and object is predicated upon the subject's effacement of nature, its being rendered cultural, and the product of labour. The unity of subject and object occurs on subjective grounds.

This introduces a second problem. As the German suggests, Hegel's other is merely 'object' [Gegenstand]. What stands opposed to consciousness in the moment of unfamiliarity remains a representation of consciousness. Insofar as the representation

³⁷⁰ Lukács, G. (1975) *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations between Dialectics and Economics*, trans. Livingstone, R. London: Merlin Press, p. 538

³⁷¹ *ibid.* p. 185

is that which appears by way of the conditions that allow, the initially unfamiliar object remains commensurate with consciousness, and is thus no other at all. The movement to unfamiliarity and back again does not appear to occasion a transformation of consciousness, as the unfamiliar object does not insist in a manner that contradicts the configuration of consciousness that already pertains. Thus Spirit's movement is what Hegel describes as 'simple repose' [einfache Ruhe]³⁷², consciousness losing itself and coming back again whilst maintaining the original unity of subject and object that figures as the dialectic's transcendental principle, or 'original germ'. Commenting on Lukács portrayal of Hegel, Skempton writes that 'the original immediacy is lost through the dialectical process and is regained through a philosophical reconciliation of subject and object that is the immanent goal of that process'³⁷³. The immediacy of identity is recovered in the recognition that nature, as other, accords with subjective representation³⁷⁴. In this forgetting of nature, its being rendered commensurate (*Angemessen* is Hegel's word) with subjectivity, Hegel reinvokes a subjective idealism despite his attempt to go beyond Kant, albeit one that thinks it has overcome the limits of the Critical Philosophy by dissolving the distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal³⁷⁵.

The case against Hegel is the same with Derrida. The inscription of organic logic into a dialectical ontology invokes the threat of mere continuous life. 'Life as nature',

³⁷² Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 27

³⁷³ Skempton, op. cit. p. 58

³⁷⁴ As Amy Wendling writes of this Hegel, 'the moment of return is inevitable... That which is estranged ineluctably returns enriched by the content of the negational tarry' (Wendling, A. (2009) *Karl Marx on Technology and Alienation*, Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 18). As Wendling points out, Hegel uses 'externalisation' [Enttäusserung] and 'alienation' [Entfremdung] interchangeably in the *Phenomenology*, which suggests the objectifying of consciousness, its standing against, or becoming other, is not necessarily the traumatic experience that it becomes with Marx and Freud. However, Lukács concern is not so much with the force of such objectification as with the movement involved, a movement that moves from unity, to disunity, to unity. Irrespective of the trauma occasioned by this movement, Lukács wants to argue that the Hegelian subject nonetheless returns to unity, which necessitates the recovery of what was lost and the redemption of past trauma. It will be the attribution of an original unity that will be challenged in the chapters to follow by way of the notion of retroactivity and the belatedness that marks the negation of negation.

³⁷⁵ A similar critique can be found as far back as Eduard Zeller, a Hegelian come neo-Kantian who, around the middle of the 19th century, criticized Hegel on the basis that he reduced the content of thinking to thinking itself. Frederick Beiser has written in a recent book that Zeller denounced Hegel's logic 'for its confusion of the form and content of knowledge, for its illusion that we can generate content from thinking alone. The great strength of Kant over Hegel, Zeller contends, is that he avoided such confusion and illusion with his distinctions between form and content, understanding and sensibility' (Beiser, F. (2014) *The Genesis of Neo-Kantianism: 1796-1880*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 265). This line of critique, in accord with Lukács, suggests that the absolutism of Hegel reduces existence to consciousness, which precludes the figuring of the incommensurate.

Derrida writes, ‘develops by itself without freedom insofar as its self-mobility is finite’. ‘It does not’, he continues, ‘go outside of itself, it does nothing but develop the germ: the qualitative increase without interruption, without relation to the outside and the absolute other’³⁷⁶. Of course Hegel specifically warns against the systematising of the dialectic, its becoming a ‘lifeless schema’ [leblosen Schema], or ‘triadic form’ [unbegriffne Triplizität], suggesting that it cannot be approached in terms of a movement from unity, to disunity, and back to unity, a consistent and reiterable process³⁷⁷. Nonetheless, he also opens his work up to being read as parousia when he writes of Spirit’s past forms, as one example, that ‘their fluid nature [flüssige Natur] makes them moments of an organic unity [Momenten der organischen Einheit] in which they not only do not conflict [widerstreiten], but in which each is as necessary as the other; and this mutual necessity [gleiche Notwendigkeit] alone constitutes [macht... aus] the life of the whole’³⁷⁸. In the same manner in which the disappearance of the ‘bud’ [Knospe] in the ‘bursting-forth of the blossom’ [Hervorbrechen der Blüte] is a continuation of the ‘original germ’, the different shapes of Spirit do not suggest of a discontinuous history³⁷⁹. Rather, considered as part of a system, or whole, that which is initially ‘incompatible’ [unverträglich] comes to be seen as both ‘necessary’ and continuous³⁸⁰. It would seem that the compatibility or continuity of Spirit’s past forms with present configuration is a matter of perspective. Approached by way of the whole, Spirit’s ‘incompatible’ moments appear ‘compatible’ [verträglich]. The dichotomous, so the argument against Hegel goes, is always reconcilable in the Hegelian dialectic if one dwells, like the Kantian spectator, in a ‘room with a good view’³⁸¹, the spectator restored to its prior position, which is now reinforced by its having undergone the labour of the concept.

³⁷⁶ Derrida, J. (1986), *Glas*, trans. Leavey Jr. J. P. and Rand, R. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, p. 28.

³⁷⁷ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 29

³⁷⁸ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 2

³⁷⁹ At another point Hegel writes, ‘but the great necessity in philosophy is to possess one living Idea; the world is a flower which is eternally produced from one grain of seed’ (Hegel, G.W.F. (1896) *Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Vol. III*, trans. Haldane, E.S & Simson, F.H, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. p. 483).

³⁸⁰ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 2

³⁸¹ Comay, R. (2011) *Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 30

In chapter 2, the withdrawal occasioned by the time of the new, the lifting of the head from the mist of guilt, invoked a gap between form and content, subject and object, universal and particular. It is this gap that Hegel sought to transform by way of collapsing the *absolute* distinction between the noumenal and phenomenal. However, to the extent that the formal structure of the dialectic informs a temporality that transcends existence, experience becomes what was described in the previous chapter as both indifferent and undifferentiated. Which is to say that the movement to a notion of reciprocity retains the separation of form and content because the whole remains undisturbed in the sense that everything that emerges is already, to return to a formulation of Steven Shaviro, ‘coded as ‘information’ in the system’s own predefined terms’³⁸². Again, this suggests that Hegel also succumbs to the problem identified by Deleuze in his suggestion that Kantian time is the most radical form of time, but a form that does not itself change. Although Hegel attempts to render the reciprocal temporality that Kant attributed to the ‘beautiful voice’ the basis of a dialectical ontology, it nonetheless remains the case, according to the arguments found in Lukács, Derrida, etc., that reciprocity itself does not change such that everything that appears necessarily accords with predefined parameters³⁸³.

This problem finds its way into Adorno’s accusation that Hegel sides with the universal at the expense of the particular. He writes that ‘as [Hegel’s] version of dialectics extends to time itself, time is ontologised, turned from a subjective form into a structure of being as such, itself eternal’³⁸⁴. This, he suggests, is the return of the ‘old devil’, the problem of dogmatism and the reification of the present, despite the attempt to mobilise, to put into motion, the old Kantian consciousness. Lingering in Hegel’s dissolution of the difference between form and content is what Adorno describes as a ‘detemporalised’ form of time³⁸⁵. In this, ‘a relationship of form and

³⁸² Shaviro, S. (2009) *Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze and Aesthetics*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, p. 85

³⁸³ Frank Ruda raises the same point against Foucault by suggesting that the inscription of resistance into the notion of power has the effect of rendering change both already immanent to every situation and fated in the sense that it ‘cannot not produce new actualizations of change’ (Ruda, F. (2013) “Back to the Factory: A Plea for a Renewal of Concrete Analysis of Concrete Situations”, in *Beyond Potentialities? Politics between the Possible and the Impossible*, eds. Ruda, F., Potocnik, M., & Völker, J. Berlin: Diaphanes, p. 47). This amounts to a blindness towards the possibility of an event in which change itself changes, which in regard to the continuous discontinuity of the logic of capital would actually amount to an end of change in this particular form.

³⁸⁴ Adorno, T.W. (2007) *Negative Dialectics*, trans. Ashton, E.B. New York: Continuum, p. 331

³⁸⁵ *ibid.* p. 333

content has become the form itself”, which suggests the relationship of subject and object has itself become a timely image or symbolon, the ‘in-between’ reverting to Kantian form³⁸⁶. The very going beyond or undoing of the Critical Philosophy’s dichotomies maintains the separation of form and content by rendering their mutual determination formal, the Kantian schematism, which Kant had already sought to evade in the third *Critique*, returning in different, more elaborate guise.

Specular Idealism: Seeing With the Eye of the Concept

The persistence of a ground or origin in the notion of reciprocity suggests that the move away from a linear understanding of time does not necessarily enable a ‘way-out’ of the logic of spectation and ‘mere life’. If time itself, even in reciprocal form, becomes a transcendental principle that assures the future unity of subject and object, the past becomes a mere succession of timely images that fail to effect a different consciousness. Insofar as the image is that which is recognised as commensurate with a particular measure, the persistence of that measure, in its transcendence, reduces what appears before consciousness to the timely. What is recognised by consciousness is that which is commensurate with its persistent and enduring measure. Hegel himself recognises this problem when he writes, ‘if cognition is an instrument [Werkzeug] for getting hold of absolute being, it is obvious that the use of an instrument on a thing certainly does not let it be what it is for itself, but rather sets out to reshape [Formierung] and alter [Veränderung] it’³⁸⁷. Which is to say that the possibility of relations figuring in a manner not does accord with given measure is denied in the separation of measure and measured. In bending back upon itself, with reciprocal measure in hand, consciousness recognises only past relations that already accord with the prevailing configuration of consciousness. Although reciprocity would appear to allow for the co-presence of difference, the past that figures simultaneously appears only as an undifferentiated image precisely because consciousness recognises only that which is commensurate. This means that despite past and present standing in a relation of mutual determination, the extent to which they are undifferentiated renders such determination without effect. If the object only

³⁸⁶ Or, as Lukács puts it, reconciliation becomes the mere ‘reintegration of substance in the newly-awakened subject’ (*The Young Hegel*, op. cit. p. 85).

³⁸⁷ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 46

appears on terms determined by the subject, the encounter between subject and object leaves both unmoved. To render the relation between subject and object formal, as Adorno, Derrida and Lukács suggest occurs in Hegel's formalising of reciprocity, the past that figures in the life of the Hegelian subject is absent of the other despite Hegel's expansion of the space of experience beyond the timely present that characterises the Critical Philosophy. From the presentism of Kant, to the pastism of Hegel, experience remains timely, at least according to the line of argument sketched here.

The suspicion that Hegel's history remains, as Edith Wyschogrod has labelled it, specular, and mediated by the ocular, or eyepiece, can be traced to two prominent passages³⁸⁸. The first is Hegel's claim that '... we must see with the eye of the concept, the eye of reason...' ³⁸⁹. The second is his suggestion at the end of the *Phenomenology* that history appears, in Absolute Knowing, as a 'gallery of images' [Galerie von Bildern] 'externalised' [enttäußert] by Spirit as a means of descending into the depths of 'the night of its self-consciousness' [Nacht seines Selbstbewußtseins]³⁹⁰. Only via this initial externalisation can Spirit 'penetrate' [durchdringen] and 'digest' [verdauen] itself and thus become self-conscious; consciousness images itself as a means of seeing itself, down to its most opaque depths. To see with the eye of the concept involves not merely externalisation, but what Hegel describes as the 'revelation of the depth of Spirit' [Offenbarung der Tiefe] as a succession [Aufeinanderfolge] of images³⁹¹. The 'gallery of images' that appear before Spirit in its bending back upon itself suggests that Spirit's depths, the past configurations of which the present is an after-effect, can be comprehended by way of the image produced by conceptual labour in the present. It would seem that only as image can Spirit penetrate and digest itself, the representation consumed in accord with what Adorno suggests is the 'belly turned mind' in which nothing is 'left unchallenged'³⁹². The consumption that Spirit engages in, and which feeds its 'need'

³⁸⁸ Wyschogrod, E. (1998), *An Ethics of Remembering: History, Heterology, and the Nameless Others*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 116

³⁸⁹ Hegel, G.W.F. (1984). *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, Introduction: Reason in History*, trans. Nisbet, H.B. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 30

³⁹⁰ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 492

³⁹¹ *ibid.*

³⁹² Adorno (2007) op. cit. p. 23

for going beyond the given, is one of self-ingestion, which, again, suggests there is ‘no real historical force on the other side’ of Spirit³⁹³.

For Wyschogrod, the parade of images that ends the *Phenomenology* suggests that Spirit is ‘subject, creator, viewer and object of this display’³⁹⁴. From the Kantian *Wohnhaus* gaining its windows, to Hegel replacing them with mirrors, in a sleight of hand that gives the impression that the walls have collapsed. Insofar as Spirit’s turning back entails the past configurations of consciousness becoming the content of present thought, the distinction between form and content is maintained and the past merely assumes the contours of an image given shape by the present configuration of consciousness. In this, the conditions of possibility that belong to the past figure in the present as an image that accords with prevailing conditions, and thus lose their historical specificity. Actual events, the *res gestae*, are dissolved in their telling or representing, the *historia rerum gestarum*. Wyschogrod argues that insofar as configurations of Spirit determine the being of that which pertains, rendering such configurations appearances turns being itself into a mere appearance.

This becomes clear, she suggests, in the distinction Hegel makes between the three types of history: original history, which is a re-presentation of contemporary events; reflective history, which is panoptical, providing an overview of the past from the point of view of the present; and philosophical history, which involves the synthesis of the initial two approaches. This latter, philosophical modality, grasps not only that which went on, but also the frame through which such history is viewed, which necessitates the frame itself becoming image³⁹⁵. As Hegel writes in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, the text in which the three aforementioned types of history are formalised, ‘nothing is lost: all principles are preserved, since philosophy in its final aspect is the totality of forms’, forms which must themselves both appear and become the content of thought in order to be penetrated and digested. The suspicion here, one that suggests of Absolute Knowing as absolute parousia, is that the past can

³⁹³ Adorno, T.W (1993) *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Weber-Nicholsen, S. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, p. 80

³⁹⁴ Wyschogrod (1998) op. cit. p. 114

³⁹⁵ *ibid.* p. 117

only be recovered as timely image such that historical difference is effaced³⁹⁶. This has the effect of reducing history to the same, the past a mirror of the present, and the unity of subject and object maintained as a transcendental principle. In philosophical history, the *res gestae* finds its form in being consumed by consciousness. It is as a 'gallery of images' that the past proves digestible. In having the history of the world appear before it, a history that is its own, Spirit is capable of comprehending that history, of unifying its diverse moments and ruptures. This digestibility is predicated upon both the measure with which the past appears not itself being subject to rupture, and the past being approached as commensurate with that measure. The proof, Wyschogrod argues, is to be found in Hegel's suggestion that Spirit's freedom consists in the 'constant negation of all that threatens to destroy freedom'³⁹⁷. For freedom to pertain, Spirit must consume its past, which has the effect of dissolving the otherness of the other that stands opposed to consciousness.

To render the dissonant palatable is to efface the other such that knowing itself becomes specular, the image Spirit's only sustenance. The indifferent and undifferentiated experience that emerges with successive time both informs a Cartesian orientation towards the present (the true being that which appears as 'clear and distinct')³⁹⁸, and allows Spirit to grasp its own past in the same terms with which the present appears. 'Not only are the shapes that pass by in the history of consciousness objects of sight', writes Wyschogrod, 'but knowledge itself, or science, is specular'³⁹⁹. Hegel's notion of science is of course not reducible to the clinical experimentation that the term evokes. He writes that 'Science, just because it comes on the scene, it itself an appearance: in coming on the scene it is not yet Science in its

³⁹⁶ Catherine Malabou frames this version of Hegel as being predicated upon the notion of the phoenix, Spirit rising from the ashes of loss to be reborn. 'The paradigm of the phoenix... corresponds to the movement of presence that constantly reconstitutes itself from its wounds', she writes. In this, Spirit returns to itself having undergone an 'extreme rending' such that a reconstitution of presence takes place, which cancels defects and absences (Malabou, C. (2007) "Again: 'The wounds of Spirit heal, and leave no scars behind'", *Mosaic*, vol. 40, no. 2, p. 31). There will be more on this below.

³⁹⁷ Hegel (1984) op. cit. p. 48

³⁹⁸ See Descartes, R (1996) *Meditations of First Philosophy*, trans. Cottingham, J. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Of course Descartes' work is not so easily reduced to a representational orientation in which the given merely appears as image. See, for example, Catherine Wilson's "Discourses on Vision in Seventeenth-Century Metaphysics", in which she writes, 'within the rationalist texts themselves, there are doubts and anxieties, retreats and rebellions, exceptions and redescrptions, which threaten what Martin Jay has termed 'Cartesian perspectivalism'' (in Levin, D. (ed.) (1997) *Sites of Vision: The Discursive Construction of Sight in the History of Philosophy*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, p. 118).

³⁹⁹ Wyschogrod (1998) op. cit. p. 121

developed and unfolded truth... In any case Science must liberate itself, and it can only do so by turning against it'⁴⁰⁰. Hegel seems to suggest here that, having undergone the labour of its concept, the path of its becoming, science would neither remain mere semblance nor a specular form of knowing. And yet, it is this liberation from the representation that Wyschogrod challenges. Hegel lacks the means, she contends, with which his science can become anything other than specular, the form itself remaining mere semblance. In describing Spirit's movement, its passing through various past configurations, or appointed 'stations'⁴⁰¹, as a process in which it 'purifies' [läutern] itself, Hegel depends on (and thus cannot move beyond) the representation to digest Spirit's past. As he writes in the *Phenomenology*, the 'path' of Spirit entails the 'loss of its own self' [Verlust seiner selbst], which figures as a pathway of 'doubt' [Weg des Zweifels], or 'despair' [Weg der Verzweiflung]⁴⁰² in which Spirit's various attempts to know the world prove inadequate. If spectatorship is confirmed as but one more failed attempt to know the thing-in-itself, it is for Wyschogrod a configuration that Hegel, in his dependency upon an imaged past, cannot evade.

By rendering the past a 'gallery of images', not only history, but being itself has become virtual such that there is nothing in the dialectical orbit that is not appearance. There is no Real as such because everything is imaged, including consciousness itself. In the effacement of the Real, Spirit is caught in a circle of images, as if standing, 'before a projector bringing the images... into plenary presence'⁴⁰³. Seemingly, Hegel provides no means of escape from spectation: 'On Hegelian grounds, we are forced to the startling conclusion that the being of appearances has swallowed up the divine and the human has virtualised the Real in an endless play of concept and image'⁴⁰⁴. Although Hegel differentiates between the image [Bild] and concept [Begriff], and what is more, picture-thinking [bildhaftes Denken] and conceptual-thinking [begreifendes Denken], according to Wyschogrod's reading, the latter is not able to extricate itself from the former, which condemns thinking to the *re*-presentation that Hegel criticised so vehemently in both Descartes and Kant. For

⁴⁰⁰ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 48

⁴⁰¹ *ibid.* p. 49

⁴⁰² *ibid.*

⁴⁰³ Wyschogrod (1998) op. cit. p. 143

⁴⁰⁴ *ibid.*

Wyschogrod, historical materialism thus outstrips dialectical materialism such that nature is effaced by a culture whose past is identical to its present. As the next section will suggest, the absolutising of culture, and its attendant social labour, has the effect, insofar as this reading of Hegel can be maintained, of rendering Spirit a closed loop, a house of mirrors that misrecognises itself as other.

Erdenrest and Rabble: The Strenuous Labour of Dialectic

Introduced by Wyschogrod's reading is the problem of absolute presence, a critique of Hegel found not only in Lukács and Derrida, but also, to a qualified extent, in Adorno. In the ascendancy of an historical materialism caught in a circle of images, the absolute succumbs to what Adorno refers to as 'identity-thinking' [identitätsdenken], in which consciousness' bending back upon itself brings the dialectic to a standstill rather than invoking the requisite transformation of consciousness⁴⁰⁵. If everything is appearance, that is, undifferentiated, or virtual in Wyschogrod's wording, there is nothing that can figure as consciousness' negation. What is lost, in the absence of the dialectic, is the specificity of history, the past reduced to what is commensurate with the present configuration of consciousness insofar as the figuring of past shapes as images leaves the present configuration unmoved. Not only are such timely images easily digested (what is consumed always already commensurate with the subject), such accord renders the past continuous with the present, which, in turn, precludes the possibility of the co-presence of ontological difference. The concern, which applies to both the recovery of the past, and present experience, is that otherness (that which is not represented by the timely image), is effaced. To attribute to Hegel absolute parousia, which is predicated upon reciprocal time becoming a transcendental principle, is to suggest that his work consumes the other without leaving a trace such that being itself is reduced to the singular ontology of that which appears.

Adorno's critique of Hegel, as found in the three essays that form his *Hegelbuch*, begins with Kant's notion of 'spontaneity' [Spontanität]. To recall the dichotomy

⁴⁰⁵ Again, this standstill is the converse of Walter Benjamin's in the sense that it results from an absence of difference rather than an absolute incompatibility that precludes the sublation of difference into dialectical flux.

upon which Kantian cognition is predicated, there is a separation between sensibility and the intellect, the former a mere passive faculty that receives sensory impressions, the latter a faculty of spontaneity or production that renders the received impressions an image that accords with the categories of the Understanding. Adorno suggests that Hegel is correct, in contrast to Kant, in making the claim that not only the representation that results from the cognitive process, but also the very givenness of the phenomenal that is taken up and combined by the faculties of cognition, is marked by the intellect and its categories, which, in Hegelian parlance, come to be named Spirit, which is nothing more than that which mediates relations. Following Hegel, there is no material domain that can be separated from the spontaneity of consciousness, understood as Spirit, nor intuitive forms such as time and space. In the domain of Spirit, even the given is the result of labour, there being no immediacy to which philosophy can point to as a means of ensuring the legitimacy of that which figures in experience.

Drawing on Marx's claim that Hegel recognises 'objective man' as 'the result of his own labour', Adorno shifts the frame of reference slightly to suggest that Spirit, or what he will name society, is produced by social labour⁴⁰⁶. Not only the categories with which consciousness thinks, but also the time and space in which the phenomenal is given, are its product⁴⁰⁷. For Adorno, this speaks to the universal aspect of the subject's production of itself; the subject produces universally by producing not just itself but its society and others within this society. 'The reference of the productive moment of Spirit back to a universal subject rather than to an individual who labours is what defines labour as something organized, something social [gesellschaftliche]; its own "rationality", the ordering of functions, is a social relationship [Verhältnis]', he writes⁴⁰⁸. If labouring produces the individual, and such

⁴⁰⁶ Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 18

⁴⁰⁷ Which, as the opening chapter argued, is precisely what enables a thinking of time as politics. Insofar as time is produced by social labour it is also mutable, which, in turn, means the given is also mutable. It is the mutability of the given, as has been argued throughout, that opens up the possibility of an untimely life and a 'way-out' of mere speculation. The problem, as it emerges here, is that in the absolutising of social labour it becomes a mechanism absent of subjectivity. As a consequence, time appears as if a mere instrument of administration, one that allows different things to coincide. However, it is precisely this form of administration that effaces difference. Hence the concern with recovering the mutability of time, and, moreover, a time of mutability.

⁴⁰⁸ *ibid.* Or, as Hegel puts it, 'the individual as he appears in this world of prose and everyday is not active out of the entirety of his own self and his resources, and he is intelligible not from himself, but

production is necessarily social, the individual is socially produced such that there can be no ontological divide between the given and humankind's productive capacities, the sensible and intellectual. The import of this claim cannot be overstated. There is nothing, for Adorno's Hegel, which is not produced and malleable, including consciousness.

As an after-effect of labour, the subject is for Adorno its own reflected form. The subject labours, and produces itself as it labours⁴⁰⁹. The essence of the subject is what is produced by its labour, which is to say that it is essentially labour. This suggests of a productive or pragmatic unity between spontaneity and being. In the Hegelian dialectic, Adorno worries, there is nothing other than labour or the spontaneity of Spirit, its self-negation and production. Collapsing the *absolute* distinction between the sensible and intellectual renders labour itself absolute. For Adorno, the totalizing of social labour has the effect of privileging the subject over object, universal over particular. He writes that 'only the doctrine of the identity of subject and object inherent in idealism – an identity that amounts in terms of form to the primacy of the subject – gives it the strength of totality that performs the negative labour – the dissolution [verflüssigung] of individual concepts, the reflection of the immediate and then the sublation of reflection'⁴¹⁰, which figure as the three moments of the (non-Žižek) dialectic. Despite the reciprocal relation between subject and object, the forms furnished by consciousness nonetheless dominate the relation insofar as the relation itself becomes formal, what has been named the domain of the 'in-between' fixed. Hegel's absolute idealism, Adorno argues, dissolves the 'moments of reality' by framing them as the 'positing' [Setzung] of an 'infinite' [unendlichen] subject⁴¹¹. By reducing the Real to consciousness it assumes the look of the given, exhausted in its immediate appearing despite the expansion occasioned by Hegel's anamnesis. In turn, social labour is abridged to the in-itself, a mere mechanism detached from the spontaneity of subjectivity, which transforms it from something 'fallible [Hinfällige] and conditioned [Bedingte]' into a reified or metaphysical object whose existence does not depend on consciousness and the subjects who constitute the social totality.

from something else' (Hegel, G.W.F. (1975) *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, Volume I*, trans. Knox, T.M. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, p.149).

⁴⁰⁹ Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 20

⁴¹⁰ *ibid.* p. 10

⁴¹¹ *ibid.*

In the process that Adorno charts, the domination of subjectivity, which is predicated upon the absolutising of its labour, empties the subject of its spontaneity such that it assumes the form of the nature it dominates. In this, there is a movement from nature to ‘second nature’, which dissolves the mutability of social labour⁴¹².

What is peculiar about this reversion is that it is predicated upon the forgetting of nature, or the substituting of what Adrian Johnston refers to as a ‘weak’ nature for a notion of nature as presence⁴¹³. According to Adorno’s reading, Hegel takes the part, labour, for the whole (*pars pro toto*). As a result, he excludes from Spirit the nature that its production depends upon and which exceeds Spirit’s grasp, as outlined in the opening chapter in reference to Marx’s notion of nature’s alms⁴¹⁴. In this, the subjective aspect of the production of the thing-in-itself appears to exhaust the objective, which excludes from the scene of existence the ‘moments of reality’ that labour depends upon⁴¹⁵. The privileging of the subject has the effect of dissolving

⁴¹² As Hegel writes in the *Philosophy of Right*, humankind transforms ‘first nature into a second, Spiritual nature, in order that every Spiritual element becomes for [it] something habitual’ (Hegel, G.W.F. (1991) *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Wood, A. trans. Nisbet, H.B. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 195). In the movement from nature to culture, the latter, in order to maintain itself, must assume the form of nature such that it becomes immediate. This is precisely how the dialectic ends in the *Phenomenology*.

⁴¹³ Johnston, A. (2011) ‘The Weakness of Nature: Hegel, Freud, Lacan, and Negativity Materialized’, *Hegel and the Infinite: Religion, Politics and Dialectic*, eds. Žižek, S., Crockett, C. & Davis C. (2001) New York: Columbia University Press, p. 162

⁴¹⁴ Adorno (1993) *op. cit.* p. 24. That nature is, as Adorno names it, ‘indissoluble’, does not mean that it is also not subject to the determinations of Spirit. As will be argued later in this chapter, determination is never absolute, which suggests the relation between subject, concept, and object remains open. The thing-in-itself, from this perspective, neither evades comprehension, nor can it be grasped absolutely despite being determined by consciousness. The reason being, the very comprehension of something, that is also its production, is accompanied by what can be termed the ‘secretion’ [*Absonderung*] of the otherness of the other, which is released in the very going beyond limits that enables something to be comprehended. It is not that the totality of social labour does not produce its other, but rather, that it fails to recognise itself as doing so, which means the otherness produced is not recognised and is thus effaced from the scene of existence, the latter depending upon not just a bare ‘is’, but also social labour.

⁴¹⁵ As Frank Ruda has pointed out, and as the citation above suggests (see footnote 68), the movement from nature to Spirit is predicated upon habit, and the forming of habits. Habit enables the inhabiting of Spirit insofar as it transforms ‘first nature’ into a second, Spiritual nature, in which the new configuration in which Spirit emerges becomes habitual, which allows for its ‘stability and perpetual constitution’. If social labour produces Spirit, and habit underpins the perpetuation of that labour, habit is both that which enables Spiritual life, and that which leads to its reification and the metaphysical. From Ruda’s perspective, the extent to which Spirit is underpinned by habit renders a lack of habit (which Hegel attributes to ‘the rabble’ [*das Pöbel*]) important because it gestures towards the dependency of the totality upon nature, which counters the essence of the totality in its lack of labour. Despite being the after-effect of labour, society depends upon that labour becoming habit or second-nature in order to preserve itself. See Ruda, F. (2011) *Hegel’s Rabble: An Investigation into Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, New York: Continuum, p. 76. What must await future work is the link between habit, as it figures in Hegel, and that psychological ‘cement’ that for Adorno underpins Freud’s ‘repetition compulsion’ and maintains an irrationality that would otherwise be seen through rationally.

objective reality, whilst transforming what is subjective into objectivity in a process of reification that, rather than introducing the spontaneity of social labour into the objective, tends towards emptying labour of its subjectivity, which could otherwise be framed as construction ceding its place to production⁴¹⁶. Hegel's idealism, Adorno argues, masks the objectivity upon which subjectivity depends. The privileging of the subject is for Adorno the 'untruth' of Hegel's account of Spirit, the 'masking of the subject as subject-object, the denial [Verleugnung] of the non-identical [Nichtidentischen] in the totality...' ⁴¹⁷.

This effacement of the spontaneity of subjectivity, its becoming reified object, is the result not of a lack of consistency or clarity on Hegel's part, but the price of absolute consistency. Adorno draws on Hegel's denunciation of Kant as lacking in consistency to argue that it is the very inconsistency of Kant that gestures towards the figuring of reality in the spontaneous work of the intellect⁴¹⁸. To consistently reproduce is to negate the inconsistency of a 'weak nature', whose weakness precludes the possibility of a stable ground. Hegel, in following Fichte and instilling consciousness as an 'absolute principle' [Urprinzip], erased the inconsistent, that which does not belong to consciousness [nicht Bewußtseinseingen], as a means of maintaining the totality of labour and the malleability of the material⁴¹⁹.

⁴¹⁶ See the discussion revolving around these two terms (constructivism and productionism) see Kaufman, R. "Red Kant, or the Persistence of the Third "Critique" in Adorno and Jameson", *Critical Inquiry*, Summer 2000, vo. 26, no. 4, p. 717.

⁴¹⁷ Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 24.

⁴¹⁸ In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel writes that 'the shortcoming of the Kantian philosophy was its unthinking inconsistency [bedankenlose Inkonsistenz]... and this shortcoming was removed [aufgehoben] by Fichte. It is the absolute form which Fichte laid hold of... Fichte's philosophy is thus the development of form in itself. He maintained the ego to be the absolute principle... Hence, according to Fichte, reason is in itself a synthesis of concept and actuality [Synthese des Begriffs und der Wirklichkeit]' (in Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 11). Contra Hegel, that the phenomenal is given for Kant and not a mere product of the spontaneity of the intellect suggests of a reality in which social labour retains its spontaneity. Although this is also problematic in the sense that the given is immutable, Kant nonetheless maintains, from Adorno's point of view, that which cannot be sublated via the work of the concept. In this, Kant's work more readily allows for an indissoluble materiality, which does justice to an antagonistic society. This issue will be taken up again in the conclusion to the thesis.

⁴¹⁹ Adorno's Hegel concurs at this point with the normative reading that can be found in Robert Pippin's works. In both the Hegel that Adorno is critiquing here and the Hegel that Pippin advances is an understanding of being as the intelligibility produced by the spontaneity of what Pippin names 'collective subjectivity'. Whereas Pippin sees this opening as the possibility of society producing its own norms, for Adorno, this absolutising renders that production instrumental in the sense that consciousness is maintained as the form in which the Real finds its existence. Of course, following a line of critique found in Habermas, Finlayson has also argued that Adorno relies on a notion of normativity to expound his ethics, particularly the 'new categorical imperative' that informs his

However, the very consistency of Hegel's program would appear to deny the possibility of such a totality. The true for Hegel, Adorno notes, cannot be derived from any *Urprinzip* because it is a 'dynamic totality' [dynamische Totalität] in which all propositions 'contradict' [Widerspruchs] and determine one another (a reciprocal ontology negates even itself). Adorno writes, 'in his decision to tolerate no limits [keine Grenze zu dulden], to efface [tilgen] every particle [Erdenrest] of a determination of difference [Differenzbestimmung], Hegel literally outdid [übertrumpft] Fichtean idealism'⁴²⁰. Where Kant suggested that an idealism absent of a notion of the noumenal would be 'absurd' [ungereimt], it is precisely this absurdity that Hegel, following Fichte, pursued to its ends. Hegel's position is absurd, insofar as he totalises social labour and reifies subjectivity, because there can be nothing, according to Adorno, that is not consumed by Spirit, including consciousness itself. Spirit's absoluteness amounts to the eradication of all difference. 'The absolute rigor [Stringenz] and closed quality [Geschlossenheit] of the argument [Denkverlaufs] that he and Fichte strove [anstrebt] for in opposition to Kant already establishes the priority of Spirit, even if the subject is defined as object at every stage, just as conversely the object is defined as subject'⁴²¹. This establishes Spirit as 'ontologically ultimate' [ontologisch Letzten], everything 'presumed' [vermisßt] to be 'commensurate' [kommensurabe] with Spirit's measure, including consciousness itself. In this, consciousness, as well as reality, is subsumed by Spirit. The *Urprinzip* that is intended to unify concept and actuality thus has a suspended quality, being 'up in the air' [in der Luft Erhaltende], or 'hovering' [Schwebende]. The truth of the Hegelian dialectic, Adorno argues, is its own impossibility, the impossibility of there being a principle not subject to dialectical effacement, which includes its own absoluteness. In attempting, as Adorno puts it, to 'jump over its own shadow' [über den eigenen Schatten zu springen], the dialectic comes unstuck, and makes no leap at all, becoming instead mere variation within given parameters.

The attempted reconciliation of subject and object, which Hegel sought to realise at every stage by siding with the subject, can only obtain at the expense of the

position on the Holocaust. See Finlayson, J. "Adorno on the Ethical and Ineffable", *European Journal of Philosophy*, (2002) vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 1–25.

⁴²⁰ Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 10, trans. amended

⁴²¹ *ibid.* p. 13

Erdenrest, the material particular. Insofar as society remains for Adorno ‘unreconciled’ [unversöhnlicher] and ‘antagonistic’ [antagonistischen], the claim to unity figures as a ‘mere assertion’ [bloße Behauptung]. He writes:

The philosophical anticipation of reconciliation [Versöhnung] is a trespass [frevelt], against real reconciliation; it ascribes anything that contradicts [widerspricht] it to “foul” [faulen] existence as unworthy [unwürdig] of philosophy. But a seamless system [lückenloses System] and an achieved [vollbrachte] reconciliation are not one and the same. Rather, they are contradictory: the unity of the system derives [rührt] from unreconcilable violence [Gewalt]⁴²².

A seamless system, consistent in every way, proves a mere assertion because reconciliation with that which remains inconsistent demands an inconsistent or contradictory system⁴²³. Seamlessness or consistency can be maintained only via the exclusion of the *Erdenrest*, an exclusion that Adorno equates with violence and the siding with domination. The material does not seamlessly accord with the ideal, which means no system that aims at seamlessness can accommodate the material or account for the *Erdenrest*.

For Adorno, Hegel’s transitioning from one stage of the dialectic to the next is too quick, too cursory, too easy. What is at stake in his critique of Hegel is doing justice to the particular, which cannot occur via a reconciliation of subject and object that remains subjective, a reconciliation that rests within the purview of speculation. He writes, ‘[t]he materialist longing to grasp the thing aims at the opposite: it is only in the absence of images that the full object could be conceived. Such absence concurs with the theological ban on images’⁴²⁴. In the totalising of social labour, the particular is allowed figure only as image. However, insofar as the dialectic effaces itself as a transcendental principle, it necessarily remains open, an opening that acknowledges the indissolubility of the non-identical particle [Erdenrest]. ‘Analysis of the absolute

⁴²² *ibid.* p. 27

⁴²³ Frank Ruda pursues this point in his portrayal of Žižek as engaged in a deliberate performative contradiction. See, Ruda, F. “Dialectical Materialism and the Dangers of Aristotelianism”, *Slavoj Žižek and Dialectical Materialism*, *op. cit.* p. 147

⁴²⁴ Adorno (2007) *op. cit.* p. 207. For a discussion of the *Bilderverbot* as it pertains in Hegel, Marx and Adorno, see Lanning, R. (2014) *In the Hotel Abyss: An Hegelian-Marxist Critique of Adorno*, Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, pp. 77-82, or alternatively, Truskolaski, S. “Adorno’s Imageless Materialism”, *Studies in Social and Political Thought*, vol. 23, Summer 2014, pp. 14-23.

subject has to acknowledge the indissolubility [Unauflöslichkeit] of an empirical, nonidentical moment in it, a moment that doctrines of the absolute subject, idealist systems of identity, are not permitted to acknowledge as indissoluble [unauflöslich]⁴²⁵. Hegel's philosophy remains 'unresolved and vulnerable' [Ungeschlichteten und Anfälligen] because the subject cannot be used to 'ground the absolute' [taugt es nicht zur Begründung des Absoluten], being always situated within an antagonistic society that cannot be imaged.

This is not so much a denunciation of Hegel, but of the civil society that belongs to *Neuzeit*. The untruth of Hegel, the moments in which he tends towards the reification of the present, is the truth of an unreconciled society in which the *Erdenrest* is excluded. Adorno's concern is thus the premature affirmation of the present.

A philosophy for which all that exists dissolves into Spirit as a result of its movement and as the totality of that movement, and which therefore proclaims the identity of subject and object in the whole when it is their non-identity in the particular that inspires it – such a philosophy will apologetically take the side of what exists, which is supposed to be identical with Spirit⁴²⁶.

The always too eager claim to 'maturity' [Mündigkeit] closes down the speculative space in which a future could emerge, which, in turn, reinvokes the temporality of the myth, the always already the same, over and over again⁴²⁷. Indeed, Žižek will argue, as what will form part of the response to the criticisms of Hegel mounted in this chapter, that it is the very limiting of reconciliation to thought alone that is the strength of Hegel's dialectic insofar as what is required is a re-orientation of consciousness towards the 'inconsistency' of substance despite that inconsistency being predicated upon the labour of the concept. Only then can the real work, or the work upon the Real, begin.

⁴²⁵ Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 17

⁴²⁶ *ibid.* p. 85

⁴²⁷ At another point Adorno writes 'that he highhandedly did away with the barrier [den Block weggeräumt] after all, with the experience of something that cannot be dissolved [Unauflösliche] in consciousness, which was the innermost experience of Kant's transcendental philosophy, and he stipulated a unanimity of knowledge that becomes seamless [bruchlose] through its discontinuities and that has something of a mythical illusory quality to it' (*ibid.* p. 86.).

The premature affirmation of an unreconciled society is of course most conspicuous in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, insofar as one reads the text as promoting the Prussian State as ultimate form. In the *Philosophy of Right* the concern moves from Spirit to civil society, a movement in which, to follow Frank Ruda's reading, the problem of the absolute becomes more acute. Ruda argues that Adorno's *Erdenrest*, or what in the *Philosophy of Right* is named the 'rabble' [das Pöbel], manifests as a problem that is neither assimilable nor dissoluble. Although the rabble pertains or insists, it cannot be recognised as such because it remains incommensurate with civil society's measure. For Ruda, the rabble troubles any attempt to construct a philosophically, that is, rationally grounded whole, because it both belongs and does not belong. It contradicts the rational or positivist understanding of existence as either/or, and thus reveals the limits of a philosophy that espouses an '*Urprinzip*'. This limit manifests in philosophy's confrontation with the political, which becomes, to amend Adorno slightly, that which civil society knows, 'without being permitted to know it'⁴²⁸, a line that Ruda also draws upon. Again, insofar as philosophy can only approach that which pertains via the concept, it cannot comprehend that which the subject, in Adorno's phrasing, 'feels itself' [sich fühlt] 'tied to' [gebunden], which Ruda names the political. There is a pressing of something disquieting, but the stubbornness of the subject's measure refuses the incommensurate, which continues, nonetheless, to press in some way despite evading phenomenological grasp.

To repeat Adorno's claim, philosophy is caught in a paradox. For both Adorno and Ruda, in drawing on Marx, the avoidance of this paradox speaks to philosophy's 'poverty' [Elend], the confrontation with which demands the transformation of the terms upon which it is predicated, and thus the dissolution of an '*Urprinzip*', whether dialectic, consciousness, normativity or otherwise⁴²⁹.

⁴²⁸ *ibid.* p. 26.

⁴²⁹ From Adorno's perspective, this would entail philosophy breaking with its obsession with clarity, an obsession upon which, he claims, Descartes grounded modern philosophy (see *ibid.* pp. 96-105). As Heidegger argued, the mode of representation that belongs to the modern became *the* mode at the behest of Descartes (Heidegger, M. (2002) "Hegel's Concept of Experience", *Off The Beaten Track*, trans. Young, J. & Haynes, K. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 97). That this 'geometric' mode of consciousness is neither natural nor absolute is apparent in Descartes suggestion that 'in their whole lives, many men never perceive anything whatever accurately enough to make a sure judgement about it'. What Descartes points to here is that what is taken to be ordinary consciousness, which has assumed the contours of what Husserl calls a 'geometry of experiences', was, at the time he was writing, only just emerging as a mode of comportment, a mode that, as not yet universally habitual, belonged only to the exceptional man of science. Which is to say that what is

As the prior discussion of Adorno suggested, Hegel's totality, whether construed as Spirit or civil society, is predicated upon social labour. In this regard, the rabble presents a problem because of its refusal to labour, which, in turn, amounts to a refusal to leave the domain of nature as is proper to the human being and citizen. The very possibility of civil society is predicated upon an 'essence' [Wesen], which, in the *Philosophy of Right*, takes the form of labour. Insofar as it refuses this essence the rabble displays an absence of spontaneity, to adopt the Kantian idiom. Consequently, its life unfolds as pure immediacy and desire. There can be no 'taking leave' [ausgehen] of the given for the rabble, as it does not engage in the requisite labour. In turn, the lifting of the head from the mist of guilt, which first became available to the genius, is denied the rabble. *Mündigkeit*, despite Kant attempting to render it universal, belongs, as a possibility, only to those who engage in the requisite social labour.

For Ruda, the rabble figures as a denial of the Reformation, and thus a denial of history's progress. 'The Protestant principle is marked by a refusal to recognise in one's disposition of mind anything not justified by thought'⁴³⁰, or what could otherwise be described as the spontaneity of the intellect. In this, the passive or receptive capacity of consciousness, which figured in Kant as the faculty of Sensibility, is substituted for the labour of an intellect become absolute. Introduced in the emergence of the absolute subject is the subject's culturing, the essence, or being [Wesen] of a subject no longer a matter of nature, but of labour. In this movement nature is transformed from being [Wesen] to non-being [Un-wesen]⁴³¹. To labour is to make of what is given more than what is given, which, with the raising of the head from the mist of guilt, becomes the essence of what it means to be human. Those who don't labour, the beggars and idlers of inactivity, are no longer worthy of recognition

taken as given, including perception, is always already a matter of becoming. For Adorno then, philosophy must strive to make intelligible that which evades its language without confusing this intelligibility with clarity (Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 105). In contrast to Robert Pippin, for whom it is governed by norms, intelligibility is connected for Adorno to that which insists despite being excluded from the scene of existence, the *Erdenrest* or rabble. The poverty, or what is better, the suffering [Elend] of philosophy, lies in the trauma occasioned by the impossibility of knowing what nonetheless presses upon it, and which its own possibility is predicated upon. For thinking to re-orientate itself towards the political would be to organise itself around this trauma, which, as Rebecca Comay argues, is not a form of pathos, but structural (Comay & Nichols (2012) op. cit. p. 314).

⁴³⁰ Ruda (2011) op. cit. p. 7

⁴³¹ *ibid.* p. 173

because of their refusal to lift themselves (*sich erheben*, to use Walter Benjamin's term) from the poverty of immediacy and the natural, which now figure as non-being in a totality predicated upon social labour. This means, Ruda argues, that the beneficiary of labour is the self that is produced in its very labouring, all gain accruing to the individual. In refusing to labour, and becoming an unrecognisable non-being, the rabble ceases to exist insofar as existence is predicated upon the mutual recognition of being.

If recognition is a matter of labouring, the rabble's refusal would appear to be a mere sign of weakness or lack at the level of the individual. The rabble is excluded, becomes a non-being, because of its refusal to partake in the labour that allows inclusion and recognition. However, because subjectivity pertains only in labouring, the rabble is a non-subject, what could be named, to draw on Ruda, the 'undead', which is and is not, a non-being [Un-wesen] that nonetheless is. To fail to labour cannot amount to a refusal because this implies an already constituted subjectivity. To be or not to be is neither a choice nor a question, but a matter of contingent circumstances. As Ruda makes explicit, every subject is latently rabble, which means the essence [Wesen] of the subject is actually the non-being [Un-wesen] that civil society excludes rather than an individual's ability to labour⁴³². That the rabble is not the result of weakness or a lack (insofar as every subject is also essentially lacking) suggests that the rabble's exclusion from the social totality is a necessary state of affairs⁴³³. In order to constitute itself as a totality civil society must substitute non-being for a positive essence. Otherwise no demarcation can occur and the totality would dissolve. This means, Ruda points out, that the very possibility of a totality is

⁴³² See in particular Ruda (2011) *ibid.* p. 206, fn. 16, where Ruda writes: '... the German term "*Unwesen*" implies that essence [*Wesen*] of man is a negation of that essence itself [*Un-wesen*] which should not be conceived of only in terms of negation, but also as an indicator of an existence'. Likewise, Žižek's notion of 'less than nothing' suggests of a negativity that is not the mere opposite of positive existence, but a non-being that evades the logic of the either/or. Žižek's work will be taken up shortly.

⁴³³ Robert Pippin argues that such exclusion is not necessary, only prevalent (Pippin, R. (2015) *Interanimations: Receiving Modern Germany Philosophy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 110). This is because he approaches a notion such as the rabble via a romantic positivism that assumes the other is always already recognisable despite civil society's failure to attend to what it excludes. In claiming that the basic norm of society is something like an 'institutionally secured state of equally recognitive status' (*ibid.* p. 111), Pippin fails to grasp the sense in which recognition is predicated upon a necessary exclusion. This is particularly apparent in his portrayal of the rabble as 'a merely contingent particular' (*ibid.* p. 110). Although, insofar as every individual is latently rabble, it is contingent as to which individuals are rabble, it is not the case, to the extent that civil society is predicated upon an essence (in this case, labouring), that the rabble *tout court* is contingent.

predicated upon an original exclusion. Every subject is not only latently rabble, but latently excluded⁴³⁴. Although the circumstances that determine who is rabble are contingent, that the rabble 'is' is necessary. As a necessary counterpart to social labour, the rabble is not naturally occurring therefore, but culturally produced. Which is to say that the culturing of the subject is also the culturing of the rabble. Civil society produces not just citizens, but the non-beings that it both knows but cannot know because it recognises only that which accords with its (misrecognised) essence, an essence, nonetheless, that is 'second nature'.

It is the necessity that underpins the production of the rabble that, Ruda argues, leads to its indignance. The rabble is indignant because the legal entitlement of everyone's existence can only be ensured on the condition that certain sections of the population have their right deprived⁴³⁵. Antithetically, the right to subsistence for all can only be maintained via the denial of this right for some, who, insofar as civil society understands itself as maintaining freedom for all, can no longer figure as a part of the all. The rabble emerges from this contradiction; it is the non-being that is both of and not of civil society. 'In the indignant voice of the rabble', Ruda writes, 'civil society does not hear anything but the counternatural voice that it itself generates'⁴³⁶. Because civil society is established on the logic of individual self-subsistence, the rabble, in being excluded from civil society and thus unable to ensure its self-subsistence, contradicts civil society. In remaining bound to pure immediacy and desire, the rabble does not figure in what Pippin, drawing on Wilfred Sellars, will name a 'space of reasons'. This is despite the rabble's very incapacity being a necessity upon which civil society depends. The rabble cannot live out the logic that nonetheless produces it. In this, civil society necessarily invokes that which is counternatural to it.

Ruda and Adorno are thus interested in recovering the indissolubility of the rabble. Both the rabble and the *Erdenrest*, which precede and exceed the Reformation and the totalisation of social labour, figure as a 'first nature' that calls 'second nature' back,

⁴³⁴ What is more, the rabble does not refer to this or that individual, but the 'rabbleness' or otherness that belongs to every subject. The exclusion of the rabble does violence not just to the individuals who are excluded, but also the subjects who, via contingent circumstances, find themselves included. To be included is to suffer the loss of one's lack, which renders the subject an inert object.

⁴³⁵ Ruda (2011) op. cit. p. 36

⁴³⁶ *ibid.*

insisting that it bend back upon itself and attend to that which it has excluded. Ruda concurs with Adorno's claim that labour is predicated upon nature, which in the culturing of Spirit becomes the *Un-wesen*, the 'undead', which lives on despite not being recognised as such. This is what renders it both unassimilable and indissoluble. As Ruda puts it, the rabble is 'something which does not exist but that is still there'⁴³⁷. Again, this is the paradoxical existence towards which, it will be argued, philosophy must orientate itself.

In the figure of the rabble Hegel was confronted with that which he could not resolve. Both Ruda and Adorno argue that the absolutising of the state in the *Philosophy of Right* became an attempt to resolve this paradox. The idolization of the state is evidence, Adorno suggests, that Hegel recognised the fact that Spirit cannot resolve its own contradictions⁴³⁸. The free play of the dialectic ends in the creation of a 'penurious rabble' [Erzeugung des Pöbels]. The appeal to the state thus figures as the introduction of an undialectical institution that is charged with countering the excesses of Spirit and its inability to resolve its own contradictions. 'Hegel's philosophy of the state... suspends the dialectic under the aegis of a principle to which Hegel's own critique of the abstract could be applied... ', Adorno writes⁴³⁹. Rather than listen to society's counternatural (perhaps beautiful, in the Kantian mould) voice, Hegel instead affirmed an unreconciled society as the best that the rabble could hope for. To be Hegelian where Hegel was not thus opens up what Ruda terms a 'place of transformation', 'a place in which something can happen, precisely due to its peculiar lack'⁴⁴⁰. This space, which extends beyond the boundaries of the totality of social labour and escapes the logic of civil society, allows for the emergence of the non-being that is the essence of the spontaneous subject not yet reified. It is not a 'space of reasons', but one in which the incommensurate presses in its irrationality. The rabble or *Erdenrest* thus figures as a recollection, the recovery of a space not marked by the totality of social labour. In this, the rabble stands 'against the mediating movement of Spirit itself'⁴⁴¹. Insofar as Hegel's modernity involves the withstanding of 'multiplicity' and 'difference', the rabble confounds Hegel's modernity because it

⁴³⁷ *ibid.*

⁴³⁸ Adorno (1993) *op. cit.* p. 26

⁴³⁹ *ibid.* p. 29

⁴⁴⁰ Ruda (2011) *op. cit.* p. 36

⁴⁴¹ *ibid.* p. 76

does not figure as a particular in his schema⁴⁴². For Adorno, as for Ruda, the rabble is thus an ‘historical force’ [geschichtliche Kraft] that stands on the ‘other side’ [jenseits] of the totality of the bourgeois state. It is that which insists, but cannot be withstood, such that a demand is placed on thinking to re-orientate itself towards this paradoxical figure. As the following chapter will argue, it is a figure that Hegel’s dialectic is nonetheless geared towards.

⁴⁴² *ibid.* p. 113

Chapter 4

In-Between: The Path Of The Political

That development which, in the natural world, is a peaceful process of growth - for it retains its identity and remains self-contained in its expression - is in the spiritual world at once a hard and unending conflict with itself.

Hegel

Hegel is on the move again. Or, Hegel is again circling back on himself. Or, Hegel is making a beginning – again.

Andrew Hass

Retroactive Dialectics: Undoing What Was Done

The discussion turns in this chapter to the various positions that maintain what can be named a retroactive reading, and rewriting, of Hegel, which includes the work of Rebecca Comay, Adrian Johnston, Catherine Malabou and Slavoj Žižek. Rather than insisting upon either a metaphysical approach, which reads the present without recourse to the fate of the metaphysical, or a non-metaphysical approach, which reads the past as if the metaphysical was always already outmoded, the retroactive refuses to privilege either whilst also maintaining their irreconcilability. This approach does not merely maintain this tension however. Rather, the readings considered invoke or bring about such tension by way of the recovery of the incommensurate, which precludes any claim to premature reconciliation and works to render the present a site of intensity, or what Andrew Benjamin has referred to as a ‘locus of activity’⁴⁴³. Implied here is the sense in which the past can never really be done with. However, its continued insistence is not merely given, which is why it must be invoked in the reading and rewriting of Hegel. It is this invocation that places past and present in an incommensurate relation, gesturing towards the ‘in-between’ that such readings attempt to inhabit, which, as the opening chapter argued, is the condition of the

⁴⁴³ Benjamin, A. (2013), *Working With Walter Benjamin: Recovering a Political Philosophy*, Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, p. 249

possibility of a future that emerges from the disruption and transformation of tradition. Philosophy, from this perspective, figures as the denial of reconciliation insofar as the latter is predicated upon effacing the incommensurate. This is the materiality of the speculative, which insists upon the non-identity of the Ideal and the Real despite, in following Hegel, approaching the Real as constellated by the Ideal.

To return the discussion of the previous chapter to the problem of time, the extent to which Hegel remains bound to the logic of spectation (social labour merely re-producing itself as the labour of Sisyphus), suggests that the Hegelian future is condemned to repetition, the subject that admits nothing not justified by thought, dissolving its own subjectivity, and thus the very possibility of being other and the being of otherness. Forgetting the nature or other upon which it depends, and stopping its ears to the sound of the ‘beautiful voice’, consciousness, which not only thinks over the given, but also produces the conditions under which it is given, renders change itself programmatic, Kant’s straight line time becoming the circle of reciprocity that also transcends history. In this, Hegel seems to reinvok a pre-Critical positivism that also marks the worst of romanticism.

Although Hegel allows for the mutability of time in his absolutising of social labour, the very means with which he instils mutability becomes, in Adorno’s wording, the *skandalon* that disconnects time from subjectivity. Despite being produced by labour, or the spontaneity of a shared consciousness, time assumes reified form, administering the given as a transcendental principle. Time becomes a form of change that does not itself change precisely because the spontaneity that produced it can only repeat itself. Time, as a product of metaphysical labour, becomes itself metaphysical, the future already determined insofar as its transcendental form is waiting, in the same manner as Foucault’s Hegel, up ahead, ‘immobile and elsewhere’⁴⁴⁴. This is the diagnosis apparent in the work of Wyschogrod, Adorno and Ruda.

⁴⁴⁴ Foucault, “The Order of Discourse”, in *Untying the Text: A Poststructuralist Reader*, ed. R. Young (1981) Boston: Routledge, p. 74. As Vladimir Safatle writes, ‘if time is an immobile totality then everything that happens in its interior, every becoming and succession will be an expression of such totality’ (Safatle, V. (2015) “Temporality, Ontology, Dialectics: Hegel Against a Formal Concept of Time”, *Filozofski vestnik*, Letnik XXXVI, Številka 3, p. 114). In this, there can be nothing new because the new itself is programmatic.

There is, in the movement from the lifting of the head from the mist of guilt to the reification of social labour and its attendant totality, the taking of a path or following of a passage. Which is to say that reification is a result rather than origin. The path is one that traverses the gap between nature and culture, sensibility and intellect, passivity and spontaneity, tradition and the new, metaphysics and its dissolution, the One and the other. It also runs from Kant to Hegel, and, one might add, from the French Revolution to the Terror, or from the Reformation to the Anabaptists and the Counter-Reformation. Clayton Crockett and Creston Davis have, in relation to Edith Wyschogrod's work, named this the passage of the political⁴⁴⁵, which could also be approached in terms of Gillian Rose's 'broken middle', or William Desmond's 'metaxological', to which reference was made in chapter 2.

To take the concern of the previous chapter as an example, in the movement from nature to culture and the absolutising of social labour, the path bends back upon itself, in proper Hegelian fashion. And yet, in its bending it has come to form what Catherine Malabou refers to as a 'vicious circle', social labour reverting into an inert object⁴⁴⁶. In bending back, Spirit forgets the non-being [Un-wesen] upon which the essence [Wesen] of its subjectivity, and its ability to bend back, is predicated. This amounts, as Ruda argued, to a self-erasure, the essence of subjectivity being its non-being. In turn, history assumes mythic form, and the time of the new becomes the eternal return of the same. The worry, which Comay has expressed in the form of a question, is 'whether philosophy remains "Thermidorian" – whether it is condemned to keep retracing the long march from the Jacobin Terror to the Terreur Blanche of the Thermidorian counter-revolution... to the bleached out, covert or sublimated varieties of terror Hegel sees articulated in a philosophical and aesthetic register, with increasing indirectness, from Kant through Fichte to Jena Romanticism?'⁴⁴⁷. Repeatedly, it seems, the path of the political, which attempts to retrace its steps and cross the 'insurmountable gulf' formed with the emergence of subjectivity, is schematised into a form that reifies beginning and end, the mediating term merely

⁴⁴⁵ Crockett, C. & Davis, C. (2011) "Introduction: Risking Hegel: A New Reading for the Twenty-First Century", in *Hegel and the Infinite: Religion, Politics and Dialectic*, eds. Žižek, S., Crockett, C. & Davis C. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 15

⁴⁴⁶ Malabou, C. (2005) *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*, trans. During, L. New York, US: Routledge, p. 145

⁴⁴⁷ Comay, R. & Nichols, J. (2012) "Missed Revolutions, Non-Revolutions, Revolutions to Come: On Mourning Sickness", *PhaenEx* 7, no. 1, p. 317

connecting cause to effect⁴⁴⁸. The opening up of this path, therefore, is not merely a matter of allowing for a different path, but a different beginning and a different end, the mediating term, the 'in-between', itself mediated and mutable. Undoing what was done necessitates repeating the movement, of taking the path again, from what Crockett and Davis describe as the penultimate to the ultimate, from the lifting of the head to its decapitation⁴⁴⁹.

For the reified subject, the path from nature to culture, from non-being to being, does not appear as a path at all because its dependency on nature is effaced in its labouring. In looking back all that appears (its depth, to recall, a 'gallery of images') is itself, all the way down, so to speak. There is, from the point of view of the absolute subject, only labour and the consciousness that attaches to it. This is the paradox that Hegelian philosophy finds itself in: 'that of developing a dialectical method, with its connections to a self-reflective subject, in a context defined as one in which the subject has been liquidated by its own attempt to liquidate everything outside of itself'⁴⁵⁰. If reflection were blocked to the subject because it has effaced its own essence, the very possibility of reflection, and thus transformation, would appear to be predicated upon the recovery of that essence, its non-being, which, in contrast to Heidegger, is not Being, but an indeterminacy that becomes determined, and actual, via dialectical movement and thus discursive mediation. Insofar as the path from nature to culture ends in absolute presence, Wyschogrod's spectator standing before a

⁴⁴⁸ In the early work *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate*, Hegel approaches the forming of the gap between subject and object via the metaphors of the great biblical flood. The flood was not merely a natural disaster; it provoked the emergence of a culture that would overcome nature's indifference to human suffering by dominating it. 'Formerly friendly or tranquil, nature now abandoned the equipoise of her elements, now requited the faith the human race had in her with the most destructive, invincible, irresistible hostility; in her fury she spared nothing; she made none of the distinctions which love might have made but poured savage devastation everywhere', which, as a consequence, meant that, 'if man was to hold out against the outbursts of a nature now hostile, nature had to be mastered' (Hegel, G.W.F. (1961) *On Christianity: Early Theological Writings*, trans. Knox, T.M. New York: Harper Torchbooks, p. 182-83). In response to nature's indifference, culture comes to consume nature, which ends in the forgetting of nature and the production of a totality that appears predicated upon only social labour. This is also the argument apparent in Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, where they argue that the drive to dominate nature is actually the playing out of the natural tendency towards self-preservation. Which is to say that the forgetting of nature ends in obedience to nature, just as the forgetting of *Unmündigkeit* in the movement to *Mündigkeit* revokes a return to the former.

⁴⁴⁹ Crockett & Davis (2011) op. cit. p. 14

⁴⁵⁰ Weber-Nicholson, S. "Introduction", Adorno, T.W. (1993) *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Weber-Nicholson, S. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, p. xiv

history rendered a mirror image⁴⁵¹, the recovery of subjectivity's lack, its essential non-being, figures as the production of a space in which, to repeat Ruda's remark, 'something can happen'⁴⁵². The forgetting of nature or non-being is not terminal. Indeed, the incommensurate both insists and persists in the present, pressing upon the subject despite the attempted disavowal and lack of phenomenal existence. Although social labour seeks to produce both sides of the Kantian dichotomy as a means of reconciling unreconciled society, it cannot do so without also producing that which evades its totalising logic. 'The corporation', Ruda writes, 'always knows a remainder and this remainder is the poverty of those that it does not know'⁴⁵³. The critique of Hegel must attend therefore to that in the dialectic in which the *Erdenrest* manifests in contradiction to Spirit's own tendency towards the denial of the material, the moments of inconsistency and absurdity that trouble the dialectic's attempt to unify labour and reality, subject and substance.

The argument to be pursued in the following two chapters is that the possibility of attending to the inconsistent and absurd, the *Ungereimt*, does not entail the rejection of Hegel despite his tendency towards, as Adorno has claimed, 'absolute consistency'⁴⁵⁴. Hegel's inability to contend with the problem of the 'rabble', although an indictment of his spurious attempt at affirming the present, speaks to both the impossibility of obtaining reconciliation in the domain of thought when society remains unreconciled, and the need to repeat⁴⁵⁵. Already with Hegel consciousness bends back upon itself, which is a necessary but not sufficient aspect of attending to the untimely. Moreover, Hegel recognises that in turning to the past, consciousness also produces that past, as the discussion of cause and effect in chapter 2 showed. There cannot be for Hegel an origin or ground that belongs to the past and pertains in the present⁴⁵⁶. To follow Adorno's argument, only a 'little bit more' [eines Geringen]

⁴⁵¹ Wyschogrod, E. (1998), *An Ethics of Remembering: History, Heterology, and the Nameless Others*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 143

⁴⁵² Ruda, F. (2011) *Hegel's Rabble: An Investigation into Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, New York: Continuum, p. 36

⁴⁵³ *ibid.* p. 22

⁴⁵⁴ Adorno (1993) *op. cit.* p. 12

⁴⁵⁵ In relation to the affirmation of the monarch in *The Philosophy of Right*, for instance, Adorno suggests that 'such weaknesses also contain crucial aids to understanding' (*ibid.* p. 131). It is only because civil society excludes the rabble that it stands in need of an undialectical state to ensure the universality that it claims for itself.

⁴⁵⁶ As Adorno writes, 'Hegel destroys the very mythology of something "first"' by approaching every ground as an after-effect of a retroactive determination' (*ibid.* p. 64).

would be needed for the dialectic to ‘speak its own name’ [riefe sich selbst beim Namen], and not succumb to the tendency towards the premature affirmation of an irrational present. The ‘more’ that is needed, according to Adorno, is the ‘remembrance’ [Gedächtnis] of the mediated and ‘indissoluble’ [unauflösliche] moment of nature upon which social labour is predicated, which could otherwise be named the co-presence of ontological difference.

That neither *Erdenrest* nor ‘rabble’ figure as a particular in any kind of schema means that the nature remembered cannot be represented, as if Spirit is a container in which life dwells. The *Erdenrest*, to drawn on Kant, is ‘unnamable’ [unnennbar] from within the parameters of a civil society that names⁴⁵⁷. For the dialectic to speak its own name thus requires the opening of a space that would allow the untimely past to figure in an hitherto unnamed manner. The ‘more’ that Adorno speaks of has nothing, therefore, to do with addition. Rather, it is speculative. Speculative idealism, as the argument to follow will contend, suggests of a particular manner or way of turning to the past, one not geared towards discovery or the rending of the veil, but the undoing of what was done, the negation of the reification of social labour, which opens up a notion of working-*with*, the latter referring to that which labour depends upon, but which nonetheless cannot be grasped via the representation⁴⁵⁸. If the present is an after-effect of the past, just as the future will be the after-effect of a present, the opening up of a future from within the present demands the transformation of that which the present is grounded upon and which continues to pertain in the present. Which could otherwise, pace the opening chapter, be described as the recovery of the co-presence of ontological difference that is a marker of the event. Because the actual is the result of dialectical movement and contestation, the past is pregnant with potentialities or non-actualities that did not occur [das Ungeschehen], the counternatural of what did occur [Geschichte], which nonetheless figure as conditions

⁴⁵⁷ Kant, I. (2000) *The Critique of the Power of Judgement*, ed. Guyer, P. trans. Guyer, P. & Matthews, E. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 194

⁴⁵⁸ For the delineation of this notion, see Benjamin, A. (2013) *Working With Walter Benjamin: Recovering a Political Philosophy*, Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press. Freud’s ‘working-through’ [durcharbeiten] invokes a similar approach (see Freud, S. (1991) “Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through”, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Vol. XII*, trans. Strachey, J. London: The Hogarth Press). Rather than labour manipulating already constituted objects, both working-with and working-through are geared towards the permutation of not only the object worked on, but also that which does the work, social labour permuting nature and in doing so permuting itself.

upon which the present is predicated. This is apparent in the following from the *Encyclopaedia Logic*:

In existence, determinacy is one with being, and at the same time posited as negation, i.e. *limit, barrier*. Being other is thus not something indifferent outside of it but instead its own moment. By virtue of its quality, *something* is, first, *finite* and, second, *alterable*, so that finitude and alterability belong to its being... Something is what it is only within its limit and due to its limit. Hence one must not regard the limit as something that is merely external to existence; rather it permeates existence as a whole⁴⁵⁹.

This passage suggests that the unnamable past is not therefore foreign to Hegel despite his criticism of Kant that suggests the ‘mere ought’, the unrealised possibilities, are nothing but chaff, or husks. Recalling Andrew Hass’ claim that Hegel is not just permutable, but keeps permuting himself in the sense that dialectic returns to its moments, including the non-actual⁴⁶⁰, this opens up the possibility of ‘casting off’ [abwerfen] and ‘undoing’ [ungeschehen machen] what was done, which follows from the doing again of what was done, from repetition⁴⁶¹.

The permutation of Hegel, which is internal to the dialectic, demands the reading and re-reading of Hegel. Only in repeating the labour of the concept can the recovery of the path of the political obtain: permutation opens up a ‘space of allowing’ in which ‘something can happen’ that does not already belong to history [Geschichte], the latter

⁴⁵⁹ Hegel, G.W.F. (2010) *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline, Part I: Science of Logic*, eds. & trans. Brinkmann, K. & Dahlstrom, D. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 147

⁴⁶⁰ Hass, A.W. (2013) *Hegel and the Art of Negation: Negativity, Creativity and Contemporary Thought*, London: I.B. Tauris, p. 1

⁴⁶¹ Hegel writes in the *Phenomenology* that Spirit ‘does not know that... in [its] absolute certainty of itself [in der absoluten Gewißheit seiner selbst], [it] is lord and master over every deed [Tat] and actuality [Wirklichkeit], and can cast them off [abwerfen], and make them as if they had never happened [ungeschehen machen kann]’ (Hegel, G.W.F. (1977) *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Miller, A.V. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 406). Again, the sense in which Spirit is both lord and master suggests of the forgetting of nature such that the very possibility of undoing what was done is both predicated upon such mastery (the absolutising of social labour) and its negation, which demands the recovery of the counternatural ‘beautiful voice’. In line with Adorno’s claim that it is the strength of the reified subject that must burst through that reification, the very possibility of recovering labour’s lack can only occur however via the strength of labour. The notion of *Ungeschehen machen* figures as central to the work of both Žižek and Rebecca Comay, not to mention its figuring in Freud. It will be considered in full later in the chapter.

the objects, deeds and occurrences that inform what is known of the past, but which are absent of the co-presence of ontological difference that marks the event. If reified subjectivity is produced in the scission that separates being from non-being, and the taking of a path that effaces itself, recovery is concerned with repeating this path so that it might play out differently, preserving subjectivity, but negating the reification⁴⁶². For Rebecca Comay, such repetition must assume a particular register, a repetition that ‘points not to some kind of nostalgia for the comforts of inanimate existence, or to the void of Nirvana, but rather a return to the beginning where everything can start again’⁴⁶³, which must include the dialectical method itself. This is precisely what the sublation of the Reformation and Hegel’s Protestantism would amount to. In turn, the present, as an after-effect of a past retroactively determined as marked by otherness, would no longer appear as a totality of social labour, and thus not merely as discursive. As Hegel suggests, the other is not indifferent and external to the One, but its own moment such that the One is plural, always already more than itself. To speak its own name, the dialectic must allow for its own dissolution, which, in turn, demands an openness to the future and the refusal of the premature affirmation of an unreconciled society. Speculative idealism can only be retrospective, that is, belated, occurring after the fact, but it nonetheless insists that the after is also the before such that it is also too early, an argument that will be formulated in what is to follow.

⁴⁶² As Peter Osborne has suggested, because dialectics, in repeatedly permuting itself, can always claim that any specific instantiation is sublata by a further, and more correct, one, it is near on impossible to critique from within its own terms. He writes, ‘if the fallibilism of Hegel’s phenomenological method opens up all specific Hegelianisms - all specific totalizations of history - to the test of historical experience, it also protects Hegelianism itself, Hegelianism as ‘method’, from philosophical critique. Indeed, the interpretive critique of any particular Hegelianism, any particular totalization, can always be read as a demonstration rather than a refutation of the method. But how many such demonstrations do we need before the ironizing process of so paradoxical a confirmation of rectitude begins to erode our belief in the project?’ (Osborne, P. (1995), *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*, London: Verso, p. 41). If failure is the leitmotif of the dialectic, every specific failure is nothing more than the dialectic doing what it is meant to do. Repeating Hegel thus becomes both internal to Hegel and the repetition of failure. The question then becomes, is not this failure terminal, and thus the dialectic a false ‘way-out’? An answer will be provided, at a later point, by way of the work of Rebecca Comay.

⁴⁶³ Comay, R. (2013), “Hegel: Non-metaphysical, Post-metaphysical, Post Traumatic (Response to Lumsden, Redding, Sinnerbrink)”, *Parrhesia*, no. 17, p. 53

The Belated Organism

It was suggested earlier that for Lukács, Derrida and Foucault the organicism of a reciprocal ontology, as outlined in chapter 2, ends in a closed system, Spirit unable to 'go outside itself' because it can only relate to an image it already harbours, which Derrida frames as the development of an 'original germ'⁴⁶⁴, with its teleological connotations. In this, the loss of self that accompanies the confrontation with the other is recovered in the recognition that the other belonged to Spirit all along. In Derrida's words, 'the movement of lost presence sets in motion the process of re-appropriation'⁴⁶⁵. Alienation is thus followed by the recovery of loss, which suggests the original, natural unity disturbed by social labour is re-established insofar as Spirit now produces both sides of the culture/nature dichotomy, unity obtained by fiat and dissolving one side into the other. As a result, a principled unity persists through time despite the rupture invoked by culture, and, in the forgetting of nature, this original unity turns out to have been the work of labour all along. What transcends dialectical movement and the ruptures of history is the unity of subject and object, which is predicated, as Adorno and Ruda maintained, upon rendering the other commensurate with the measure that pertains in the present.

Hegel's idealism however, as Adorno readily admits, is also marked by its attempt to extend experience beyond the representation and the timely image. In what is to follow, it will be argued that Hegel's past, which manifests via Spirit turning back upon itself, necessarily exceeds the subject's grasp such that the conceptual comprehension of the other invokes, at the same time, a reconfiguration of consciousness. Consciousness is not only determined by material reality, this reality is neither given, nor an abyss [*Abgrund* in the Heideggerian sense] that evades the negativity of its own thinking. In the expansion of the space of experience that accompanies Hegel's rendering of the past experiential, what figures as past is always more than what appears when looking back, which follows from the sense in which the past is for Hegel subject to what can be named retroactive determination, its various moments rendered plural in the recovery of the non-being that the given

⁴⁶⁴ Derrida, J. (1986), *Glas*, trans. Leavey Jr. J. P. and Rand, R., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, p. 28.

⁴⁶⁵ Derrida, J. (1982) *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Bass, A., Brighton, England: The Harvester Press, p. 72.

moment is predicated upon, which ‘undoes’ what was done. ‘The extreme of idealism’, Adorno writes, ‘has its material implications’⁴⁶⁶, the speculative determinations of idealism extending the past beyond its *re*-presentation in the present. The ground that emerges via the labour of the concept is not an origin in a traditional sense therefore, because it cannot pertain in complete separation from the conceptual work performed in the present. Which is to say that it is determined by conditions not reducible to a particular configuration of Spirit. It is in this sense that Hegel can be said to permute himself, there being no singular place of observation from which to survey the past, nor Hegel’s own work, without negating both surveyor and surveyed, which suggests there is no “Hegel”, but rather a plurality of Hegels that manifest in the reading and re-reading of Hegel⁴⁶⁷.

As an attempt to sketch a Hegel that counters the reading of his work as invoking absolute parousia, the initial claim to be made is that the ‘original germ’ that Derrida suggests is a mark of the organic does not pertain in regards to Spirit. Hegel writes in the *Philosophy of History* that, in contrast to the organism, ‘Spirit is quite otherwise’ precisely because ‘the realisation of its Concept is mediated [vermittelt] by consciousness and will [Bewußtsein und Willen]’⁴⁶⁸. This, he continues, means that Spirit is ‘divided against itself’ [selbst sich entgegen], torn between its ‘natural destiny’ [natürliche Bestimmung], the fulfilling of an already determined goal, and the negation of that goal brought about by the spontaneity of social labour, which opens up other destinies, the taking of a different path. ‘Its development [Entwicklung]’, Hegel suggests, ‘does not present the harmless tranquillity of mere growth [blose Hervorgehen], as does that of organic life, but a hard and indignant work against itself [harte unwillige Arbeit gegen sich selbst]’⁴⁶⁹.

Read in this light, Hegel’s framing of Spirit’s ‘formative movement’ [bildende Bewegung]⁴⁷⁰ as a process in which it first loses itself before making a recovery,

⁴⁶⁶ Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 68

⁴⁶⁷ What must be remembered is that this is not a claim about liberal pluralism. The recovery of plurality is geared not towards merely allowing for the other, but of conflict at the ontological level, a conflict that is intended to provoke a future in which neither the One nor the other remain what they were prior to such conflict.

⁴⁶⁸ Hegel, G.W.F (1956) *The Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree, J. New York: Dover Publications, p. 55

⁴⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁷⁰ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 17, trans. amended.

assumes a different register. Of course whether Hegel is able to evade the problem of parousia is not merely a matter of saying otherwise. However, what the reading and re-reading of Hegel must be geared towards, and what has been named here as speculative idealism attempts, is precisely the negation of Hegel's tendency towards parousia. Again, if there is no "Hegel" that precedes the determination of his work that occurs in the present, the future of Hegel, to co-opt Malabou's formulation, remains to be written. In the same manner that the Hegel returned to from the present cannot be an original or authentic Hegel, what Spirit returns to, insofar as a moment of comprehension takes place, is not the same as the Spirit initially lost. As much as history is for Hegel a process marked by the labour of the concept in which spontaneous subjectivity 'inserts' itself into Spirit's 'formative movement' in order to not only realise, but also transform Spirit, what's at stake in Hegel, considered as a Idea still to be actualised (modernity, to repeat the argument, remaining Kantian), has yet to be comprehended. Which is to say that both the moment to realise Hegel has passed (the Idea of Hegel already manifest), and that the time of Hegel is still to come (the Idea not yet realised). In *The Philosophy of History*, Hegel describes this temporal difference in the following terms:

Aims, principles, etc., have a place in our thoughts, in our subjective design only [inneren Absicht]; but not yet in the sphere of reality [Wirklichkeit]. That which exists for itself only is a possibility [Möglichkeit], a potentiality [Vermögen]; but has not yet emerged into Existence [Existenz]. A second element must be introduced in order to produce actuality – viz., actuation [Betätigung], realization [Verwirklichung]; and whose motive power is the Will [Wille] – the activity of man in the widest sense. It is only by this activity [Tätigkeit] that this Concept [Begriff] as well as abstract characteristics generally, are realized, actualized; for of themselves they are powerless⁴⁷¹.

To return to the notion of Spirit, its immediate and indeterminate form is not the same as mediated and determined Spirit precisely because the latter, in having bent back

⁴⁷¹ Hegel (1956) op. cit. p. 22, trans. amended. Hegel goes on to describe the 'motive power' that 'puts [subjective ideas] in operation, and gives them determinate existence', as the 'need [Bedürfnis], drive [Trieb], inclination [Neigung] and passion [Leidenschaft] of man' (ibid. p. 22, trans. amended). Although, as argued in the opening chapter, political action is engendered by the experience of the co-presence of ontological difference, there must nonetheless be something, named here by Hegel as need, drive, inclination and passion, that informs philosophy and the attempt to open up a 'space of allowing' in which difference may figure.

upon itself and undergone the labour of the concept, is forced to both confront the ‘unfamiliar’ [unbekannt] other that did not appear in immediacy, and grasp the other as itself, a moment of comprehension, it will be argued, in which the otherness of the other is not brought to hand, but released. The comprehension of the other, which results from the negation of the negation, is not a matter of grasping the other as presence, but of allowing it to figure in its otherness. The result of dialectical movement (which is to engender political action, but is not itself action) is a moment of comprehension that, as an allowing, produces the other, which is what Hegel describes above as the ‘motive power of the Will’. In turn, to follow the counter arguments pursued, in various ways, by Adorno, Ruda, Comay and Žižek, Absolute Knowing suggests not of absolute presence, but the re-orientation of consciousness towards the other that whilst also determining the latter, nonetheless provokes its otherness. Which is to say, to repeat the line from the opening chapter, that Absolute Knowing is a matter of the co-presence of ontological difference, and thus of contestation. It is not an end therefore, but the recovery of past event that renders the ensuing one present, and which thus evokes an emphatic experience effaced by the singular ontology of a Kantian modernity. Again, it is only via this re-orientation, which itself has material implications, that work on the Real begins⁴⁷².

What Hegel intends by framing comprehension as a process (in which a movement from the immediacy of appearances to the mediated concept is made), is the transformation of the conditions of possibility that pertain in the present. For the other to figure in the life of Spirit, a reconfiguration of consciousness must occur that transforms not just the present, but also the past and future. To the extent that such a movement is possible, the ‘original germ’ that is Spirit’s ‘destiny’ would no longer

⁴⁷² Which is to say that to the extent to which modernity has remained Kantian, consciousness has remained blind to the sense in which the very grasping of the other is also the release of its otherness. It is also necessary at this point to distinguish between what could be called, following Adorno, the contradictions of objects, their being marked by otherness, and the antagonisms of civil society. Contradictions, it will be maintained, remain ‘indissoluble’ [unauflöslich] despite being subject to negation and transformation. Antagonisms, conversely, are those aspects of civil society that visit pain and suffering upon subjects precisely because its contradictions, or otherness, are effaced. Work upon the Real is thus concerned with allowing for the other whilst dissolving civil society’s antagonisms. The poverty of philosophy is such however that although it may insist on the otherness of the other, it cannot bring about the reconciliation of civil society’s antagonisms, which is precisely why it must be geared towards a re-orientation of conscious that would open up the possibility of transforming the material, rather than being that transformation itself.

pertain as it did prior to the reconfiguration of Spirit⁴⁷³. This is what Hegel means when he suggests that the movement to a new configuration necessitates a ‘qualitative leap’ in which the structure of the previous world is dissolved, the very germ of the prior configuration rendered unrecognisable on the terms that previously pertained. In undergoing the labour of the concept the other is both produced (insofar as it does not appear in immediacy) and negated (insofar as it doesn’t remain a mere appearance, but becomes conceptual), which suggests of its transformation from subjective experience (the hearing of the ‘beautiful voice’ that gestures towards the Idea) to objective concept (the comprehension of the ‘beautiful voice’ in its otherness). This means that what is incommensurate with an initial configuration of Spirit is subsequently grasped as internal to Spirit despite countering the essence upon which that initial configuration was predicated. In reaching over its other, Spirit is necessarily reconfigured as a means of allowing for relations (which figure as both a plurality of beings and a plural being) that exceed the singular ontology that informed its prior configuration as it appeared in the present. What is grasped [begriffen] in the comprehending of the other is not ‘actuality’ [Wirklichkeit] alone, but also the necessary ‘non-actuality’ [Unwirklichkeit] that counters being and which cannot be figuratively ‘represented’ [vorgestellt] despite enabling the imaging of being.

The difficulty here is that although the other is, in its initial appearing, ‘non-actual’ [Unwirklich], it becomes ‘actual’ [Wirklich] in Spirit’s ‘formative movement’. In turn, what ‘is’ [Wesen] is not merely being in its parousia, but also ‘non-being’ [Unwesen], the latter moving from non-actual to actual in the reconfiguration of Spirit. What is more however, as noted above, the becoming actual of the non-actual produces the otherness of the other such that it is not grasped in its presence despite

⁴⁷³ There is in this claim a certain accord with Walter Benjamin’s framing of the baroque. If the baroque is that in which the head is lifted from the mist of guilt, a lifting that is the pre-condition of enlightenment, then this lifting remained for Benjamin only a potentiality that failed to be actualised. He writes in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, for instance, that ‘the German Trauerspiel was never able to inspire itself to a new life; it was never able to awaken within itself the clear light of self-awareness’ (Benjamin, W. (1998) *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. Osborne, J. London: Verso, p. 158). And although Benjamin would not have allowed that interruption to be framed as a ‘self-permutation’, as it has been presented here, his work nonetheless evinces the same argument advanced above. Namely, that the actualisation of what in a particular configuration of Spirit is only a potentiality stands in need of an interruption that would allow for the emergence of a different configuration, one in which the potential becomes actual. Along these lines, what is being argued here is that Hegel remains a potentiality that belongs to modernity, but whose actualisation will require the comprehension and thus the sublation of modernity. In this sense, Hegel both is and is not modern. For a discussion of this strange temporality in relation to Benjamin’s *Trauerspiel*, see Benjamin (2013) op. cit. p. 147-48.

the reconfiguration undergone. Whilst comprehension of the other necessitates the reconfiguration of consciousness, the new shape of Spirit that emerges is not without its other⁴⁷⁴. If, in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel presents Spirit, in its various failed attempts to comprehend the thing-in-itself, as a ‘pathway of despair’, it is in having traversed this path that Spirit finds itself again⁴⁷⁵. What will be maintained is that to speak of the dialectic as a ‘way of despair’ can only be a claim about the past made from within the conditions of possibility that belong to modernity. Despite the periods and configurations of Spirit traversed, it is not as if each period in history suffers the same fruitless labour before finding itself. To assume the latter would be to render history itself (and not its recollection) a succession of triadic movements in which Spirit pronounces the ‘reconciling Yes!’⁴⁷⁶ in order to draw each movement to a close and signal a new configuration.

The claim, rather, is that the *Phenomenology* does not map onto linear history. The attribution of particular configurations to certain historical periods can only occur from within the conditions of possibility that pertain in any given present⁴⁷⁷.

Although Hegel introduces metaphysics into history, he does not simply historicise the metaphysical. As Simon Skempton writes, ‘the forms of consciousness are not punctual’⁴⁷⁸, which means they do not coincide with a particular time in history despite appearing at particular times. This non-synchronicity is precisely why metaphysics survives its apparent demise. What this suggests, to repeat Adorno’s claim invoked in the opening chapter, is that modernity is a quality, not a quantity. As a specific configuration of consciousness, it is not bound to a particular period in history. Nor, however, does this mean that modernity has ever been realised in history, or that its realisation cannot be revoked: we have never been modern, and yet, we are already modern. Although historical change is for Hegel predicated upon

⁴⁷⁴ As Rebecca Comay writes of actualisation (*Verwirklichung*), it ‘can mean nothing other than the deactivation of the existent and the reactivation and reenactment (in every sense) of the thwarted futures of the past’ (Comay, R. (2011) *Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 145). The movement beyond a Kantian present is predicated upon the inscription of non-being within being, which, at the same time, figures as the negation of the existent.

⁴⁷⁵ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 19

⁴⁷⁶ *ibid.* p. 409

⁴⁷⁷ Which suggests, moreover, that the movement and recollection of linear history is not concomitant with transformations of Spirit. Which is to say that a given present is marked by differing configurations of Spirit, the singularity in which it appears occurring only when that configuration is both comprehended and left behind. This is why modernity remains contested: it both is and is not, its determination predicated upon future comprehension.

⁴⁷⁸ Skempton, S. (2010) *Alienation After Derrida*, New York: Continuum, p. 56

conceptual labour, such labour need not run its full course in order for historical change to occur. Historical change is not commensurate with changes in consciousness to the extent that there is always a one-to-one relationship between them. Which is to say that the infanticide that accompanied, for example, the French Revolution (the revolution morphing into the Terror), is not the result of the actualisation of modernity, but its repudiation. This is why the present is marked by competing temporalities (the claims of past configurations lingering in the present): the conceptual labour that invoked them was brought to a premature close. Modernity figures not as a time period therefore, but as an intervention in the flow of time, whether circular or linear. It is what Walter Benjamin calls ‘now-time’ [Jetztzeit] in which the ‘bad infinite’ of the thesis-antithesis-synthesis (which failed to bury its dead), is interrupted⁴⁷⁹. To again pick up on Adorno’s motif, such an intervention necessitates the cutting of Spirit’s flesh, a form of self-mutilation whose disavowal leads to the reawakening of the forces of tradition as a means of returning to the safety of firm ground.

Early Negation: Going to One’s Ground

The very possibility of dialectical movement is predicated upon the opening of what has been named the ‘in-between’. In contrast to the organism, for whom the Idea and its realisation coincide immediately, the ‘formative movement’ of Spirit is marked by an opening between the penultimate and the ultimate. What insists between the emergence of the Idea (which is not mere thought, but rather a question or call that stirs Spirit into movement⁴⁸⁰), and its actualisation, is a space in which both the penultimate and ultimate are determined, such that the destiny of Spirit is never predestined. This space is not merely normative however because the movement to a different configuration of Spirit ‘dissolves’ [löst... auf], as Hegel suggests at the beginning of the *Phenomenology*, the structure of its previous world, which includes

⁴⁷⁹ To the extent that the lifting of the head from the mist of guilt occurs in tragedy rather than law, as Walter Benjamin maintains, it does not occur in linear time, but instead bursts such time open. Hegelian history, as a movement between the finite and the infinite, cannot be mapped onto the linear history of historicism, the latter a mere pathway of bad infinities. Dialectical movement does not occur in history, but is history, in a Hegelian sense.

⁴⁸⁰ In the *Differenzschrift*, Hegel describes this call as a demand that the particular raise itself to universality (Hegel, G.W.F. (1977a) *The Difference Between Fichte’s and Schelling’s System of Philosophy*, trans. Harris, H.S. & Cerf, W. Albany, New York: New York State University Press, p. 85).

the structure of normativity that, according to Robert Pippin, governs the Kantian present⁴⁸¹. It is within this ‘in-between’ space that being is not simply determined on the basis of epistemological contestation over the intelligible, but dirempted in the ‘qualitative leap’ that accompanies dialectical movement, Hegel’s notion of the ‘knotted line’ suggestive of this radical shift to an unforeseeable world. Again, the Hegelian future is something ‘unknown’ [eines Unbekannten], not the continuation of a Kantian consciousness already apparent in the present.

For Hegel, the opening of such a space, which does not merely pertain, but must be recovered, is predicated upon what he names negation, which not only intervenes in, but also allows for, the movement from immediacy to determinacy, or potentiality to actuality and the release of the otherness of the other. Negation occurs not once, but twice in the unfolding of the dialectic. The initial, or early negation, which disturbs the given, is the work of the Understanding, which Hegel describes as ‘the most astonishing and mightiest of powers, or rather the absolute power [absoluten Macht]’⁴⁸². If the totality of social labour produces a ‘vicious circle’, culture reverting to the mythic structure of efficient causality, the power of the Understanding works to interrupt such circuitry. In the *Phenomenology* Hegel describes the self-enclosed circle as ‘an immediate relationship’ in which the given appears as unified⁴⁸³. In immediacy, the moments of the dialectic appear to be held together, a unity that precludes the figuring of the non-being that the given is predicated upon. However, via the power of the negative, what Hegel calls the ‘energy of thought’, the moments are detached from one another such that what was ‘bound’ [gebundene] and ‘actual’ [Wirklich] becomes what he names an ‘accident’ [Akzidentelle]. The latter, he continues, ‘attains an existence of its own [eigenes Dasein] and a separate freedom [abgesonderte Freiheit]’⁴⁸⁴. No longer ‘circumscribed’ [von seinem Umfange getrennte], but also ‘non-actual’ [Unwirklich], the ‘accident’ emerges as a particular that does not accord with the unity of the given. It is, as the German verb *absondern* suggests, secreted from the whole. This initial, but by no means lesser negation, which Hegel describes as the ‘activity of separating’ [Tätigkeit des Scheidens], has

⁴⁸¹ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 6.

⁴⁸² *ibid.* p. 18

⁴⁸³ *ibid.*

⁴⁸⁴ *ibid.* p. 18-19, translation amended.

the effect of dissolving what appeared as unified, of drawing it out of the context in which its representation appeared to capture its being.

The absolute power Hegel attributes to the Understanding suggests it is of a different order to the Kantian faculty, or rather, that Kant did not grasp the effect of such a faculty. Hegel's Understanding, which engages in what he describes as 'the analysis of a representation' [Analysieren einer Vorstellung], 'is nothing but the sublation [Aufheben] of the form of its familiar being [Bekanntseins]'⁴⁸⁵. The Understanding, for Kant, is portrayed instead as producing the representations that appear in immediacy despite being mediated by the faculties of cognition. Its role is to facilitate, to ensure the certainty of the given. By contrast, the seemingly benign Understanding is for Hegel an agent of destruction. Offering what he terms a 'table of contents', the three-fold synthesis carried out in the name of the representation does not unify, but rather, brings the immediate unity to 'absolute dismemberment' [absoluten Zerrissenheit]⁴⁸⁶. The analysis carried out by the Understanding breaks the Idea or universal 'into its original elements', and 'returns to its moments'⁴⁸⁷. What Kant failed to recognise is that the syntheses performed by the Understanding render the familiar unfamiliar⁴⁸⁸. In Hegel's words:

In regards to cognition [Erkennen], the commonest way in which we deceive ourselves [Selbsttäuschung] or others is by assuming something as familiar, and accepting it on that account... Subject and object, God, Nature, Understanding, sensibility, and so on, are, sight unseen [unbesehen], taken to be [zugrunde gelegt] familiar [bekannt] and valid [Gültiges], and made into fixed points from which to start and which to return⁴⁸⁹.

⁴⁸⁵ *ibid.* p. 18, translation amended.

⁴⁸⁶ *ibid.* p. 19, translation amended. Importantly however, dismembering the immediate cannot itself occur immediately. Which is to say that even as a moment in the dialectic, the initial negation, which will at a later point be shown to be not first, but concomitant with the negation of negation, is itself predicated upon the labour of the concept such that dismembering the representation is a process that can be neither carried out by the individual, nor is it given.

⁴⁸⁷ *ibid.* p. 18, translation amended.

⁴⁸⁸ This shift in the status of the Understanding is, Adorno argues, the result of Hegel's absolute, as opposed to subjective, idealism. He writes, 'at its extreme, identical becomes the agent of the nonidentical' (Adorno (1993) *op. cit.* p. 69), which suggests consciousness, despite the violence it visits upon the given, is no longer, in Hegel's words, the 'melting pot and the fire by which the indifferent manifoldness is consumed and reduced to unity' (Hegel (2010) *op. cit.* p. 86). As will be shown, in pushing the identity thinking of the Understanding to its limits, not only objects, but also subject is brought to 'absolute dismemberment'.

⁴⁸⁹ Hegel (1977) *op. cit.* p. 18, translation amended.

By dismembering what had hitherto appeared as unified, objects come to figure in their moments, which dissolves the familiarity of the given, including the fixed points from which Spirit sets out and to which it returns. What Hegel's argument depends upon, of course, is that such moments are not mere undifferentiated and indifferent parts. As will be argued below, precisely because that which is given has a history, and history is for Hegel marked by differing configurations of Spirit, its moments cannot be approached via a positivism that reduces the constituent parts to the same. This is why Hegel's Understanding is not circumscribable within Kantian limits; it invokes a plural being by allowing for the co-presence of difference; the qualitatively different moments that the given is predicated upon manifesting in the present in their being torn loose from the whole, despite, at this point, remaining merely incommensurate, not yet actual. In this, an opening between the concept and its realisation, between universal and particular, is exposed.

To return the given to its moments entails not the discovery, but the production of the other. In the separation of the other provoked by dismemberment, it no longer figures as a particular in Spirit's schema. In the domain of Spirit, the negation of immediacy becomes an 'insertion' that disrupts the closed circuitry of the given. The organism, by contrast, undergoes 'a continuous process of changes', and yet, it is the 'very contrary of change', being what Hegel describes as a '*vis conversatrix* of the organic principle'⁴⁹⁰. There is nothing internal to the organism that mediates its concept and its realisation because nothing that belongs to the organism 'inserts' [eindrängen] itself into the 'in-between'; its existence is necessarily in 'conformity' [Angemessenheit] with the nature of its 'genus' [Keim]⁴⁹¹. As Žižek has written, although the organic is often 'perturbed', it remains 'at peace with itself' because its perturbations arrive externally⁴⁹². In contrast, the circuitry of Spirit is marked, in the tearing loose of an 'accident' that becomes, in that tearing, non-actual, by a negativity that, as will become important, is internal to it. Žižek suggests that Hegel frames such an 'insertion' in terms of a 'monstrous' [ungeheuerlich] Christ⁴⁹³, who figures not

⁴⁹⁰ Hegel (1956) op. cit. p. 55

⁴⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁴⁹² Žižek, S. (2012) *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*, London: Verso, p. 233

⁴⁹³ Hegel (1956) op. cit. p. 55

merely as the ‘in-between’, but also determinates the hitherto fixed points, the universal and particular, between which it emerges. It is here, in this ‘broken middle’ (Rose), this ‘plastic’ space (Malabou), this ‘creaturely’ domain (Santner) of the ‘imbecile’ (Žižek), that otherness resides⁴⁹⁴.

As will be argued in what is to follow, the self ‘insertion’ that is the initial negation has the effect of determining not only that which belongs, but also that which exceeds the circumscribed boundaries determined with the arrival (which is actually produced by social labour) of the ‘monstrous’ [Ungeheuerlich]. Negation, as Genevieve Lloyd points out, is for Hegel, in following Spinoza and the argument he formulates in *Letter on the Infinite*, always a determination because affirmation necessitates the exclusion of other content⁴⁹⁵. To not belong, to be non-actual, in the same regard as the rabble is to be determined as non-being. This is what Geulen describes as the flesh of the ‘dead letter’⁴⁹⁶, which, in the dismemberment of the given, sees both the One and the other, in Hegel’s words, ‘deprived of life [entlebt] and Spirit [entgeistert]’, battered and ‘flayed’ [geschunden], so that what was immediately perceived as a unified object becomes mere ‘lifeless’ [lebloosen] knowledge ‘wrapped’ [umgenommen] in the skin of its other⁴⁹⁷.

The initial negation or ‘insertion’ performed by the Understanding kills what appears as organic by separating the non-being that being depends upon. In this separation,

⁴⁹⁴ And the list goes on: Freud’s ‘unheimlich’, Benjamin’s ‘stairwells and corners’, Desmond’s ‘metaxological’, Heidegger’s ‘clearing’, Arendt’s ‘council system’, Kafka’s ‘primordial swamp’, Balestrini’s ‘unseen’, etc. Although there are obviously clear differences between these terms, what they all gesture towards is a space in which ‘something can happen’ that transforms or reconfigures, the retroactively determined ‘original germ’ that informs life, a transformation that is predicated (although to a far lesser extent in Heidegger) on what in the opening chapter was named relationality, the mutual determination of relations in relating, following Andrew Benjamin’s two senses of the word (see Benjamin, A. (2015) *Towards a Relational Ontology*, Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 1). What will become important in approaching such openings or spaces is the extent to which two problems can be dialectically attended to: on the one hand, Aristotelianism, on the other, haptocentrism. These two dangers will form the core of the conclusion to the thesis when Kant is reintroduced into the work of Hegel. For the two poles of this problem see Ruda, F. (2016) “Dialectical Materialism and the Danger of Aristotelianism”, *Slavoj Žižek and Dialectical Materialism*, eds. Ruda, F. & Hamza, A. UK: Palgrave Macmillan, and Colebrook, C. (2013) “Hypo-Hapto-Neuro-Mysticism”, *Parrhesia*, no. 18

⁴⁹⁵ Lloyd, G. (2013) *Enlightenment Shadows*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 129. See also, Stern, R. “‘Determination is negation’: The Adventures of a Doctrine from Spinoza to Hegel to the British Idealists”, *Hegel Bulletin*, (2016), vol. 37, no. 1 pp. 29-52

⁴⁹⁶ Geulen, E. (1991), “A Matter of Tradition”, *Telos* 89 (fall), p. 166

⁴⁹⁷ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 31

both the One and the other start to ‘decompose’ [verfault]⁴⁹⁸, or become what Ruda describes as ‘undead’⁴⁹⁹. The ‘accident’ does not remain a mere particular separated from the whole, but is instead brought to a state of foulness, the refuse [Spreu, or Treber] that survives the Bacchanalian revel reappearing in the sober light of morning with the effects of the previous evening imprinted upon it. This is why Spirit or civil society, in its initial blurry eyed reawakening, cannot recognise the other as its own (being either blind or shamed), and why the particular exceeds the schema with which the given is consumed. The separation of the givens’ moments is at the same time their becoming other. In Spirit’s bending back upon itself, the past that manifests does not merely accord with a configuration of consciousness that pertains in the present therefore, but evinces a plural being that extends the ontological beyond given limits. Dismemberment is, to draw on the Andrew Benjamin term, a process of ‘othering’ in which the familiar is rendered unfamiliar or the intelligible becomes unintelligible on the terms that pertained prior to the insertion⁵⁰⁰.

In contrast to the ‘pure beholding’ [reines Anschauen] that marks the approach of the spectator, whom, on Heidegger’s terms, ‘would never be able to discover [entdecken] anything like what is threatening [Bedrohliches]’⁵⁰¹, the putridness of ‘non-being’, this ‘monstrosity’, precludes its sublation via the conditions that pertain in the given configuration of Spirit⁵⁰². As a theme that Comay frames as central to the reading of Hegel, the ‘non-actual’ proves indigestible because Spirit cannot stomach its other⁵⁰³. As Hegel writes, ‘death, if that is what we want to call this non-actuality, is of all things the most dreadful [Furchtbarste]’⁵⁰⁴. It is the dreadfulness of the non-actual

⁴⁹⁸ Hegel, G.W.F (1991) *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Wood, A. trans. Nisbet, H.B. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 53

⁴⁹⁹ Ruda (2011) op. cit. p. 173

⁵⁰⁰ Benjamin, A. (2015) op. cit. p. 157

⁵⁰¹ Heidegger, M. (1996) *Being and Time*, trans. Stambaugh, J. New York: State University of New York Press, p. 130

⁵⁰² Dennis Schmidt has argued that the figure of Antigone, which both Hegel and Heidegger draw on, is just such a ‘monstrous’ insertion that opens up an ethical domain in which, ‘conflicts emerge from a region that given ethical terms cannot grasp and that cannot be grasped by the conceptual language of philosophy’ (Schmidt, D. (2015), “The Monstrous, Catastrophe, and Ethical Life: Hegel, Heidegger and Antigone”, *Philosophy Today*, vol. 59, no. 1, p. 62). Both authors understand, he suggests, ‘the real contribution of *Antigone* to be found in the exposure of the deep antagonism, violence, and incommensurability that opens the space of ethical and political responsibility’ (ibid.).

⁵⁰³ See in particular her “Hegel’s Last Words: Mourning and Melancholia at the End of the Phenomenology”, in (2013), *The End(s) of History: Questioning the Stakes of Historical Reason*, eds. Nichols, J. & Swiffen, A. Routledge, as well as Comay (2011) op. cit.

⁵⁰⁴ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 19

that causes Spirit, in this initial negation, to lose ‘itself in the fixed non-identity of its thoughts’, and become ‘caught up in its opposite’⁵⁰⁵. And although the language Hegel uses to describe the Understanding and its attendant violence (‘lifeless’, ‘pigeon-hole’, ‘instrument’, ‘table of contents’, ‘conjuring trick’, ‘standard’) suggests of mere gratuitous destruction, its work remains absolutely necessary because it is the Understanding that breaks open not only the closed circuitry of the given, but also the subject. To recall Marx’s line from the opening chapter, ‘the world would not be many-sided without the many one-sidednesses’ that produce *Dasein* via a process of circumscription and negation⁵⁰⁶.

The ‘insertion’ carried out by Hegel’s Understanding, in contrast to Kant, is of such force that the subject itself is dismembered or falls apart. Hegel adopts, at several points in the *Phenomenology*, the formulation *zu Grunde gehen*. Of particular interest to the present discussion is the following from the *Preface*:

Since the Concept [Begriff] is the object’s own self, which presents [darstellt] itself as the *coming-to-be of the object*, it is not a reposing [ruhende] subject inertly [unbewegt] supporting the accidents; it is, on the contrary, the self-moving Concept which takes its determinations back into itself. In this movement the reposing subject itself perishes [geht... selbst zugrunde]⁵⁰⁷.

As Žižek points out, the term has a double register, suggesting not only of disintegrating, perishing or falling apart, but also, ‘to go to, to reach, one’s ground’⁵⁰⁸. In their putridness, the moments separated by the initial negation perish, which is precisely that which enables the subject to reach its ground. If, as a ‘pathway of despair’, Spirit’s various and more frenzied attempts to know, to grasp the world, to bring it to hand, is one of increasing alienation in which the initial separation of subject and object (repeated *ad nauseam* as a means of distinguishing the domain of culture from that of nature), becomes only more acute, rendering these moments unpalatable figures as a means of recompense. The latter however cannot be thought as the recovery of what was initially lost. Again, what is recovered is not an origin,

⁵⁰⁵ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 39

⁵⁰⁶ Marx, (2010), “Debates on the Law of Thefts of Wood”, *Marx and Engels Collected Works: Vol. 1, Karl Marx 1835-43*, Lawrence & Wishart, p. 233

⁵⁰⁷ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 37, translation amended.

⁵⁰⁸ Žižek, S. “Hegel and Shitting”, *Hegel and the Infinite*, op. cit. p. 230

but the spontaneity of social labour. To go to one's ground is to open the domain of the 'in-between', which will become the very means with which Spirit, in 'absolute dismemberment', finds itself again.

For Hegel, as he makes clear in the *Differenzschrift*, there is what he names a 'need' [Bedürfnis] of philosophy⁵⁰⁹. Again, this claim, which the use of the genitive points to, has a double register: philosophy is needy, 'striving' [streben] towards totality and the reparation of its diremptions (which suggests it cannot remain in dismemberment); and it is needed, the overcoming of such diremptions predicated upon the opening made by negative insertion in which the very diremptions that philosophy strives to overcome are exposed. To dismember is not merely to interrupt the closed circuitry that effaces the other, it is also a condition upon which an opening towards the other depends. For there to be a thoroughgoing totality, the false totality that is reified social labour must be negated, which demands, as will be argued, not the healing of wounds, but their inflicting or exposing, which tears the other loose from the whole and negates the 'original germ' that informed the reified totality⁵¹⁰. It is here, in this moment of 'absolute dismemberment', that nature makes it return. The speculative need, Hegel suggests, is for a philosophy 'that will recompense nature [versöhnt und die Vernunft selbst in eine Übereinstimmung mit der Natur gesetzt wird] for the mishandling [Mißhandlungen] that it suffered [leidet] in Kant and Fichte's systems...' ⁵¹¹. Immediately, what is signalled is that recompense is paid to the other, not to the One. And yet, as will be shown, it is only via such recompense that Spirit itself can recover the spontaneity of its labouring, and thus obtain something like self-determination.

⁵⁰⁹ Hegel (1977a) op. cit. p. 83

⁵¹⁰ What is more, such dismemberment also suggests of the dissolution of the unified image in which phenomena has its being in the Critical Philosophy. The image or symbolon is intended as the unification of subject and object. Insofar as it appears in immediacy however, the unity portrayed by the image occurs on terms determined by consciousness, that is, it is absent of otherness. The initial negation delineated here thus figures as the negation of the image. It does not end in imageless experience however, but rather the timely image becoming untimely.

⁵¹¹ *ibid.* p. 83

Late Negation: Laying Hold of the Divine

For Hegel, the recompense to be paid by speculative philosophy necessitates not only the dismemberment of the given (which figures as the negation of the given and which invokes the subject's going to ground), but also the moment of comprehension in which Spirit reaches over its other in order to form a new totality. This latter negation figures in the determination of the 'big Other' insofar as it transforms the conditions of possibility that pertain in the present. Which is to say that the relation of non-relations invoked between the One and the other also necessitates the transformation of the objective processes that determine the 'is'. For Žižek, this means that the 'big Other' is in fact worldly, that is, not merely constituting, but also constituted, being an after-effect of the labour of the concept and the negation of the negation⁵¹². Rather than a transcendent, reified and fetishized authority, the 'big Other' is effected in its being comprehended, a comprehension informed by the negation of the negation.

The moment of comprehension, to follow an argument found in the work of Rebecca Comay, also opens up the possibility of moving from melancholia to mourning, the 'pathway of despair', in which, as Žižek puts it, 'the in-itself continually eludes the subject', all content revealed as the subject's own phantasms, reaching an end⁵¹³. And although Spirit going to its ground opens up the possibility of this late negation, to dwell in the melancholia of dismemberment and aporia is to maintain the 'big Other' in its indeterminate other-worldliness. As an *avant la lettre* critique of what Gillian Rose frames as the ecclesiology of post-structuralist positions that remain dichotomous precisely because of their disavowal of 'the actuality of any oppositions' (all limits reduced to 'unconceptualised aporias' and thus unable to be negotiated with, *negotium* ceding its place to *otium*, labour to 'free time'), Hegel writes the following:

[I]t is not the interest of such sentimentalities [gefühlvollen Reflexion] really to rise above those depressing emotions [über diese Empfindungen zu erheben]; and to solve the enigmas of Providence [die Rätsel der Vorsehung... zu lösen] which the

⁵¹² Žižek (2012) op. cit. p. 233

⁵¹³ *ibid.* p. 387

considerations that occasioned them present. It is essential to their character to find a gloomy satisfaction [trübselig zu gefallen] in the empty and fruitless sublimities [leeren unfruchtbaren Erhabenheiten] of that negative result ...⁵¹⁴.

The need of philosophy, in both registers, is such that philosophy cannot remain in the sentimental mode of the initial negation, subsisting on a 'gloomy satisfaction' alone. What Rose names the 'dialectic of nihilism', which dwells in an initial negation alone, 'disallows... any conceptuality or means of comprehension'⁵¹⁵ by effacing the extremities of universal and particular. Philosophies of finitude, she suggests, are philosophies of 'Revelation' insofar as the singular, which for Hegel is a concrete universal not merely given, but produced via the labour of the concept, becomes an event or incursion which in its supposed singularity is taken to be without relation⁵¹⁶. It is in this sense that post-structuralism, in Rose's reckoning, is ecclesiastical, the arrival of the singular a matter of the 'big Other' despite the avowed death of God narrative. This means, in turn, that the two extremities, universal and particular, remain unmoved; there being both no concrete law, the singular without universal, and absolute law, the singular unable to negotiate with the law in its abstractness, such that the particular is absolutely determined by it. The law, in its indeterminacy, and without relation, becomes more acutely lawful such that change becomes fated, and medieval superstition re-emerges in the form of the event, which appears without rhyme or reason.

There must be instead, on the basis of a 'need', a movement in which 'Reason lifts itself [erhebt... sich] into speculation [Spekulation]'⁵¹⁷. Insofar as this raising is a form of negation that belongs to Reason, the latter must 'hold fast' [festzuhalten] to 'what is dead'⁵¹⁸, rather than 'taking leave' [ausgehen] of the phenomenal, as is the case in the Critical Philosophy, the latter succumbing to the same problem Rose identifies with post-structuralism. In disconnecting itself from the phenomenal, Kant's faculty of Reason is a mere empty form, which, Hegel argues, reproduces the pigeon-hole effect of the Understanding in its relating to objects. In the Critical

⁵¹⁴ Hegel (1956) op. cit. p. 21

⁵¹⁵ Rose, G. (1992) *The Broken Middle: Out of Our Ancient Society*, Blackwell Publishers, p. xii

⁵¹⁶ *ibid.* p. xiii

⁵¹⁷ Hegel (1977a) op. cit. p. 88

⁵¹⁸ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 19

Philosophy, Reason is a mere second-order form, the emaciating Understanding becoming an emaciated Reason. In miming the Understanding, Reason is a *Caput Mortuum*, a ‘dead-head’, that leaves the given unmoved. Rather than ‘laying hold of the divine’, Kantian Reason, as a form of Christian humility that for Hegel is really ‘inward pride and great self-conceit’⁵¹⁹, finds its satisfaction in drawing regulative principles from the dead objects of cognition, what Adrian Johnston describes, in echoing Rose, but also Lacan and Adorno’s reading of Kant, as a ‘miserable self-effacing masochism’⁵²⁰.

In the absolute separation of the phenomenal and noumenal, the former becomes a domain of spectres. Spirit, as Hegel argues in the *Phenomenology*, is, in its Kantian form, overcome by ‘superstition’ [Aberglaube], the death that befalls the prior configuration of consciousness leaving what were idolised objects emptied of their meaning⁵²¹. However, in failing to bend back upon itself, to take the anamnestic turn, that is, in its being Kantian, Spirit ‘knows not how’ the idolised became abject. It is as if the most mundane of acts, the smallest movement, what Hegel describes as giving a comrade a shove ‘with the elbow’, brings the entire edifice of the prevailing order crashing to the ground⁵²². Despite the world-historical change that occurred with the emergence of the Critical Philosophy and the time of the new, the loss of the idolised, in which experience itself is transformed, is not recognised by Kant as an after-effect of, what is for Hegel, a reconfiguration of consciousness that could only occur by way of the intellect being determined by the phenomenal. Far from being an otherworldly occurrence, the ‘bang! crash!’ that signals the downfall of (a certain kind of) idolatry is, in light of Hegel’s collapsing of the *absolute* distinction between phenomenal and noumenal, not only worldly, but also the work of social labour. As Nietzsche suggests in *The Gay Science*, in reference to the death of God, ‘... they have done it themselves’⁵²³. What remains hidden in the Critical Philosophy is a potential that despite already having pertained could not be recognised as present.

⁵¹⁹ Hegel, G.W.F. (1896) *Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Vol. III*, trans. Haldane, E.S & Simson, F.H, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. p. 257

⁵²⁰ Johnston, A. (2014a) *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism: Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers*, Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, p. 313

⁵²¹ See the section “The Struggle of the Enlightenment with Superstition”, Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 329

⁵²² *ibid.* p. 332

⁵²³ Nietzsche, F. (2008), *The Gay Science*, ed. Williams, B. trans. Nauckhoff, J. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 120

In the Critical Philosophy the dismemberment brought about by the Understanding's analysing is not yet comprehended as an executioner of idols. The lingering belief in the supernatural attributes what is, at least on one side of the Rhine, a 'bloodless' revolution that rendered Spirit's previous shape a 'dead form', to that which lies beyond the phenomenal world⁵²⁴. As Rebecca Comay has pointed out, the movement from faith to insight that accompanies the Enlightenment is identified by Hegel as the invocation of melancholia⁵²⁵, which suggests the Critical Philosophy is something of a *skandalon*, guarding against scepticism whilst at the same time banishing the objective from experience. In the emergence of a disconnected faculty of Reason, not only the givenness of objects is lost, but also the law. This is the moment of empty abstraction that marks both the Critical Philosophy and the Terror, a moment in which not just concrete objects, but also the divine, become abject in the separation of universal and particular. The ease of cutting a head of a cabbage or taking a drink of water, to draw on Hegel's famous analogy, follows from the faculty of Reason miming the violent form of the Understanding. In their opaque emptiness, neither universal nor particular, neither law nor objects, figure as cause such that events and deeds appear fated. In this, the given remains given, being the after-effect of a 'big Other' that consciousness cannot lay its hands upon.

Kant goes wrong, according to Hegel, by conceiving of the diremptions occasioned by the Understanding's gift for naming and categorisation as a means of evading the temporal flux of the phenomenal. By dismembering the given, Reason is no longer beholden to it. For Hegel, conversely, such dirempting or wounding does not occasion transcendence, but a reconfiguration of consciousness that allows the given to figure in its otherness. Which is to say that Hegel's notion of Reason does not replicate the Understanding and remain an external instrument trained upon a world given by a particular measure or standard. In Žižek's wording, Reason does not 'faithfully reproduce... the dynamic complexity of reality by outlining the fluid network of relations within which every identity is located'⁵²⁶. Reason is not

⁵²⁴ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 332

⁵²⁵ Comay (2011) op. cit. p. 63

⁵²⁶ Žižek (2012) p. 275

regulative, and nor does it draw from contradictory particulars a universal that subsumes difference.

As Adrian Johnston has argued, Kant's benign Reason fails to satisfy what is named in the *Earliest System-Program of German Idealism*, 'creative Spirit' [schöpferischen Geist]⁵²⁷. Johnston suggests that in the absence of a God-like Absolute, the only divinity left is Spirit, which, in turn, suggests that the labour of the concept, the negation of the negation, 'cannot but sometimes "lay hold of the Divine"'⁵²⁸. In contradistinction to Kantian humility, consciousness, in Hegelian form, is raised to the level of totality, which demands conceiving of the speculative as a determinant of the universal. 'Thinking', Hegel suggests, 'did not need to fall into the *misology*... of acting against itself' by returning to the safe confines of immediacy, which figures as a renunciation of thinking, Spirit's 'unalloyed self-hood'⁵²⁹. For Hegel, thinking figures as recompense for the melancholia that arrives with the time of the new, and yet, what is gained is not the transcending of dialectical flux, but a space of allowing in which objects can figure in their otherness. What is recovered is not something positive, but difference, or 'non-being'. The experience to come, which such recovery gestures towards (to the extent that modernity has not yet been actualised), has thus never been.

Hegel's Spirit is not only engaged in dismemberment, it is also speculative. In contrast to the initial negation, which, 'sticks to fixed oppositions, being unable to grasp their self-mediation', and which results 'in a mad dance of self-destruction in which all fixed determinations are dissolved'⁵³⁰, the negation of the negation figures as a determinant of the thing-in-itself, able to touch the divine, to draw on Hegel's phrasing. For Žižek, Hegel's Reason is not absolutely separated from the Understanding. Rather, it negates the latter and the noumenal beyond to which it gestures. The recompense that this late negation is to invoke brings Spirit back down to earth by rendering the 'non-being' that is being's other both experiential and ontological. To 'hold fast' to both being and non-being is to lift the phenomenal itself into speculation, which Kant strictly forbids by asserting that the Understanding

⁵²⁷ Johnston (2014a) p. 311-12

⁵²⁸ *ibid.* p. 313

⁵²⁹ Hegel (2010) *op. cit.* p. 39

⁵³⁰ Žižek (2012) *op. cit.* p. 364

cannot 'follow' Reason in its taking leave. That Kantian consciousness kills does not necessitate a transfiguration in which an otherworldly beyond is opened up, space made for faith. Despite Spirit finding itself in absolute dismemberment, this self does not, insofar as it finds itself again, transcend the phenomenal⁵³¹. The loss inflicted by the Understanding, which renders both the One and its other putrid, is not redeemed via a transcendental addition furnished by Reason. 'There is nothing in thinking [Denken]', Hegel contends, 'that has not been in sensation, in experience. It must be considered a misunderstanding [Mißverstand] if speculative philosophy were to refuse to accept [nicht zugeben] this proposition'⁵³². For Hegel, this proposition can also be turned around; there is nothing in experience that is not thinking. Necessarily, Reason and Understanding, the phenomenal and that which takes leave of the phenomenal, stand in a relation of mutual determination. To conceive otherwise is to remain within the logic (and givenness) of the Kantian Understanding.

As a consequence, and as Žižek writes:

Reason is not more but less than Understanding... [It] is therefore not another faculty supplementing Understanding's "one-sidedness": the very idea that there is something (the core of the substantial content of the analyzed thing) which eludes Understanding, a trans-rational Beyond out of its reach, is [its] fundamental illusion⁵³³.

What separates the Understanding from Reason is thus the latter's recognition that the work of both is substantial rather than merely phantasmagoric, pertaining only in a domain of regulative principles, limited to the furnishing of an ought or producing mere appearances. Despite its apparent concreteness, it is the very finitude of the Understanding that opens up a noumenal domain to which the subject remains barred.

[T]he illusion of Understanding is that its own analytical power – the power to make "an accident as such . . . obtain an existence all its own, gain freedom and

⁵³¹ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 19

⁵³² Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 36, trans. amended.

⁵³³ Žižek (2012) op. cit. p. 276

independence on its own account" – is only an "abstraction": something external to "true reality" which persists out there intact in its inaccessible fullness⁵³⁴.

As not more but less than Understanding, the negation of the negation performed by Reason subtracts from the presence of an object by inscribing lack within its very being. This is what Žižek means when he claims that 'an icon thus points beyond itself to the divine presence that dwells within it'⁵³⁵. To negate the noumenal beyond is not to render the spiritual empirical. Rather, the 'more' of the latter that Adorno points to is comprehended as pertaining in the thing-in-itself, an entirely earthly existence.

The moments of non-being exposed in dismemberment are not external to things-in-themselves, but internal. The 'accidents', which find their own 'separate freedom' by being torn apart by the violence of the Understanding, are rendered constitutive of things-in-themselves via this late negation. Reason does not supplement the Understanding, there is no conceptual profiting, as Comay puts it, from what proves to be only a momentary expenditure⁵³⁶. Rather, Hegel's Reason comprehends the various moments separated in the initial negation as necessary constituents of the being of an object.

The possibility of the latter is predicated upon grasping the self-mediation of what appears to be contradictory, which, Hegel claims, necessitates the conditions of possibility that pertained prior to the initial negation undergoing a process of transformation, which, to repeat the citation from chapter 2, renders Spirit 'entirely different from [ganz andere], indeed even opposed to [engegengesetzte], the way one is already'⁵³⁷. The *Aufhebung*, as sublation, does not invoke a movement beyond negativity therefore, but rather, both the going to one's ground that dissolves the positive moments that culture has instilled as Spirit's past, and the reinscription of the plurality that such dissolution invokes into the very being of the thing-in-itself, an

⁵³⁴ *ibid.* p. 277

⁵³⁵ *ibid.* p. 853. Such an icon is an untimely rather than timely image.

⁵³⁶ Comay (2011) *op. cit.* p. 124

⁵³⁷ Hegel (2010) *op. cit.* p. 47

inscription that demands the reorientation of consciousness towards its other, which, at the same time, produces the other.

The recompense fashioned by Reason from out of the refuse of the Bacchanalian revel does not restore being to presence, but transforms it by the reconfiguration of the conditions that allow. It is on the basis of this re-orientation that the otherness of the other is released. To undo what was done there must be a process of divestiture. For if Spirit, in its bending back, merely consumes the moments of which it is an after-effect, Absolute Knowing becomes absolute presence, Spirit converting into what Adorno referred to as the 'belly turned mind'. As Žižek has pointed out, the very possibility of the reconfiguration of Spirit depends upon the discharge of that which has been consumed. The recovery of nature, in other words, is predicated upon its being abrogated. Release or excretion is, Žižek argues, just as fundamental to the dialectic as the digestion of the past. The 'process of sublation', he writes, 'can only reach its end by the countermove [of release or abrogation - CW]⁵³⁸, which suggests that the latter is internal to the *Aufhebung*, the completion of the dialectic predicated upon the release of what was consumed.

The recompense to be paid to the other comes in the form of a release from epistemological grasp. Writing of the void that the late negation renders constitutive of the thing-in-itself, Comay suggests that 'rather than trying to plug the gap through the accumulation of conceptual surplus value, Hegel sets out to demystify the phantasms we find to fill it; the dialectic is in this sense best understood as a relentless counterfetishistic practice'⁵³⁹. There is therefore no reconciliation in which Reason puts back together that which the Understanding tears apart. When Hegel suggests that breaking an idea up into its elements 'means returning upon its moments', Spirit must return, in its bitter labouring, to the essential non-being, the gaps and distortions, that mark the thing-in-itself. As Hegel writes, the gap between subject and object is a 'lack' [Mangel] that does not pertain between them, but which is their 'soul' [Seele] or 'that which moves them'⁵⁴⁰. Indeed, in the discussion of 'being' and 'nothing' in the *Science of Logic*, Hegel makes the claim that the very relation between the two is

⁵³⁸ Žižek, S. "Hegel and Shitting", *Hegel and the Infinite*, op. cit. p. 223

⁵³⁹ Comay (2011) op. cit. p. 125

⁵⁴⁰ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 21, trans. amended.

in fact a non-relation. Or, to put it otherwise, a relating of non-relations, which precedes any dialectical interaction between separate entities precisely because the relating is internal to what would otherwise be taken to be things that relate. Moreover, the preceding is also persists beyond dialectical interaction precisely because the determinate negation that their interacting invokes misses the mark so to speak. Hegel describes this lack as ‘nothing, purely on its own account, negation devoid of any relations [beziehungslose Verneinung] - what could also be expressed if one so wished merely by ‘not’ [Nicht]’⁵⁴¹. Both objects, and subject as object, are marked by this *Nicht*, which suggests of an irreducible plurality at the ontological level. Negation does not act upon something positive, and nor does it restore positivity via the negation of the negation. And although this ‘non-being’ precedes the relating of constituted singulars, it is nonetheless only recovered and reinscribed into the object by way of the negation of negation that defines the relating of Understanding and Reason, the former dismembering, the latter comprehending the thing-in-itself. In contrast to Kant, the lack that marks the subject’s comprehension of the objective suggests not of a subjective weakness, but of what is internal to the thing-in-itself. ‘What appears to us as our inability to know the thing’, Žižek writes, ‘indicates a crack in the thing itself, so that our very failure to reach the full truth is the indicator of truth’⁵⁴². As the dialectical reversal *par excellence*, what seemingly precludes comprehension becomes the very means of knowing the thing-in-itself as marked by a nothing that is less than nothing.

It is thus the interaction of the two forms of negation, or Understanding and Reason, that dismembers the unity of the given, exposes the non-being upon which that unity was predicated, and reinscribes this otherness into the thing-in-itself as the ‘not’ that is not the negation of ‘being’, but suggests instead of the co-presence of ontological difference⁵⁴³. Writing on Agamben’s work on early Hegel, Andrew Hass suggests

⁵⁴¹ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, in Houlgate, S. (2006) *The Opening of Hegel’s Logic: From Being to Infinity*, Indiana: Purdue University Press, p. 195. It is here that Hegel distinguishes ‘non-being’ [Nichtsein] from ‘nothing’ [Nicht], the latter better expressing the sense in which it is not just the negation of ‘being’ that Hegel is concerned with, but that which is prior to any relating of constituted singulars. As noted earlier in the piece however, I have preferred to use ‘non-being’ in order to render it commensurate with Marx’s use of ‘Unwesen’.

⁵⁴² Žižek (2012) op. cit. p. 17

⁵⁴³ As Žižek writes, the transcendental standpoint, which invokes a gap between subject and object, and thus between the subject and its comprehension of itself as object, ‘is in a sense irreducible, for one cannot look “objectively” at oneself and locate oneself in reality; and the task is to *think this*

that charting this ‘pathway of despair’ figures as a means of maintaining or protecting (and rendering experiential) Eleusinian silence, the negativity or lack that language cannot positively capture, but can circle around. The *Phenomenology*, Hass goes on to argue, ‘is a making transparent of that protection, a transparency that is a mediation’⁵⁴⁴. The negation of negation disinters, but also produces, the non-being upon which being is predicated. In turn, the self that Spirit returns to is neither commensurate with prior configuration, nor a mere image, in the sense that its conditions of possibility now allow for otherness⁵⁴⁵.

To return to the notion of the rabble, what it gestures towards is not an absence whose recovery would make the social totality whole again, but an ontology of lack in which the void is produced anew, and thus singularly, in every dialectic. Hegel writes that:

The vanishing [Verschwindende] itself must... be regarded [zu betrachten] as essential [Wesentlich], not as something fixed [Festen], cut off [abgeschnitten] from the True, and left lying who knows where outside it, any more than the True is to be regarded as something on the other side, a reposing, dead positive [ruhende, tote Positive]⁵⁴⁶.

What manifests as counternatural is to be neither excluded from the True [die Wahre], nor rendered fixed [fest]. In the Bacchanalian revel, no member, to recall Hegel’s claim, ‘is not drunk’⁵⁴⁷. For Hegel however, the inescapability of intoxication does not end in absolute presence, because just as each member is ‘dissolved’ [auflöst], and thus ‘drops out’ of the reverie in the movement of the dialectic, it is also ‘separated’ [abgesondert] or ‘released’ [befreien], and becomes putrid in its otherness. This latter aspect, it would seem, means that particulars or ‘accidents’ have neither mere

impossibility itself as an ontological fact, not only as an epistemological limitation’ (Žižek (2012) op. cit. p. 239).

⁵⁴⁴ Hass (2013) op. cit. p. 129

⁵⁴⁵ That the negation of negation does not make the dirempted whole is precisely why Eugene Thacker’s including of Hegel within what he describes as an ‘ontology of generosity’ (that he locates in post-Kantian idealism, and which he contrasts with the negativity of Schopenhauer), is misguided (Thacker, E. (2011), “Dark Life: Negation, Nothingness and the Will-to-Life in Schopenhauer”, *Parrhesia*, no. 12, pp. 12-27). Absolute Knowing, as the Rebecca Comay reading of Hegel that is to follow in the next chapter will demonstrate, is a claim about the reorientation of consciousness towards what Comay describes as a traumatic structure, a ‘non-synchronicity’ that renders every encounter a missed encounter. Which is to say that Hegelian becoming is not a progression towards absolute parousia.

⁵⁴⁶ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 27, trans. amended.

⁵⁴⁷ *ibid.*

presence nor mere absence; they ‘drop out’ but nonetheless remain in their now putrid state, a form of being that counters what is encapsulated by the representation. In the determining of particulars, there is also the production of the counternatural, the non-being, which figures as an aspect of being that is secreted despite the singular to which it belongs dissolving into dialectical flux. From the point of view of the Kantian Understanding, or what Hegel refers to as judgement in the court of dialectical movement, particulars ‘do not pertain’ [bestehen... nicht] beyond their determinate negation precisely because the otherness of the other is effaced. Alternatively, from the point of view of the whole or the Kantian faculty of Reason, this movement is ‘apprehended’ [aufgefaßt] as a state of ‘repose’ [Ruhe]⁵⁴⁸ in which no change occurs. However, insofar as Understanding and Reason are not for Hegel separate faculties, but instead interacting abilities that belong to consciousness, Spirit’s bending back upon itself, and the negation of negation, need not end in either constant flux or ‘simple repose’.

What Adorno overlooks when he suggests that such repose amounts to a ‘piece of unreflected immediacy’ is that the repose of the whole is ‘apprehended’ [aufgefaßt] rather than ‘comprehended’ [begriffen]. Only the latter grasps the sense in which the whole is the true and the true dialectical movement that includes all its moments (including the particular’s becoming putrid), rather than something ‘on the other side, positive and dead’⁵⁴⁹. There is no future in which ‘non-being’ or the ‘undead’ is revived and restored to positive being, but this does not mean there is no future *tout court*. The non-actual is ‘horrifying’ [Furchtbarste] precisely because it is ‘essential’ [Wesentlich] in its putrid state. At the heart of Hegel’s organism is the ‘preservation’ [Aufbewahrung] of an otherness that suggests the ‘original germ’ is always already putrid (and thus plural), and which precludes the possibility of absolute presence. Rather than submit to the death invoked by dismemberment or the resuscitation of the dead that ends in fulfilment⁵⁵⁰, Hegel’s rendering of non-being ontological suggests of

⁵⁴⁸ *ibid.* p. 28

⁵⁴⁹ *ibid.* p. 27. Indeed, Hegel describes such repose as a ‘restless infinity’ (*ibid.* p. 106). This notion is central to Mark Taylor’s reading of Hegel. See Taylor, M. (2011), “Infinite Restlessness”, *Hegel and the Infinite*, op. cit. pp. 91-114.

⁵⁵⁰ An example of which can be found in Peter Trawny’s reading of Hegel. Trawny, concerned with Hegel’s religious writings, argues that the ‘insertion’ that is the arrival of Christ ends in the ‘death of death’, and the fulfillment of time. See Trawny, P. (2000) “The Future of Time”, *Research in Phenomenology*, vol.30, no. 1, p. 25

an 'undead' putridness at the heart of Spirit. The organism that is Spirit is unrecognisable as anything organic not only because of its putridness, however, but because the latter is predicated upon the subjective spontaneity that is internal to Spirit. Whilst Spirit is marked by a plural ontology and the co-presence of difference, it only pertains as such by way of the bending back around and working through that Spirit engages in at the behest of a 'need' to go beyond the given. When Hegel speaks of the whole he invokes not a metaphysics of presence, but an ontological plurality whose emergence and maintenance is predicated upon social labour.

Chapter 5

Non-Contemporary: Hegel in/as the Present

There is no third way and that is the one we are going to take.

Victor Shklovsky

What else were the monsters he fought against but dreams that he had to keep confronting. The kind of entities that he encountered and had to kill afflict us only in our sleep. I am familiar with those lionlike, birdlike, serpentine creatures, I flee them, but they catch my scent, then track me down when I die in the underbrush of night, they bite my hips, I wrestle with them, this is a dreadful compulsion, and I never wake up until I should have been torn from limb to limb, yet there is no wound, no pain. Such beasts harass us when we have discerned some overpowering entity deep inside ourselves, when we tremble at the thought of our own superiority.

Peter Weiss

A Belated Messiah

In the previous chapter it was argued that for Hegel the negation of negation that invokes the reconfiguration of Spirit releases the other from the grasp of consciousness by inscribing the otherness of the other into the thing-in-itself. This means that the gap between subject and object is constitutive of what it means for something, whether subject or object, to pertain. The otherness of the thing-in-itself manifests as this gap. Comprehension is not a matter of grasping the other in its presence therefore (which necessarily renders the other a phantasm of consciousness), but of allowing it to figure in its otherness. What is comprehended is the sense in which the otherness of the other does not coincide with consciousness, which is precisely what makes it other. The relation invoked is a relating of that which is incommensurate. To this end, the organicism of Hegel neither ends in a philosophy of parousia nor is it absent of the spontaneity of subjectivity. Only by way of the labour of the concept in which consciousness inserts itself into the dialectic's organic flux and interrupts the closed circuitry of the given do objects figure in a manner that counters the timely image.

In contrast to the phantasmic change that occurs in the domain of culture, or what Hegel names ‘pure insight’, Absolute Knowing is geared towards both knowing and invoking historical change. The ‘bang, crash’ that informs superstition is with Hegel the consequence of a ‘formative movement’ that consciousness both takes part in and is itself moved by⁵⁵¹. In moving beyond the limits of a Kantian modernity, the dialectic allows not only for the comprehension of the ‘is’ that informs any particular configuration of Spirit, it also allows for comprehension of the transformation of the ‘is’. Indeed, comprehension is internal to such transformation, figuring as a moment in which the co-presence of ontological difference is reinvoked. What is absolute about Absolute Knowing is both knowing how historical change occurs and that knowing proving ontologically efficacious.

In what is to follow it will be argued that both the early and late forms of negation that inform comprehension are never punctual. The labour that produces an untimely otherness is itself untimely. In chapter 2 it was suggested that for Hegel a beginning must always be made from within the unity that pertains in immediacy, what he named ‘pure being’⁵⁵². However, insofar as this initial unity is disturbed by negation, the determination of both the One and the other occurs only retroactively such that experience (of *Dasein* rather than mere *Sein*) is always belated, the comprehension of the event occurring *ex post facto*. At the same time however, such retroactivity also invokes the release of an otherness that dissolves the configuration of consciousness that had presently pertained. Comprehension thus figures as a moment in which consciousness goes beyond itself. This suggests that neither what is given in immediacy nor what results via mediation is ground or eschaton. Both the beginning and end are always had in the middle, their comprehension either belated or premature, resulting from what Jean-Luc Nancy has described as an ‘upsurge in the course of the given’. For Nancy, Hegel ‘neither begins nor ends’⁵⁵³. One has always already begun, and yet, what is begun cannot be drawn to a close insofar as comprehension is always already accompanied by the production of that which

⁵⁵¹ Hegel, G.W.F. (1977) *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Miller, A.V. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 17, trans. amended

⁵⁵² Hegel, G.W.F. (2010) *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline, Part I: Science of Logic*, eds. & trans. Brinkmann, K. & Dahlstrom, D. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 136

⁵⁵³ Nancy, J.L. (2002) *Hegel: The Restlessness of the Infinite*, trans. Smith J. & Miller S. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 9

exceeds the end. Indeed, it is precisely this movement that for Hegel constitutes history, and thus, to the extent that modernity is the time of historical change, emerges, as a possibility, as everyday experience.

This thoroughgoing non-synchronicity that marks both beginning and end follows from the sense in which the very ‘formative movement’ provoked by the labour of the concept is itself untimely. If Hegel intends for dialectical movement to end in a moment of comprehension in which the repeated missed encounters that mark the ‘pathway of despair’ transition into Absolute Knowing, the latter, as the moment of recompense, is not punctual; the co-presence of ontological difference, despite its at-the-same-timeness, is not only untimely, its very possibility necessitates a lack of punctuality. Which is to say that the untimeliness of immediate and mediated experience is not overcome by engaging in the ‘bitter labour of Spirit’; there can be no return to a prelapsarian time in which the clocks are synchronised precisely because no such time ever existed. Laying hold of the divine can only occur in an untimely manner, the Messiah both already and not yet arrived, the revolution coming too soon, but unable to be drawn to a close.

What will be maintained is that the present can only be grasped in the moment of its becoming past, on ‘the day of its funeral’⁵⁵⁴. To follow Comay’s framing of the dialectic as a movement from melancholia to (a qualified) mourning, the movement itself is untimely in the sense that the penultimate lingers in the ultimate. The dismemberment that revokes the presence and unity of given objects of experience necessarily lingers in the moment of comprehension that follows. Each and every moment of the dialectic, including its end, is marked by non-synchronicity. If the negation of the negation occurs only retroactively, and, at the same time, releases the otherness of the other, comprehension is itself always too late and too early. This is precisely what Hegel means when he suggests that the Owl of Minerva, as a figure of knowing, takes flight only at dusk. In the living out of the present the conditions that allow cannot be known in their being lived out. And yet, it is this very limitation that opens up the possibility of a future whose potentiality already resides in the present. As will be shown, this potentiality stems from the sense in which the ontological is

⁵⁵⁴ Comay, R. (2011) *Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 145

not reducible to the epistemological, which directly counters the normative reading of Hegel. In contrast to the Kant of the third *Critique*, Hegel does not merely invoke a reciprocal temporality therefore, but renders this time itself untimely. Again, it is such anachronism that opens up the possibility of the co-presence of ontological difference as experiential.

That the comprehension and production of the other and the release of otherness is always retroactive stems from Hegel's framing of determination as a process or 'formative movement' in which what 'is' passes through various moments of becoming, moving from non-actuality to actuality⁵⁵⁵. This is what is intended when Hegel speaks of aims and principles, what he names the 'ought', as appearing initially in 'our subjective design only', an appearing which means they are not yet 'in the sphere of reality', a mere 'possibility' [Möglichkeit] or 'potentiality' [Vermögen], to recall Hegel's terms⁵⁵⁶. The process of determination occurs in the passage between the pressing of the merely subjective or indeterminate to the determination of that pressing by way of the two forms of negation detailed earlier. What 'is' thus passes

⁵⁵⁵ It is precisely this processuality that Lyotard frames as a blindness that reduces alterity to the same. He writes in *Discourse, Figure* that '... Hegel, before anyone else, did not take the symbol as anything other than as lending itself to thought; before anyone else he saw it above all as a moment to be overcome. In fact, he simply did not see it, for all he wanted was to hear the voice of its silence' (Lyotard, J.F. (2011) *Discourse, Figure*, Hudek, A. & Lydon, M. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 6). Hegel, Lyotard suggests, failed to recognise the symbolic as figural in the sense that he mistook it for the discursive. In doing so, he reduced its alterity, an alterity that stems from its figural aspect, to the parameters of a discursivity that cannot allow for alterity. What is being argued here however is that the movement from non-actual to actual cannot be thought in terms of presence. Rather, this movement maintains the non-being upon which being is predicated in some form of alterity despite its becoming actual. To deny this possibility is to remain within the parameters of what Gillian Rose framed as a 'dialectic of nihilism' in which alterity fails to determine the One of discursivity precisely because it is maintained in its non-actuality (Rose, G. (1992) *The Broken Middle: Out of Our Ancient Society*, Blackwell Publishers, p. xii). Of course, Lyotard argues otherwise when he suggests the following:

What cannot be tamed is art as silence. The position of art is a refutation of the position of discourse. The position of art indicates a function of the figure, which is not signified - a function around and even in the figure. This position indicates that the symbol's transcendence is the figure, that is, a spatial manifestation that linguistic space cannot incorporate without being shaken, an exteriority it cannot interiorize as signification. Art stands in alterity as plasticity and desire, a curved expanse against invariability and reason, diacritical space (Lyotard, (2011) op. cit. p. 7).

The difference, it would seem, is that for Hegel, it is the recuperability of alterity that makes Spirit shake, whereas for Lyotard it is its irrecoverability (see pp. 399-400, n. 9 for Lyotard's expanded discussion of this problem in Hegel). What is being argued for however is that the relation of the One and the other is a relation of non-relation, that the very possibility of dialectic depends upon incommensurateness, just as Lyotard frames discourse and the figural. Where Hegel goes further however is in demanding that such difference not remain a non-relation in which no change sets in. There is much to be said here. However, it must await future work.

⁵⁵⁶ Hegel, (1956) *The Philosophy of History*, New York, US: Dover Publications, p. 22

through various historical moments. This suggests that what appears cannot be comprehended in the moment of its appearing; it remains incomplete. This does not mean however that what appears is without mediating shape or what Hegel frames as its own mouth and teeth. Rather, the determination of its shape occurs belatedly such that it can only be grasped in the moment of comprehension that is to follow. For Hegel, the *a priori* is always the *a posteriori* in the sense that the conditions under which life is lived manifest belatedly. This is because only the determined can be comprehended, and determination, moreover, is the result of dialectical movement. As Adorno suggests, ‘what is is always more than itself’, the ‘more’ referring not to an addition to the already determined, but the process of becoming in which determination occurs⁵⁵⁷. In appearing, objects are not experienced as being in excess of themselves. Only belatedly, when the moment has passed, does comprehension take place.

That determination is not only a process, but also an untimely one, suggests that for Hegel unity (and, consequently, notions like reconciliation and identity) do not necessarily amount to the effacement of difference. When Hegel claims that substance is just as much subject, this does not mean that substance mirrors the subject or vice versa⁵⁵⁸. Rather, in reaching over its other, consciousness not only determines the other, but is itself determined, and thus reconfigured, in such a manner that the conditions of possibility allow for the figuring of that which counters the being that pertained in the prior configuration of Spirit. The effect of this move is double: not only is the possibility of ontology maintained, the epistemological gap is made redundant insofar as knowing now comprehends things in-themselves precisely by comprehending them as marked by non-being. In contrast to Kant, Hegel’s

⁵⁵⁷ Adorno, T.W (1993) *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Weber-Nicholsen, S. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, p. 81

⁵⁵⁸ Hegel writes in the *Phenomenology* that ‘everything turns on apprehending [aufzufassen] and expressing [auszudrücken] the True, not only as Substance, but just as much as [ebensosehr] Subject’ (Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 10, trans. amended). It is this *ebensosehr* that proves, as Rebecca Comay has pointed out, central to understanding Hegel’s claim (Comay, R. (2013) “Hegel: Non-metaphysical, Post-metaphysical, Post Traumatic (Response to Lumsden, Redding, Sinnerbrink)”, *Parrhesia*, no. 17, p. 60, n. 3). Although it has the look of a pre-Kantian dogmatism, it will be argued here (and equally throughout) that this equating of subject and substance neither begins nor ends in identity. Although there is subjectivity in substance, and vice versa, their mutual constituting does not exhaust their being. As the concluding remarks to the chapter will argue, the untimeliness of any unity means reconciliation is always marked by non-synchronicity. And yet, it is precisely via a re-orientation towards what Comay describes as the ‘traumatic structure’ of untimely experience that holds out the possibility of a movement beyond the repetition of terror in all its forms.

speculative idealism reconfigures the epistemological ban placed on the noumenal by rendering it constitutive of being, as argued in the previous chapter. According to Adrian Johnston, ‘this involves the transition from Kant to Hegel being portrayed as a matter of a shift from the positing of breaks exclusively at the level of epistemology (Kant) to the assertion of these very same breaks (also) at the level of ontology (Hegel)’⁵⁵⁹. The retroactive negation of the negation thus figures as the production of the ontological. Consequently, comprehension cannot occur by way of the representation, as non-being, despite being determined, counters the being *re-*presented by consciousness. Nonetheless, despite this limitation, the very *re-*presenting that occurs by way of conceptual labour, the traversing of the ‘pathway of despair’, gestures towards the non-being that the representation cannot capture. Hegel’s speculative idealism, which attempts to draw out and render conceptual the non-being that the postulation of limits produces, aims, Adorno has argued, at the recovery of all the objects ‘impulses and experiences’⁵⁶⁰. In the labour of the concept, it is ‘turned this way and that until it becomes clear that it is more than what it was’⁵⁶¹. The ‘presentation’ [Darstellung] of the concept thus takes place via dialectical ‘representation’ [Vorstellung] in which the repeated failure to adequately unify subject and object and grasp the world becomes the very truth of the concept and the insisting of the Eleusinian silence within it. Moreover, that very failure is what invokes dialectical movement, the ‘need’ [Bedürfnis] for totality demanding of philosophy the reflection that is internal to and determines the thing-in-itself. Undergoing the labour of the concept thus produces objects that despite being determined by the subject nonetheless exceed the latter’s discursive grasp. Consciousness is constitutive of substance, and vice versa, but they do not exhaust one another. Kant’s ‘sufficient kinship’, which he invokes as a means of unifying subject and object, is superfluous for Hegel because both being and non-being, the One and the other, are produced in the relating of subject and object. Retroactively, there is no gap between subject and object, but within them, because their actuality is dependent upon a mutual determination. The social totality is therefore only a result, a result that is nonetheless predicated upon non-being, which is not given, but recovered in undergoing the labour of the concept.

⁵⁵⁹ Johnston, A. (2014) ‘Where to Start?: Robert Pippin, Slavoj Žižek, and the True Beginning(s) of Hegel’s System’, *Crisis and Critique*, vol. 1, no. 3, p. 378

⁵⁶⁰ Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 7

⁵⁶¹ *ibid.* p. 133

The unity of subject and substance that Hegel aims at maintains difference therefore, despite acknowledging the impossibility of accessing or bringing the particular to hand outside of universal mediation. It is within this ‘in-between’ paradox that speculation dwells, Hegel drawing on a musical analogy to make the point:

Rhythm results from the floating centre and the unification of the two. So, too, in the philosophical proposition the identification of Subject and Predicate is not meant to destroy the difference between them, which the form of the proposition expresses; their unity, rather, is meant to emerge as a harmony⁵⁶².

This preservation of difference in unity stems from the changed relation between subject and predicate that figures as central to Hegel’s approach. In place of the schematism that marks the Critical Philosophy, Hegel draws on the notion of ‘plasticity’ [Plastizität] to frame the relation between subject and predicate. In contrast to what he names ‘ratiocinative methods’, which reduce the philosophical proposition to the ‘usual subject-predicate’ relation, and invoke the ‘usual attitude towards knowing’, ‘only a philosophical exposition that rigidly excludes the usual way of relating the parts of a proposition could achieve the goal of plasticity’, Hegel writes⁵⁶³. To think the subject-predicate relation in the usual way excludes plasticity such that the subject is unmoved despite determining the phenomenal, the relationship remaining one-sided, failing to be turned, ‘this way and that’. Plasticity, as Malabou has argued in *The Future of Hegel*, evades the dialectic of parousia and trace. What pertains in the ‘in-between’ domain of the plastic can be neither deconstructed, insofar as it ‘survives’ as more than a mere trace, and nor does it belong to the order of presence, insofar as it is marked by non-being, the latter neither present nor absent, as Hegel framed the ‘accident’ that ‘drops out’ out of the Bacchanalian revel⁵⁶⁴.

⁵⁶² Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 38

⁵⁶³ ibid. p. 39

⁵⁶⁴ Malabou draws on the figure of the salamander, which, in its regeneration of lost limbs that leaves no trace, can be contrasted with the figures of both the phoenix, which ‘corresponds to the movement of presence that constantly reconstitutes itself from its wounds’, and the web, or spider, in which Derrida’s ‘writing against resurrection’ invokes no movement, the deconstruction of the phoenix merely leaving further traces (Malabou, C. (2007) “Again: “The wounds of Spirit heal, and leave no scars behind””, *Mosaic*, vol. 40, no. 2, p. 30).

By way of the notion of ‘plasticity’, Hegel’s speculative idealism thus becomes a means of moving between the logic of presence and absence, the either/or, which marks the usual subject-predicate relation. As he argues in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, the speculative is a ‘thinking over’ [Nachdenken] that is ‘both the same and different from [mere reflective thinking - CW]... it possesses in addition to the shared forms of thinking its own peculiar [eigentümliche] forms’⁵⁶⁵. This means, Hegel continues, that the speculative ‘does not simply set aside the empirical content of the latter, but instead acknowledges and uses it’. ‘Speculative logic contains [enthält] the former logic and metaphysics, preserves [konserviert] the same forms of thought [Gedankenformen], the same laws and objects, but at the same time... it develops them further and transforms them [weiterbildend und umformend] with the help of additional categories’, Hegel writes⁵⁶⁶. The speculative process, in which Spirit is reconfigured, takes place via the development and transformation of prior forms, which occurs in the addition of categories. This latter possibility, it is argued, necessitates categories that gesture towards the non-being that, although it cannot be represented, nonetheless figures as internal to that which appears. Insofar as the other is not given, these additional categories both allow the other to figure in experience and dissolve the limits that rendered the given absent of otherness. The notion of ‘plasticity’ that Malabou draws from Hegel’s work, Rose’s ‘broken middle’, and what has been named here as the ‘in-between’, all suggest of an ontology that cannot be captured by the positivism of static categories and the limits invoked by consciousness, nor, at the same time, a figural domain in which the discursive remains both blind and excluded.

Because comprehension is always accompanied by the production of non-being and the release of otherness, it is a movement that stands in need of the speculative moment. Again, comprehension is a moment in which consciousness goes beyond itself. For Spirit to reach over its other necessitates the addition of categories that extend Spirit beyond present configuration, the discursive pushing up against and exceeding its own limits. Which is to say comprehension by way of existing categories cannot attend to the plural being that is produced in comprehension such that it remains non-comprehension. As Adorno has written:

⁵⁶⁵ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 37

⁵⁶⁶ *ibid.*

Hegel's substantive insights, which extended to the irreconciliation of the contradictions in bourgeois society, cannot be separated from speculation... as though it were some kind of troublesome ornamentation. On the contrary, those insights are brought about by speculation [von der Spekulation gezeitigt], and they lose their substance as soon as they are conceived [auffaßt] as merely empirical. The idea that the *a priori* is also the *a posteriori*, an idea that was programmatic in Fichte and was then fully elaborated by Hegel, is not an audacious piece of bombast; it is the mainspring [Lebensnerv] of Hegel's thought: it inspires both his criticism of a grim empirical reality and his critique of a static apriorism. Where Hegel compels his material to speak, the idea of an original identity of subject and object "in Spirit", an identity that becomes divided and then reunites, is at work⁵⁶⁷.

The very concreteness of the existent is derived from the speculative moment that gestures towards the non-being that the empirical is predicated upon. For the totality of social labour to pertain as such, consciousness must, in its spontaneity, both attend to what is initially an indeterminate other, a mere 'beautiful voice', and tarry with such negativity as a means of constituting itself, which, at the same time, also renders the 'beautiful voice' conceptual and releases its otherness. Speculative labouring extends the subject out towards the thing-in-itself by opening up a space of allowing in which it may figure otherwise than consciousness dictates. 'Things themselves speak', Adorno suggests, 'in a philosophy that focuses its energies on proving that it is itself one with them'⁵⁶⁸. The very 'making room' that allows the thing-in-itself to figure in a manner not merely given, also allows for the determination of the subject, which can only occur by way of the transformation that such extension begets. The 'bitter labour of Spirit' does not merely figure as the subject's means of knowing both itself and its other. Rather, it is the very means that produces both such that Absolute Knowing is not (only) an epistemology, but a practice. The recompense to be paid to the other comes in the form of a release from epistemological grasp, a release that is nonetheless predicated upon a social labour that has tended, under the conditions of *Neuzeit*, to do the opposite, that is, to efface the incommensurate.

⁵⁶⁷ Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 3, trans. amended

⁵⁶⁸ *ibid.* p. 6

A Broken Middle

As retroactive, the dialectic is neither pre-determined, and thus an instrument that transcends phenomenal existence, nor a mere description of particular historical circumstances. That the speculative produces both the One and the other suggests, as Agon Hamza has argued, that ‘... there is no distinction between the method and an object: they are mediated’⁵⁶⁹. The recovery of the subjectivity of labour in which the spontaneity of consciousness evades the schematic, and thus opens up the possibility of transforming the given, depends upon what Hegel refers to as Spirit ‘working-through its passage’ [durch einen langen Weg sich hindurchzuarbeiten]⁵⁷⁰. It is this passage that has been named the ‘in-between’ or, to follow Gillian Rose, the ‘broken middle’. To work this passage is to expand the space of experience such that what presses is not merely the given, but the various moments that compose the ‘formative movement’ of the dialectic. The opening of this passage stands in need of what was earlier described as an ‘insertion’ or ‘intervention’, which interrupts the circuitry of the given and the reduction of experience to the timely image.

To approach the dialectic as a practice rather than a method suggests that conceptual labour does not entail the following of a path, but its production, what Andrew Benjamin has referred to as a ‘way-making’⁵⁷¹ in which the forming of form takes place. The path already taken, which Adorno famously described as running from the slingshot to the atom bomb, and which includes the path of the Critical Philosophy that Kant sought to render a ‘highway’, has not led to the overcoming of an antagonistic civil society⁵⁷². However, because the realised path is necessarily predicated upon the production of otherness, it is also marked by what could be described as an historical ought: that which both counters realised history and figures as its prerequisite, but was effaced rather than released in its otherness. Which is to say that historical movement is predicated upon the possibility of that history being otherwise, which means that although such a counter history is effaced in the coming of a Kantian modernity, it necessarily pertains as a potentiality despite appearing

⁵⁶⁹ Hamza, A. (2016) “On Going to One’s Ground: Žižek’s Dialectical Materialism”, *Slavoj Žižek and Dialectical Materialism*, eds. Ruda, F. & Hamza, A. UK: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 163

⁵⁷⁰ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 15, trans. amended.

⁵⁷¹ Taken from a conversation had at Monash University.

⁵⁷² Adorno, T.W. (2006) *History and Freedom: Lectures 1964–1965*, ed. Tiedemann, R. trans. Livingstone, R. UK: Polity Press, p. 12

impossible from within the parameters of *Neuzeit*. It is this necessity that informs the ‘need’ that drives philosophy beyond the given: Spirit knows that history is more than the actualised because, in Hegelian form, the content of thinking is not reducible to the singular and timely. As Adorno has argued, the chance for philosophy to realise itself was missed, which means it has not yet reconfigured itself in a manner that would allow for the figuring of otherness⁵⁷³. It is for this reason that philosophy ‘lives on’⁵⁷⁴, and the reading and re-reading of Hegel is still to come.

Despite this failure, which may indeed be terminal, what falls to philosophy is the ability to insert itself into the ‘formative movement’ that produced the unreconciled present. To ‘work-through’ its passage necessitates returning to the moments of contestation in which the other was first produced and then effaced in the schematization of the ‘in-between’ that accompanied the reification of social labour⁵⁷⁵. Again, history’s having been [*hat geschehen*] cannot be determined as such without producing an other that is internal to it despite evincing a being that counters the realised. This other is suggestive of history’s other possibilities, of what could have occurred [*hätte geschehen*], which means history, in the form of the *historia rerum gestarum* cannot be reduced to *Geschichte*, the having occurred of occurrence as it is *re-presented*. In other words, it remains open to the extent that that which occurred may be ‘undone’ [*ungeschehen gemacht*]. Determined retroactively, the past only figures as such by way of conceptual labour in the present. Moreover, it is determined anew in every reconfiguration of Spirit, just as, to draw on Marx, ‘human anatomy contains a key to the anatomy of the ape’⁵⁷⁶, the suggestion being that only retroactively do unrealised possibilities that belong to the past appear as such. The conditions of possibility within which life is lived are determined as a limit after the

⁵⁷³ Adorno, T.W. (2007) *Negative Dialectics*, trans. Ashton, E.B. New York: Continuum, p. 3

⁵⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁷⁵ Andrew Benjamin locates the same ‘passage work’ in Walter Benjamin. He writes of this passage and its relation to nature that ‘the identification of a process means that the recovery of nature needs to work through the already naturalised presence of nature. What this means is that nature would emerge through an undoing of the processing of its creation’ (Benjamin, A. (2013) *Working With Walter Benjamin: Recovering a Political Philosophy*, Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, p. 149), which could otherwise be named a denaturing.

⁵⁷⁶ Marx, K. (1993) *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Nicolaus, M. London, Penguin, p. 105. Žižek also draws on Marx to make the same point about retroactivity (see Žižek, S. (2012) *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*, London: Verso, p. 221).

fact, a determination, moreover, that also retroactively produces possibilities that ought to have been insofar as society has remained antagonistic.

To do again, to work through the present's 'formative movement', necessitates the *inhabiting* of what has been named the 'in-between', which is necessarily opened up in the determination of historical occurrence, the latter construed as the belated comprehension that mediates the givenness of object, deed and occurrence. The 'in-between' embodies both being and non-being without making a home in either. It is encircled within a plural being, or what Hegel has called a 'circle of circles'⁵⁷⁷. In contrast to Kojève's Hegel, this suggests not of the adequation of being and concept, a perfect circle marked by absolute presence, but a disjuncture in the sense that being, in its plurality of moments, always evades absolute conceptual capture. This becomes clear in the *Philosophy of Nature* when Hegel writes that 'traces of Notional determination will certainly survive in the most particularized product, although they will not exhaust its nature'⁵⁷⁸. Although being is conceptual, what pertains in any given moment does not exhaust the ontological. The 'in-between' is marked not by adequation, but difference, such that what constitutes plural being does not stand in a relation of equivalence. Again, it is a relation of non-relations.

The argument to be made here is that consciousness dwells, albeit belatedly, in this 'in-between' when it engages in conceptual labour. As an after-effect of a 'formative movement', consciousness is not merely determined, but constellated, in the sense that the relations that determine are plural. It is in this space that the determination of existence occurs, where being is ontologised. For philosophy to insert itself into this space, and attend to otherness, is to hold open the determination of the past. It is precisely this holding open that undoes what was done. Intended here is not a different telling of the past, but the interruption of its 'formative movement'. Insofar as the other counters the totality of social labour, its recovery necessitates the doing again of Spirit's past, which also reconfigures Spirit in the present. To dwell in the 'in-between', to undo what was done, dissolves the limits of the present, Spirit necessarily having gone beyond them in recovering the social totality's other. As

⁵⁷⁷ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 43

⁵⁷⁸ Hegel, G.W.F. (2004) *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline, Part 2: Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Miller, A.V. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 23

Adorno has written of Hegel, his approach is not to construct a totalising schema, but an ‘effective centre of force latent in the individual moments’⁵⁷⁹. The ‘in-between’, which speculative idealism both produces and inserts itself into by way of the comprehension of the One and the other, does not transcend the existent. Rather, and to follow Žižek’s argument, the path that Spirit ‘works-through’ in bending back upon itself determines the existent as marked by the non-being upon which it depends. Again, this is why Hegel can claim that substance is just as much subject: the opening up of substance that allows for the figuring of otherness depends upon the labour of consciousness. ‘Working-through’, which is also a working-*with*, entails the *inhabiting* therefore of an ‘in-between’ passage in which the determination of the ontological takes place. It is in these terms that Malabou defines the notion of ‘plasticity, which is ‘at once capable of receiving and giving form’⁵⁸⁰. To ‘work-through’ one’s passage figures as the determination of the existent, which, insofar as the latter allows for the conceptual figuring of otherness, transforms subjective experience and the configuration of consciousness with which it takes place. The being of the existent cannot be given beforehand therefore, as it only emerges in the ‘formative movement’ of dialectics, and the insertion of consciousness into the gap opened up between being and non-being.

The above suggests that the mediator, the passage of the ‘in-between’ in which existence is determined, is itself determined in its determining. This must be contrasted with an understanding of the mediator as something positive which stands between being and nothingness. As Andrew Hass argues, the latter conception ‘un-positing the negativity that the first negation brought, and in turn posits negativity’s negation now as something (in contradistinction to nothing)’, the negation of negation restoring what was initially negated to positivity⁵⁸¹. This becomes apparent in Nancy’s reading when he writes that the rhythm that Hegel invokes is not a “‘swinging back and forth” between two terms or poles in turn accentuated’⁵⁸². The musicality of the Hegelian dialectic does not remain within the logic of subject-

⁵⁷⁹ Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 56

⁵⁸⁰ Malabou, C. (2005) *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*, trans. During, L. New York, US: Routledge, p. 8

⁵⁸¹ Hass, A.W. (2013) *Hegel and the Art of Negation: Negativity, Creativity and Contemporary Thought*, London: I.B. Tauris, p. 142

⁵⁸² Nancy, J.L. (2001) *The Speculative Remark: One of Hegel’s Bon Mots*, trans. Surprenant, C. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p. 100-101

predicate. The ‘in-between’, cutting across the limit that separates being and non-being, is a mediator that cannot withstand what it mediates. What mediates subject and object is no thing; it is neither given nor does it pertain in a noumenal beyond. Hegel’s negation of the noumenal does not merely render the beyond secular by incorporating the ‘more’ of the empirical into the notion of an earthly Spirit. Rather, the spiritual comes to figure not as a third thing that hovers above subject and object, but as internal to them in the sense that their very being is the result of the dialectic of being and non-being, which counters the fetishization of production that marks the culture industry wherein subjectivity is effaced. Dialectics is not therefore the relating of constituted parts, as the parts are only retroactively produced by way of dialectic. As Adorno has written of Hegel:

He does not make the parts, as elements of the whole, autonomous in opposition to it; at the same time, as a critic of romanticism, he knows that the whole realises itself only in and through the parts, only through discontinuity, alienation, and reflection⁵⁸³.

The whole for Hegel is derived from the particular rather than as ‘something beyond them’⁵⁸⁴. In turn, non-being, as a condition of being, itself manifests in the particular. Again, the mediator, which could otherwise be called consciousness, does not moderate between dialectical extremities whilst remaining moderate. Insofar as, to quote Hegel, ‘... all things... come to judgement’⁵⁸⁵, the possibility of dialectical movement rests upon judgement being extended beyond given limits. Mediation, to follow Adorno, is never a ‘middle element between extremes’ for Hegel, ‘as, since Kierkegaard, a deadly misunderstanding has depicted it as being’. ‘Instead’, he continues, ‘mediation takes place in and through the extremes, in the extremes themselves. This is the radical aspect of Hegel, which is incompatible with any advocacy of moderation’⁵⁸⁶. Produced via its mediating, consciousness does not negate the extremes of contradiction, of the One and the other, by moderating difference. Rather, undoing what was done necessitates recovering the difference that pertains at the extremities. Mediation, something also being its other, is not moderation, but the internal co-presence of difference. As Schönberg suggested in a

⁵⁸³ Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 4

⁵⁸⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁸⁵ Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 130

⁵⁸⁶ Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 9

line Adorno cited approvingly, only the middle road does not lead to Rome⁵⁸⁷. As Hegel himself argues in the *Phenomenology*, Spirit's 'formative movement' must not 'make short work [schon fertig ist] of other standpoints by declaring it takes no notice of them', as this would amount to a failure to reach over its other⁵⁸⁸. The very possibility of short-circuiting the 'vicious circle' rests upon 'enduring' the 'length of this path', what Hegel describes as Spirit taking upon itself 'the enormous labour of world-history'⁵⁸⁹. In contrast to the 'short work' of positivism, 'working-through' refuses the premature declaration of an end, of something being 'already finished' or 'ready to go' [schon fertig]. In bending back upon itself, Spirit recovers the recoverability of a past neither already at an end nor an 'abyss of vacuity' [Abgrund der Leeren]⁵⁹⁰ in which it remains veiled behind a mask of indeterminateness. In contrast to Pippin's normativity that reduces the ontological to the intelligible, the opening of the 'in-between', which for Pippin is a 'space of reasons', not only produces being, but also its other. The 'is', as the being of the existent, cannot be closed because its very existence is predicated upon conceptual labour. In this, the possibility of a future emerging from the present is maintained.

Too Early

The belatedness that marks philosophy's relation to the present, its comprehending of the conditions of possibility that determine the living out of a life occurring *ex post facto*, means philosophy cannot insert itself into the movement of the dialectic with result or goal in mind. That the determination of the past occurs only and repeatedly from the position of the present precludes the possibility of the following of a program or the living out of intentions. The sense in which the past, to draw on the William Faulkner line, is 'never dead... not even past', suggests that present intention

⁵⁸⁷ Schönberg, A. (2003) *A Schönberg Reader: Documents of a Life*, ed. Auner, J., New Haven & London: Yale University Press, p. 186; Adorno, T.W. (2008) *Lectures on Negative Dialectics: Fragments of a Lecture Course 1965/1966*, ed. Tiedemann R. trans. Livingstone, R. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, p. 29

⁵⁸⁸ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 16

⁵⁸⁹ *ibid.* p. 17. It is important to note that traversing the path of world-history does not demand reading Hegel as if Spirit's historical shapes emerged at historically specific times, and could only have emerged then. To do so is to render Spirit's movement linear, which inscribes a progress narrative upon his work. Although he historicises Spirit, the transitions that he situates in history could and have occurred at various times when construed in terms of successive time. The latter time however does not pertain in relation to every past or future configuration of Spirit such that the projection of linear time upon the past and future reduces them to a Kantian present.

⁵⁹⁰ *ibid.* p. 9

is mediated by that which cannot be brought to hand *in toto*. The true is the whole, as Hegel notoriously suggested, but the latter is the whole course of its development, which, drawing again on Hegel's knotted line analogy, is not linear, but discontinuous, the clocks never aligned, neither beginning nor end timely⁵⁹¹. This includes not just the initial negation that dismembers the given and renders the other putrid, but also the separating of the noumenal and phenomenal that takes place in the Critical Philosophy, a separation that effaces otherness rather than, as the negation of negation intends, reinscribing it into the thing-in-itself. This suggests that Hegel is not merely concerned with the concept, its lack, and the necessity of invoking other concepts as a means of comprehending the singular. Rather, he also attends to the social processes through which concepts manifest.

There is, from this position, the recognition that the concepts with which the given is approached have their own history, a history subject to contestation and disequilibria of power. As Horkheimer has remarked, 'the more progressive and true thought becomes, so the more consciousness of the material and theoretical activity of society enters into its concepts and judgements, in short into all of its acts'⁵⁹². Insofar as modernity has remained both Kantian and antagonistic, the reorientation of consciousness that would allow for the release of otherness has not come to pass, and yet, the repeated movement in which violence awaits the other also figures as a moment of Spirit's 'formative movement'. It is this that is absent from the Critical Philosophy, which Hegel criticised not on the basis that it got the categories wrong, but that it failed to adequately attend to the processes in which they manifested. Comprehension must also attend therefore to the moments in which otherness is effaced. It is the very lingering of such otherness that suggests of a past marked by plural being in which the One is accompanied by the otherness of the other, which cannot be reduced to the singular. The present, in its becoming past, necessarily

⁵⁹¹ Hegel writes in the *Phenomenology* that 'the real issue is not exhausted by stating it as an aim, but by carrying it out, nor is the result the actual whole, but rather the result together with the process through which it came about' (ibid. p. 2). The process that also constitutes the whole encapsulates the moments of non-actuality upon which the actual is predicated. Not only the production of the other but also its subsequent effacement at the behest of a timely consciousness figure as moments in the dialectic. Recovery therefore attends to both the production of the other and the effacement of its otherness by reified labour, both of which are necessary in order to establish a totality or self-enclosed object. The result, together with the process through which it came about, is necessarily ontologically plural, which means the whole refers to nothing more than a plural ontology.

⁵⁹² Horkheimer, M. (2005) "On Bergson's Metaphysics of Time", *Radical Philosophy*, no. 131, p. 10

remains open to further determination, and thus the reorientation of consciousness and the release of otherness⁵⁹³.

Intentions cannot be lived out precisely because both what is intended and what results are neither transparent to the actor nor do they remain fixed. To the extent that the past is retroactively produced, history cannot be reduced to a history of the victor, a criticism that Adorno levels at Hegel's work. Historical action, Vladimir Safatle notes, is marked by two characteristics: its unconscious nature and its belatedness. This allows, Safatle continues, for the modification of 'potentialities of the present by un-fulfilling what seemed fully determined reality'⁵⁹⁴. As Hegel himself writes, and Safatle quotes approvingly:

[I]n history an additional result is commonly produced by human actions beyond that which they aim at [bezwecken] and obtain [erreichen] – that which they immediately know [wissen] and want [wollen]. They bring about their own interest [vollbringen ihr Interesse], but in doing so they bring about something more [Fernerer] that lies within, but that did not lie in their consciousness [Bewußtsein] or intentions [Absicht]⁵⁹⁵.

⁵⁹³ Otherness, as a category, gestures towards that which cannot be represented. As such, it is a category that negates itself insofar as any determination of the other is always accompanied by what Adorno refers to as the 'more' [mehr] of the empirical (Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 81). So whilst dialectical determination renders the other determinate, and thus existent, otherness manifests with each and every determination such that it cannot be grasped in terms of its having presence. This suggests of what Alison Stone has described as the 'non-reciprocity' between subject and object despite the subject's determining the object and vice versa, which she reads into Adorno's Hegel. For Adorno, Stone suggests, objects are only partly structured by configurations of thought such that 'their intelligible side never exhausts them' (Stone, A. (2014) "Adorno, Hegel and Dialectic", *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, vol. 22, no. 6, p. 1130). What evades dialectical sublation and flux, the *Erdenrest* or rabbleness, is that objective element of an object, which could be named its otherness. Stone writes that 'difference persists when nature is admitted to extend beyond, have priority to, and generate thought, non-reciprocally' (ibid. p. 1130). So whilst the subject depends on the object, the object does not depend on the subject in equal measure. Another way to think this claim would be to suggest that although the subject determines an object, such determination is not absolute because the being of an object is heterogeneous in the sense that it is plural. It is this heterogeneity that, despite being comprehensible, does not figure as presence. This plural being, its being marked by otherness, is, it has been argued, not foreign to Hegel's work despite Stone framing this position as belonging to Adorno over and against Hegel. This is precisely what Hegel means when he suggests that 'traces of Notional determination will certainly survive in the most particularized product, although they will not exhaust its nature' (Hegel (2004) op. cit. p. 23).

⁵⁹⁴ Safatle, V. (2015) "Temporality, Ontology, Dialectics: Hegel Against a Formal Concept of Time", *Filozofski Vestnik*, vol. 36, no. 3, p. 125

⁵⁹⁵ Hegel (1956) op. cit. p. 27

The ‘cunning of reason’ that Hegel speaks of in his philosophy of history lectures does not allow the realisation of an ‘original germ’, but rather, its dissolution⁵⁹⁶. Consciousness is marked by both what it is conscious of, including its intentions, and what Hegel refers to here as ‘something more’, which resonates with Adorno’s ‘more’ [mehr] of the empirical. Precisely because history is dialectical it cannot be teleological; nothing singular persists through time nor stands as origin or ends. As the term dialectic suggests, every singular is always already comprised of a moment of opposition in which, to repeat Alison Stone’s formulation from the previous chapter, speech or reasoning [legein] is ‘pulled between [dia] two directions’⁵⁹⁷. It is the co-presence of this contradiction that dissolves both origin and ends by asserting the plurality upon which they depend.

The pulling in two of dialectic, it will be argued, is a temporal condition, what Rebecca Comay has referred to as ‘historical non-synchronicity’⁵⁹⁸. The very possibility of Spirit bending back upon itself is predicated upon a time that is ‘out of joint’, neither linear nor circular, the latter precluded because of its organicism, the former because of its denial of a differentiated past. The present, rather, is marked by a past that refuses the designation; it belongs to neither past nor present despite insisting in both. To adopt Comay’s formulation, the present, as modernity, evinces ‘divergent rhythms running along separate tracks, each set to a different tempo and a different beat’⁵⁹⁹. It is this time, one might argue, that Hegel’s own notion of reciprocity attempts to capture, which is to suggest that his work is geared towards a thinking of modernity, albeit one that he had not yet named as such⁶⁰⁰.

That time is ‘out of joint’ means not only that comprehension is always already too late, but that it is also too early. What has already been without registering as such,

⁵⁹⁶ *ibid.* p. 33

⁵⁹⁷ Stone *op. cit.* p. 1121

⁵⁹⁸ Comay (2011) *op. cit.* p. 2

⁵⁹⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰⁰ Absolute Knowing, as what Michael Murray has described as a ‘fully and specifically historical experience of time’, attempts to come to terms with a present marked by competing temporalities, which, it will be argued, situates Hegel’s work within the purview of what was named in the opening chapter as a politics of time. See Murray, M. (1981) “Time in Hegel’s “Phenomenology of Spirit””, *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 34, no. 4, p. 685. It has nothing to do therefore with an epistemological comprehensiveness. Rather, it is a knowing that suggests of the untimeliness of knowing. This will be taken up in relation to Rebecca Comay’s discussion of confession and forgiveness towards the end of the chapter.

past possibilities whose production enabled the realisation of given history, continue to linger in the present as unrealised despite belonging to the linear past. That the comprehension of the other occurs too late means it also fails to invoke the necessary transformation of Spirit that would enable it to be experienced as present. The experience is always one of having arrived too late⁶⁰¹. If however, the other remains a future possibility that under the conditions of *Neuzeit* appears impossible, it is also too early to consign such possibility to the past. In other words, if that which occurred is predicated upon the production of the other, the latter figures as both unrealised and a necessary constituent of the present insofar as it is an after-effect of the past. This untimely past continues to haunt the present in the sense that it assumes the status of that which ought to have been, evoking something like what Owen Hatherley has described as the 'grim paradox of nostalgia for a time yet to come'⁶⁰². That comprehension is untimely suggests the present is marked by past possibilities whose time has yet to arrive, but whose initial figuring has already occurred despite not being comprehended.

The continuing of an antagonistic society stands opposed to a philosophical tradition whose disparate past suggests of thought's ability to transform not only itself, but also material existence. In the continuing barbarity of the present, however, philosophy has had to come to terms with its own poverty, the finitude that has opened a gap between the dexterity and mutability of thought and the obstinacy or elusiveness of social reality. To repeat the Brassier line, 'the failure to change the world may not be unrelated to the failure to understand it'⁶⁰³. Which is to say the lack of

⁶⁰¹ William Desmond has argued that, rather than opening a space of allowing, Hegel closes down the passage between the finite and infinite such that it is direct, immediate and one-to-one. The consequence, he suggests, is that the 'release of or for the other is penultimate to return to self' (Desmond, W. (2011), "Between Finitude and Infinity: On Hegel's Sublationary Infinitism", *Hegel and the Infinite*, op. cit. p. 124). For Desmond, the infinite and finite must remain categorically heterogeneous such that the infinite is 'in excess of every whole' (ibid. p. 125). Necessarily, Desmond argues, the movement from finitude to infinity is accompanied by an irreducible loss such that the transcendence occasioned cannot remain within the confines of the self. However, what has been argued for as the 'non-synchronicity' and belatedness of comprehension means that for Hegel the self that is returned to in the negation of the negation is not one delineated in terms of presence. Rather, the subject, by inscribing otherness into the thing-in-itself, is both transformed and rendered negative. It is the very untimeliness of experience that opens up a space of allowing in which the determination of being occurs. The passage from the finite to the infinite cannot, as Desmond wants to argue, be one of immediacy.

⁶⁰² Hatherley, O. (2008) *Militant Modernism*, Winchester UK: O Books, p. 8

⁶⁰³ Brassier, R. *Concepts and Objects*, unpublished manuscript, quoted in Ruda, F. (2013 "Back to the Factory: A Plea for a Renewal of Concrete Analysis of Concrete Situations", in *Beyond Potentialities?*

comprehension of the present is bound up with the continuing of the time of the new. Indeed, what is peculiar about *Neuzeit* is the ban placed on comprehension that its very temporality invokes: its very logic is geared towards precluding comprehension. Hegel is paradigmatic of this divergence between thinking and society because the dialectic attempts to invoke transformation in both the conceptual and material, the latter predicated upon the former, the thing-in-itself imbued with thought.

The ‘non-synchronicity’ of modernity has not only frustrated thinking’s attempts to reconcile an antagonistic society however, it has seemingly exacerbated the contradictions that deliver pain and suffering upon the living. For Comay, this has played out as a misalignment between intellectual precocity and political retardation, with the German witnessing of the French Revolution figuring as model. The *German Misère*, as Marx named such misalignment, manifests as a form of trauma in which every encounter is a missed encounter, comprehension occurring only too late whilst, at the same time, producing other possibilities that remain ‘not yet’ in the sense that Spirit’s labour has yet to convert the ‘chaff’ into conceptual sustenance by undoing what was done. Modernity has remained, as Comay’s appeal to the Caspar David Friedrich drawing, “Landscape with Grave, Coffin and Owl”, maintains, ‘arrested at the point of flight; perched on the coffin [of Kantianism and the time of the new - CW], the grave still gaping open...’⁶⁰⁴. As Comay continues, ‘the corpse of politics is in the coffin, but not yet buried; in fact, as long as the owl stays perched there, the burial can’t happen’⁶⁰⁵. Kant cannot be left behind, and the reciprocity of Hegelianism has not yet come into its own. In the Benjaminian sense, the dialectic is ‘at a standstill’, speculation unable to invoke the categories that would enable irreconcilable difference to beget a movement in history, or, to put it otherwise, the categories invoked have not produced the requisite reorientation of consciousness⁶⁰⁶.

Politics between the Possible and the Impossible, eds. Ruda, F., Potocnik, M., and Völker, J., Berlin: Diaphanes, p. 39.

⁶⁰⁴ Comay, R. & Nichols, J. (2012) “Missed Revolutions, Non-Revolutions, Revolutions to Come: On Mourning Sickness”, *PhaenEx* 7, no. 1, p. 333

⁶⁰⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁰⁶ This structure of belatedness and delay must be contrasted with relational approaches that imbue the present with an ever changing and ever dynamic productive capacity that suggests transformation of the present is not only possible, but always already happening, which can be linked to all manner of Aristotelianisms. Such an approach is apparent, one could argue, in the work of Foucault. By attempting to forgo the universal and attend to the concrete specificity of particular situations, Foucault seeks to evade the problem of a universality that approaches the particular as socially and politically constituted. It is this ‘image’, he suggests, ‘that we must break free of... if we wish to analyse power

And yet, it is this very experience of this ‘standstill’ that gestures towards (without guaranteeing) a future.

The trauma occasioned not only frustrates intention, but also the very possibility of being at home in the present. The present is marked, to draw on Comay drawing on Ernst Bloch, by a ‘non-contemporaneity of the contemporary’, or what Gerhard Richter has referred to as ‘afterness’⁶⁰⁷, in which the past cannot be left behind despite having never occurred on the terms in which the present attempts to mourn its loss. Rather than being at home in the present, the subject of modernity positions itself, like the precocious Germans in relation to the enthusiastic French, as predecessor, successor and contemporary all at once⁶⁰⁸. This ‘harvesting of time as a whole’, as Schiller put it, has not produced history’s eschaton, but rather, precluded the possibility of mourning work such that the present has been reduced to a seemingly perpetual state of melancholia in which the past cannot be ‘worked-through’ because it evades, in its untimeliness, any attempt to grasp it. In contrast to Kant, for whom

within the concrete and historical framework of its operations’ (Foucault, M. (1978) *The History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Hurley, R. New York: Pantheon Books, p. 90). As Frank Ruda has argued, the particular, which figures in Foucault’s work as a *dispositif* or apparatus (and is thus actually universal insofar as it cuts across singularities), ‘are multi-relational formulations that constantly re-shape their form and content due to concrete and specific urges’ (Ruda, F. (2013), “Back to the Factory: A Plea for a Renewal of Concrete Analysis of Concrete Situations”, in *Beyond Potentialities? Politics between the Possible and the Impossible*, op. cit. p. 44). The problem however is that insofar as everything is always already subject to change (existence prescribed within the conflicting dynamic of power and resistance), change becomes that which, in Ruda’s wording, ‘cannot but actualise itself because the immanent structure of the dispositif... are nothing but ever changing...’ (ibid. p. 47). In turn, he continues, the dispositif ‘contains all the necessary possibilities of change... [and] it cannot not produce new actualisations of change’ (ibid.). Consequently, change, which is the bearer of potentiality, is always already prescribed within the dispositif itself such that whatever occurs is merely the after-effect of what it is intended to transform. In this, and as Ruda argues, change as a possibility is necessarily actualised because that is the essential character of the dispositif. Every form and notion of resistance is always already perpetuating the power/resistance dynamic that Foucault totalises. In sum, the future to come can only ever be the reiteration of the past, the very attempt to evade the problem of universality leading to the postulating of a transcendental principle that is not itself subject to change. This criticism of Foucault aligns his work with all approaches that ontologize their very resistance to ontology, a problem also apparent in various vitalisms as well as readings of Hegel that maintain that the dialectic invokes some form of organicism, such as the work of Catherine Malabou. What these approaches cannot think is history coming to a standstill precisely because it is marked by a universal not itself subject to change. By attempting to evade the problem of the universal, such approaches, as the earlier discussion of Gillian Rose’s critique of the dialectics of nihilism suggested, render the ‘big Other’ immutable.

⁶⁰⁷ Richter, G. (2011) *Afterness: Figures of Following in Modern Thought and Aesthetics*, New York: Columbia University Press

⁶⁰⁸ This is apparent in Hegel’s description of time in the *Phenomenology* as the ‘existent concept itself’ (Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 27). What this means becomes clearer in the *Philosophy of Nature* when Hegel writes that time ‘is the being which, in that it *is*, is *not*, and in that it is *not*, is’ (Hegel (2004) op. cit. p. 34). That which pertains, as conceptual, and the whole course of its development, cannot be reduced to that which has presence, but must incorporate the non-being, which is *not*, that being is predicated upon.

temporality is derived from the syntheses of phenomena that register at different times, the sense in which comprehension is processual, and the past a store of unrealised potentiality, means that for Hegel the past does not figure as a series of relations that can be unified via the faculties of cognition. This suggests, as Andrew Cutrofello has argued in regards to Comay's reading of Hegel, that Spirit, in having traversed the 'pathway of despair', abandons its prior conceptions of itself as a subject that gathers retentions and protentions, or a subject of a three-fold temporal ekstasis, which becomes the re-orientation that successive time works to preclude⁶⁰⁹. As a 'chronically missed encounter' experience is always the experience of lack, history stumbled upon only 'virtually, vicariously, voyeuristically'⁶¹⁰, such that it cannot be fashioned into a whole that appears before the apprehending subject.

Hegel does not therefore merely extend the synthesising powers of consciousness to include past configurations of Spirit. His use of negation precludes the timely experience that the Critical Philosophy sought to underpin. As phenomenology, Hegel's work attends to the experience that such an understanding of experience begets; namely, that of non-synchronicity and lack, the very experience of which stands in need of dialectics. Comay, in arguing for the universality of such traumatic untimeliness, the sense in which every modern is a little bit German, writes:

We are all miserable – temporal misfits, marooned from our own present, burdened with a handed down legacy that is not ours to inherit, mourning the loss of what was never ours to relinquish, driven by the pressure of secondhand desires, handed-down fantasies, and borrowed hopes⁶¹¹.

In short, the living out of modernity is anachronistic, which means the very possibility of something like normativity proves evasive; the very articulation of norms invokes their dissolution insofar as they prove untimely⁶¹². In the recovery of the past the

⁶⁰⁹ Cutrofello, A. "Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution", *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, (2011.05.07) (<https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/24697-mourning-sickness-hegel-and-the-french-revolution>)

⁶¹⁰ Comay (2011) op. cit. p. 4

⁶¹¹ *ibid.*

⁶¹² As Comay suggests, 'we measure ourselves against standards to which we cannot adhere and that do not themselves cohere' (*ibid.* p. 5).

temporal terms used to situate and maintain the unity of history, such as following and preceding, cause and effect, fail to signify, or signify only ‘enigmatically’⁶¹³.

Far from invoking absolute presence, the simultaneity of past, present and future (the subject of modernity pulled in varying temporal directions) ends in stupefaction⁶¹⁴. As Hegel writes in regards to the ‘Unhappy Consciousness’, ‘trust in the eternal laws of the gods has vanished, and the Oracles, which pronounced on particular questions, are dumb’⁶¹⁵. The non-being that marks the present determines the living out of a life and renders that life subject to what neither appears phenomenally nor manifests in a noumenal beyond. For Žižek, the impossibility of following a program, of obtaining a goal, is derived from the fundamental lack that marks the present, what he refers to as a ‘background of non-transparency’⁶¹⁶, which, with the death of God, is longer otherworldly. Insofar as the particular is imbued with a universality not captured by its representation, a universality Žižek, drawing on Lacan, names the ‘big Other’ (which is itself anachronistic and thus non transparent), there is an ‘overdetermination’ that renders all activity the mere reiteration of a configuration of Spirit that both already pertains and evades the grasp of the actor⁶¹⁷. As Hegel writes of the ‘ought’ [Sollen], of the ‘issuing of instructions’, ‘philosophy, at any rate, always comes too late to perform this function’⁶¹⁸. Absolute Knowing does not end in the eschaton because the non-being that marks the present frustrates both intention and presence. In turn, the supposed lift occasioned by the *Aufhebung* fails to materialise, and Spirit remains unreconciled, subject to that which it cannot comprehend.

The pervasiveness of an effect that signifies as a lack, that is, only negatively, means the cynicism of the modern towards the ‘big Other’ does not allow it to be evaded. In Žižek’s language, ‘they know it, but they are doing it anyway’, ideology having

⁶¹³ *ibid.*

⁶¹⁴ This is also where Edith Wyschogrod’s critique of Hegel as bound to ‘picture-thinking’ ends up. Rather than absolute presence, the dialectic ends in what she names the cataclysm (see Wyschogrod, E. (1998), *An Ethics of Remembering: History, Heterology, and the Nameless Others*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 134).

⁶¹⁵ Hegel (1977) *op. cit.* p. 455

⁶¹⁶ Žižek (2012) *op. cit.* p. 223

⁶¹⁷ *ibid.*

⁶¹⁸ Hegel, G.W.F (1991) *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Wood, A. trans. Nisbet, H.B. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 23

undergone a shift such that although overt belief in political ideology has seemingly dissolved, or perhaps never was, there is a sense in which adherence to ideology is nonetheless maintained⁶¹⁹. Indeed, the very enigmatic character of the ‘big Other’, in which it cannot be specified as to who the addressee is, invokes adherence to ideology. Žižek refers to that which addresses everyone because no one as the ‘master signifier’. The latter is overdetermined because in the absence of a given object, the signification pervades all experience, becoming a ‘signifier without the signified’⁶²⁰. The very indeterminacy of the ‘big Other’ renders experience both absent of specificity and subject to a vague universality that stands in for emphatic experience: ‘all is empty, all is the same, all has been’, as Nietzsche’s soothsayer laments⁶²¹. The belatedness of comprehension precludes the possibility of grasping the objective such that everything is dissolved into dialectical flux. There can be no *Aufhebung* in this situation because what determines remains indeterminate and cannot be preserved as a sublated object that belongs to the past. Too late morphs into too early in the sense that no dialectical movement takes place and the dichotomies of modernity persist, the other possibilities remaining mere chaff or husks to which modernity can only gesture towards in nostalgic silence.

A Traumatic Opening

It would seem that there is no escape from the universal’s colonisation of the particular despite its opacity and the ‘non-synchronicity’ of experience. Against the parousia of which Hegel is accused, modernity has played out instead as absolute

⁶¹⁹ In the essay *Free Time*, Adorno also makes the argument that knowing is internal to ideology rather than invoking its dissolution. Having what Adorno calls a ‘dim suspicion of how hard it would be to throw off the yoke that weighs upon them’, humankind prefers to be distracted by ‘spurious and illusory activities’ (Adorno, T.W. (1991) “Free Time”, *The Culture Industry*, ed. Bernstein, J.M. New York: Routledge, p. 194). The difficulty of throwing off the yoke suggests that even in distraction there is recognition of societal mediation, of the ‘big Other’ that weighs upon individuals. Thus, in relation to what at the time constituted a celebrity wedding, Adorno argues that although the ideology of personalization, which he describes as overestimated value placed upon individual people and private relationships, there was also, from the perspective of the viewing public who consumed its broadcast in various mass media forms, a ‘thoroughly realistic’ and critical evaluation of the events political and social importance. Adorno takes this to mean that what the culture industry presents to its consumers is ‘indeed consumed and accepted’, and yet, it is ‘not quite believed in’ (ibid. p. 196). In contradistinction to Žižek, for whom resistance to ideology is internal to ideology, Adorno detects in the cynicism of the spectator the sense in which social integration is not total, which he frames as a ‘glimpse’ of a chance of ‘maturity’ [Mündigkeit] (ibid. p. 197).

⁶²⁰ Žižek (2012) op. cit. p. 236

⁶²¹ Nietzsche, F. (2006) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, eds. Del Caro, A. & Pippin, R. trans. Del Caro, A. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 105

negativity, every attempt to grasp the thing-in-itself ending in melancholia, the negative unable to transfigure into the affirmative *Dasein*. Neither universal nor particular can be brought to hand. As Hegel himself suggests, ‘the ineffable, feeling, sentiment are not what is most exquisite and true, but instead the most insignificant and untrue. When I say ‘the individual’, ‘this individual’, ‘here’, ‘now’, then these are all universalities’⁶²². The universal cannot be evaded via recourse to affect or any notion of first philosophy, as every singularity that appears is always already marked by the ‘master signifier’, including the non-being upon which being is predicated⁶²³.

Nonetheless, the very obscurity (or what is better, weakness) of the universal in the time of the new suggests that it is also subject to rupture and reconfiguration. It is here that a response to the pervasiveness of the ‘big Other’ can begin to be mounted. As Žižek has claimed, the experience of difference is had in the universal itself. It is this universal experience that Hegel’s speculative idealism sets out to invoke. In line with Adorno’s suggestion that philosophy should flag the inevitable disappointment to follow before it sets off, the discipline can neither pursue nor obtain the successes had in the positive sciences. Which is not to say that one learns to satisfy the need that propels philosophy to permute itself by resignation or adaptation to the poverty of finitude. As Bruno Bosteels has argued, finitude has itself become a ‘new dogma that blocks all action to avoid the trappings of radical evil’⁶²⁴. Likewise, Žižek makes the claim that the impossibility of evading the ‘master signifier’, every attempt at overcoming domination only reinstalling the master in different guise, is no cause for abandoning all notions of emancipation and affirming of the present what appears as the least barbaric⁶²⁵. The reading and re-reading of Hegel does not aim to evade, efface, or rectify the problem of non-synchronicity, to draw on the various, and failed,

⁶²² Hegel’s continues: ‘anything and everything is an individual, a *this*, even when it is sensory, just as much as a *here, now*. Similarly, when I say ‘I’ I mean to refer to myself as this one individual, excluding everyone else. But what I say (namely, ‘I’) is precisely each and every one, the *I* excluding everyone else’ (Hegel (2010) op. cit. p. 53).

⁶²³ Elsewhere Žižek writes that ‘the *Phenomenology* again and again tells us the story of the subject’s repeated failure to realise his project in the social substance – to impose his vision on the social universe – it is the story of how the ‘big Other’, the social substance, continually thwarts his project’ (Žižek, S. (2000) *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, London: Verso, p. 76). This resonates with the earlier quoted passage from Comay in which she asks whether ‘we are condemned to play out some version, more or less sophisticated, of the beautiful soul’, repeatedly failing to pass from melancholia to mourning?’ (Comay & Nichols (2012) op. cit. p. 316). What is being mounted here is a negative response to Comay’s question, which, of course, she herself also pursues.

⁶²⁴ Bosteels, B. (2013) ‘Hegel in America’, in *Hegel and the Infinite*, op. cit. p. 84

⁶²⁵ Žižek (2012) op. cit. p. 19

‘ways-out’ that for Comay remain caught in the ‘vicious circle’ despite proclaiming escape. Rather, the doing again of what was done aims at undoing the realised past by refusing all the premature claims to reconciliation that belong to philosophy’s past. As has been argued, the *Ungeschehen machen* occurs by way of recovering the moments of Spirit’s ‘formative movement’ that history effaced in its siding with barbarity. The movement that ended in the reification of social labour is not teleological, as other futures necessarily mark the passage from nature to culture; the realised present a result rather than the unfolding of a transcendental principle. As Žižek suggests in reference to the lack that marks Hegel’s totality:

On the one hand, he clearly breaks with the metaphysical logic of counting-for-One; on the other hand, he refuses to admit any excess external to the field of notional representations. For Hegel, totalization-in-One always fails, the One is always already in excess with regard to itself, is itself the subversion of what it purports to achieve, and it is this tension internal to the One, this Two-ness which makes the One One and simultaneously dislocates it, which is the motor of the dialectical process⁶²⁶.

This twoness that is One manifests by way of dwelling in the ‘in-between’, which itself is a matter of repetition. What is repeated is the passage between the lifting of the head from the mist of guilt to its decapitation, from the Reformation to the Counter-Reformation, from the slingshot to the atom bomb, from the French Revolution to the Terror, from Kant to Hegel. These pathways of despair, which need not remain so, do not merely pertain however. Rather, they are produced by way of philosophy ‘inserting’ itself into Spirit’s ‘formative movement’, which, insofar as this movement is always retroactively determinable, remains a possibility that accrues to philosophy despite the obstinacy of an unreconciled society. The repeated failure of philosophy is nonetheless marked by its interrupting of the closed circuitry of the given in which no passage appears to pertain. The poverty of philosophy is not so much that it lacks the power to interrupt the continuity of the Kantian ‘highway’, but that its interrupting has not precipitated the kind of experience that would lead to the reconfiguration not just of consciousness, but of an antagonistic society more generally.

⁶²⁶ *ibid.* p. 851-52

As suggested earlier, philosophy's poverty is not fatal. Although it cannot bring about the reconciliation of antagonistic society via the labour of the concept, it can nonetheless gesture towards the persistence of the untimely, and the violence visited upon it, in the face of the repeated affirmation of a particular state of affairs as final⁶²⁷. By retroactively 'working-through' the passage in which the spontaneity of social labour converts into a reified totality, 'speculative thinking' [begreifendes Denken]⁶²⁸ recovers the non-being that is produced (and then effaced) in the determination of the One. Insofar as otherness (that which is produced in the movement of the dialectic) will always already have pertained (despite being effaced), its recovery necessitates the reconfiguration of the present in order for this lack to figure and be comprehended conceptually. The opacity of the universal does not merely frustrate subjective intention; the universal is itself subject to reconfiguration, which is its self-subversion, as the above quote from Žižek suggests. This potential means the 'overdetermination' of that which pertains is always accompanied by an opening in the universal into which philosophy can insert itself without, at the same time, bringing that universality to hand⁶²⁹. Which is to say that the universal is fallible, being predicated upon social labour that is in turn determined by the 'big Other' that labour itself produces. From the point of view of 'reflective thinking', the universal is merely that which appears such that any claim made about what is not given appears as false. As Adorno has written, 'nothing that is untrue can be understood [verstehen]'⁶³⁰ where truth is representational. This, in Adorno's wording, 'unintelligible' [unverständliche] and 'unresolved' [ungelöst] 'error' [fehler] 'bursts open' [sprengt] the system because, in the very comprehension of the system, what Adorno names the 'non-identical' [Nichtidentisch] is produced⁶³¹. And although in

⁶²⁷ Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* being the obvious candidate. However, myriad other examples abound, including, as Andrew Hass has argued, readings of Hegel's *Aesthetics* that portrays the work as promulgating an actual end of art thesis, as well as normative readings that maintain that all that is left to do is the working out of contradictions within the given configuration of Spirit as it pertains in the present, of which Pippin's notion of 'Sweden in the sixties' is representative.

⁶²⁸ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 36. In the as yet unpublished Terry Pinkard translation, *begreifendes Denken* becomes 'conceptually comprehending thought', which better captures Hegel's use of *begreifen* in contradistinction to *spekulativ*. As has been argued, to comprehend [begreifen] is bound up with the speculative moment, but the two are not equivocal.

⁶²⁹ As Adorno has written, 'Hegel's dialectic philosophy gets into a dialectic it cannot account for and whose solution is beyond its omnipotence' (Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 146). Philosophy *tout court*, insofar as it is philosophy, must 'get into a dialectic', but this insertion does not mean philosophy is able to master what it inserts itself into, and it is precisely this non-mastery that opens up the possibility of a space in which 'something can happen'.

⁶³⁰ *ibid.* p. 147

⁶³¹ *ibid.*

the labour of the concept the ‘non-conceptual’ [Nichtbegriffliche] becomes conceptual, comprehension of this movement must not mistake that conceptualisation of the non-identical for absolute identity. Which is another way of saying that comprehension is always accompanied by the production of otherness.

What Adorno points to therefore is the sense in which the other stands in need of concepts and concepts stand in need of the other in order to pertain. Both the One and the other stand in a relation of mutual dependency that does not end in identity precisely because the very determination of the concept depends upon the otherness of the other. To put it somewhat awkwardly, the becoming concept of the non-conceptual produces otherness, but the latter cannot be identical to that which becomes concept. That reflection is internal to Spirit means the latter is subject to the determinations of consciousness despite the subject not being able to apprehend or understand [auffassen or verstehen] Spirit as absolute presence. In undoing what was done by bending back upon itself, Spirit, in Žižek’s words, ‘creates its own conditions of possibility’⁶³², which must include time itself. However, this does not mean that the dialectic can ‘eliminate’ [wegzuschaffen] that which cannot be ‘fully absorbed’ [Nichtaufgehenden] into the dialectic, which would amount to Spirit pulling itself up by its own bootstraps, the circle in which it operates closed⁶³³. In turn, the universal, despite its colonisation of labour, its rendering spontaneity schematic, is subject to an other that is produced by the labour it governs.

The recompense to be paid to the other necessitates the recovery of the subjectivity of social labour. And yet, the latter is itself predicated upon the recovery of nature, or the non-being that counters the reified totality that marks the present. It is this recovery, in which the dialectic speaks its own name, as Adorno demands⁶³⁴, that enables philosophy to dwell in the ‘in-between’, neither being nor non-being alone, but both at the same time. Of course, nature is not foreign to Hegel despite his tendency, as Adorno claims, towards effacing the other in the totalisation of culture, which amounts to Hegel ‘violating’ [Verletzung] his own concept of dialectic

⁶³² Žižek (2012) op. cit. p. 223

⁶³³ Adorno (1993) op. cit. p. 148

⁶³⁴ *ibid.* p. 25

precisely by not violating the concept⁶³⁵. As Andrew Hass has argued, Hegel's concern, which did not abate throughout his corpus, was 'how to read nature (*phusis*) and the metaphysical (*metaphusis*) together'⁶³⁶. In the advance of culture, which Hegel refers to as 'pure insight', the loss of nature cannot be hindered, every attempt at curtailing cultural infection only aggravating the disease⁶³⁷. Nature, it would seem, can only return, like God as Christ, in perverted form.

What must be maintained however is that what pertains prior to negation, seemingly in simple repose, is never mere being in its absolute presence. For Žižek, as for Hegel, what precedes transgression is not a 'neutral state of things' that is then violated⁶³⁸. What precedes is always already an after-effect, not just of what came before it, but of the retroactive determination to follow. Negation does not amount to the disturbing of the already constituted. The latter, in its appearing as singular, is an after-effect of dialectical movement, which means it is always already plural. This means that there is no "nature" that pertains prior to and in isolation from culture. Instead, nature is, as Adrian Johnston has argued, 'weak' in the sense that it is constituted by the breakdowns and failures that are usually attributed to the 'crookedness' of what is human in contrast to the beautiful forms of nature⁶³⁹. By this, Johnston means that nature is underdetermined, unable to be reduced to universal law, which can be contrasted with the overdetermination of culture and social labour. Even in the organism there is an aspect that evades the universal germ such that the latter is marked by lack. This 'weak' notion of nature attempts to write discontinuity and fallibility into the universal or lawful, the continuous and infallible, which suggests of the malleability of the material that does not merely accrue from cultural manipulation. It is not that nature cannot be comprehended via the concept, but rather, the concept is internal to nature such that its movement transforms the latter in the very moment of its comprehension, which, at the same time, produces otherness.

⁶³⁵ *ibid.* p. 148

⁶³⁶ Hass (2013) *op. cit.* p. 5

⁶³⁷ Hegel (1977) *op. cit.* p. 331

⁶³⁸ Žižek (2012) *op. cit.* p. 299

⁶³⁹ To recall, Kant suggests that 'nothing straight can be made from such crooked [krummen] timber as that which humanity is made of' (Kant, I. (1991) "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Purpose", *Political Writings*, ed. Reiss, H.S. trans. Nisbet, H.B. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 46, trans. amended).

To shift the register slightly, history, as a consequence, cannot be conceived of as a movement in which a present is disturbed by a negative that transforms the singular. As Jan Völker has argued in reference to Hegel's critique of Kant, the claim that Hegel's Kant is the wrong Kant, that Hegel misrepresented Kant and in doing so missed what is was that Kant did, assumes that there is a "Kant" that both precedes Hegel's critique and can be accessed if one reads Kant in the correct manner⁶⁴⁰. Or, to repeat an earlier claim, the penultimate always lingers in the ultimate, there being no clean transition in which the past is effaced. This lingering however is itself determined by what follows such that its 'afterness' [Nachträglichkeit], to adopt Gerhard Richter's Freudian motif, is only retroactively determined. For Wyschogrod, writing in reference to the mental anguish apparent in Hegel's personal correspondence with his sister, the subject is diseased in the sense that the path to the rational is always marked by the irrational, which does not merely prefigure the rational, but is carried over into it whilst also being determined by that carrying over⁶⁴¹.

Considered in this light, nature figures in culture despite being saturated with the latter. However, it cannot be recovered in a manner that pertained prior to cultural infection. As Agon Hamza has written in relation to Žižek's ontology of absolute recoil (Spirit's bending back upon itself a determinant of being), 'there is no lost origin, ...[as] the origin itself is constituted through the idea of this loss and desperate attempts to return to that which has been lost'⁶⁴². The dialectic is, as Adorno suggests, 'fragile' [zerbrechlich] in the sense that it distorts even itself, both the demise of Hegel after his death, and his 'making a beginning – again'⁶⁴³, an after-effect of the dialectic itself⁶⁴⁴.

⁶⁴⁰ Völker, J. (2016) "From Hegel to Kant", *Slavoj Žižek and Dialectical Materialism*, op. cit. p. 58. Völker writes that, 'it is... in the Hegelian transgression of "Kant" that the proper Kant arises. The proper Kant is the one who did something other than he (the conscious Kant) believed himself to do, something other than the "Kant" who believed himself to be "Kant". It is the self-conscious Kant who knew what he did but still did something else' (ibid.).

⁶⁴¹ Wyschogrod, E. (2011) "Disrupting Reason", *Hegel and the Infinite*, op. cit. p. 183

⁶⁴² Hamza (2016) op. cit. p. 165

⁶⁴³ Hass op. cit. p. 1

⁶⁴⁴ Derrida makes a similar claim in relation to his notion of *differance*, suggesting that 'I wish to underline that the efficacy of the thematic of *differance* may very well, indeed must, one day be superseded, lending itself if not to its own replacement, at least to enmeshing itself in a chain that in truth it never will have governed' (Derrida, J (1982) "Difference", *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Publishing, p. 7). It is this admission of fragility that informs Catherine Malabou's claim that the future of Hegel is the overcoming of deconstruction.

This is not to claim however that nature is mere formless matter that finds its shape in the retroactivity of conceptual labour. Insofar as nature must necessarily be approached by way of a present shape of consciousness, the tendency emerges to thus construe nature as the mere content of a form that pertains in the present. However, it is not an either/or proposition: nature need not figure on its own terms, undistorted by culture, nor merely on terms determined by Spirit's present configuration. Nature is not only determined by the conceptual labour undertaken in the present, it also figures in a manner not exhausted by that labour. Towards the end of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel makes the claim that the goal of Absolute Knowing, what he refers to as Spirit knowing itself as Spirit, 'has for its path [Wege] the recollection [Erinnerung] of Spirits as they are in themselves and as they accomplish [vollbringen] the organisation of their realm'⁶⁴⁵. To work Spirit's passage is to not merely recollect objects, deeds and occurrences, but the configurations of Spirit in which the past occurred. Nor however does such recollection enable past configurations to be accessed 'the way they really were'. The dialectician cannot transcend his or her present, and yet, at the same time, this limitation does not condemn philosophy to finitude precisely because conceptual labour also figures as a determinant of Spirit's past configurations. As Žižek attests, 'Hegel's thought stands for the moment of passage between philosophy as the Master's discourse, the philosophy of the One that totalizes the multiplicity, and antiphilosophy which insists on the Real as that which escapes the grasp of the One'⁶⁴⁶. The dialectician must open up a space between nature and culture in order to allow the former to figure in a manner not wholly determined by the latter. It is precisely via such an allowing that difference may figure in the present beyond the confines of the limitations that belong to a particular shape of Spirit.

The recovery of nature can neither be exhausted nor permanently consigned to the past. What is recovered is not mere shapeless content, but another symbolic order or conditions that allow, whose recovery necessarily transforms experience in the present because the conditions of possibility are extended beyond the configuration of consciousness that previously pertained. This is the 'other side' [jenseits] that Adorno refers to, which is precisely that which troubles any claim to totality. There is no

⁶⁴⁵ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 493

⁶⁴⁶ Žižek (2012) op. cit. p. 851

notion of nature that precedes the distortions of culture. At the same time, however, culture remains dependent, its status as a totality predicated upon nature's effacement. As Andrew Hass suggests, this amounts to the 'negation of either side that is also the self-begetting of either side', which is precisely what he describes as speculation⁶⁴⁷. The negation of nature by culture produces the otherness of nature. As the other of culture, nature is determined as such only via the release of its otherness that occurs in the negation of negation. To say the name of the dialectic, as Adorno demands, necessitates saying the name of nature otherwise. This remains philosophy's paradox.

Waiting For Marxo

But does this paradox not still condemn philosophy to poverty? What is to be done if what is done always evades aim and goal? The problem of melancholia, like Hegel himself, is always waiting up ahead. It would seem that not only the negation of the negation is blocked to Spirit, but the absolute dismemberment upon which such late negation depends. There can be no reinscription, as Žižek demands, of ontological difference into the thing-in-itself because the objective has remained impenetrable. How many times does one repeat Hegel, and thus repeat the failures of the dialectic, including the newly repeated, before a different 'way-out' is to be pursued? As noted in the opening chapter, however, repeating the dialectic need not be reduced to Freud's 'repetition compulsion' and the neurosis that is its accompaniment. Bending back around and working through, the modalities that inform Hegel's bitter labour, invoke a different form of comportment than that which underpins the Kantian spectator and its emphasis on the epistemological. Which means that although, to follow Žižek, ideology is no longer a matter of acting out what one does not know one is subject to, the negativity that belongs to conceptual labour, in Hegelian form, not only holds open the possibility of 'something happening', it also, and in-itself, suggests of a mode of comportment that counters the boredom and stasis of spectatorship. There is, in the reading and re-reading of Hegel, a pushing against the discursive limits and singular ontology of the present despite the latter's persistence. And although such repetition has yet to achieve the requisite re-orientation of consciousness or dislodge the materiality of an antagonistic civil society, it is the

⁶⁴⁷ Hass op. cit. p. 156

never having been of a Hegelian modernity that holds out the possibility of a future. It is in this sense that Hegel must be repeated ‘seven and seventy times’⁶⁴⁸.

In volume one of his *Lectures on Aesthetics*, Hegel writes of the need to ‘punch a hole in the existing order of things’ [ein Loch in diese Ordnung der Dinge hineinzustoßen]⁶⁴⁹ in order to change the world. As Adorno, Žižek and Ruda all maintain, this insertion can only be immanent to that order. Reading and re-reading Hegel must attend therefore to that in the dialectic in which the *Erdenrest*, as nature or rabble, manifests in contradiction to Spirit’s own tendency towards effacing it. Spirit, to follow the argument of Völker introduced above, both knows what it does and does something else.

For Ruda, the rabble does not create this opening, but rather is the gap in the order itself, a gap in which all determinations are dissolved in the manifestation of non-being in the order of being⁶⁵⁰. The rabble is, he argues, an ‘invisible hand’ or ‘organ without a body’ in the sense that it both is and is not. It is counternatural to the existing order, whilst also being internal to it. This is why the rabble is impossible; it defies the representational thinking that determines the existent, and yet, it nonetheless exists. It accords with Agamben’s notion of the ‘voice’ and Nancy’s ‘our just between us’, which both gesture towards something that ‘has gone beyond the ‘voice’ of sonic utterance, but has not yet reached the ‘voice’ of meaningful discourse’⁶⁵¹. It is both there and not there, possible and impossible, what could be described as an anoriginal negativity that is ‘less than nothing’, as Žižek puts it. Its existence is one of neither presence nor absence; it figures as neither phoenix nor a web of scars or traces. And yet, the impossible only remains as such to the extent that the given is maintained in its timeliness or the labour of the concept is portrayed as having already reconciled a society that remains narrowed by its contradictions.

⁶⁴⁸ Hegel, G.W.F. (2010a) *The Science of Logic*, ed. and trans. Di Giovanni, G. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 21

⁶⁴⁹ Hegel, G.W.F. (1975) *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, Volume I*, trans. Knox, T.M. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, p. 593, trans. amended.

⁶⁵⁰ Ruda, F. (2011) *Hegel’s Rabble: An Investigation into Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, New York: Continuum, p. 122

⁶⁵¹ Hass op. cit. p. 130. Hass describes this being as an ‘in-between presence’.

The timeliness that marks modernity, the either/or logic that renders experience both undifferentiated and indifferent, figures as a block that precludes the realisation of subjective ideas and principles, which, Hegel maintains, are not merely ideas, but also experiential. That is, they remain one-sided, unable to be converted into objective states that abjure the very one-sided, and thus antagonistic, society in which they necessarily emerge. It is concomitant with the problem of the critic, who, in J.M Bernstein's wording, 'reveals a discontent with the very civilization to which [he/she] owes [the] discontent'⁶⁵².

Hegel touches on the problem of finding a 'way-out' of the existing order – whilst being an after-effect of it – when he writes that 'even though the end [Ziel] is Spirit's insight into what knowledge is, impatience demands the impossible [Unmögliche], namely, to achieve [erreichen] the end without the means [des Ziels ohne die Mittel]'⁶⁵³. For philosophy to gain insight into what knowledge 'is' it would seem to require a means of stepping outside the existing order of things, a move that must, nonetheless, prove immanent to that order. To know knowing, so to speak, demands going beyond the limits in which knowing occurs. As the argument pursued so far maintains, this possibility accrues from the very establishing of limits. To limit is to invoke a movement beyond limit. To follow Hegel's argument further, if the impossible demands what impatience precludes, what is required is a means of establishing the limits to the present, which, in turn, would produce the otherness that signals not only the comprehension of the present, but also its dissolution, the existing order of things surpassed. Upholding a notion of totality is the very means with which such a totality is exceeded. Indeed, the present must be totalised in order for there to be a future, which is why the move to a notion of modernity as a form of temporal totalisation, as outlined in the opening chapter, figures as the means with which comprehension of the present may occur. And whilst comprehension signals the production of otherness, it does not abound without an associated re-orientation of consciousness, the latter allowing the given to figure in a manner previously denied, which suggests of the point at which the Ideal effects the Real. Insight into knowledge is not merely an epistemological claim therefore, but an ontological one in

⁶⁵² Bernstein, J.M. (1991) "Introduction", *The Culture Industry*, op. cit. p. 16

⁶⁵³ Taken from §29 of the as yet unpublished Terry Pinkard translation of the *Phenomenology*: <https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/21288399/Phenomenology%20translation%20English%20German.pdf>

the sense that knowing both determines being and gestures towards the otherness that escapes epistemology's grasp.

Modernity has yet to be comprehended precisely because it remains Kantian. The movement that would invoke a totality in which the untimely was recognised as internal to it has not yet occurred. Which is to say that the organ that is the other remains without a body. The rabble, to take Ruda's example, is not only the excluded upon which the included is predicated, it also gestures towards, in its non-being, a capacity latent in the social totality. As an organ without a body this impossible possibility becomes actual when the organ obtains a conceptual existence. This is precisely what Ruda, by way of Marx, describes in relation to the musical ear:

If it seems impossible prior to the invention of music that man has or can have a musical ear, what happens with the invention of music is that a new organ is generated. This specific impossibility is converted into a possibility that has to be thought in the temporality of the future anterior. One can therefore also claim that the proletariat as a subject of universal production continually determines itself retroactively as that which it will have been. It is a constant "being-by-itself" in the steady production of the retroactive determinations of new social organs of its own universal essence⁶⁵⁴.

The transformation of Spirit occurs by way of the production of subjective capacities or organs that, despite having always already pertained, are only retroactively determined as such. Again, retroactive determination occurs in the very going beyond that accompanies comprehension such that philosophy only knows belatedly. To comprehend its present, Spirit must have always already been capable of knowing its other via the concept, of doing what, prior to that comprehension, it did not know itself capable of. Although Hegel makes the claim that 'consciousness knows and comprehends only what falls within its experience'⁶⁵⁵, experience cannot be reduced to that which manifests as given; after the fact, it will always have been more. The expansion of the space of experience is not merely a matter of Spirit bending back upon itself therefore, but of actualising organs and capacities that only pertain insofar

⁶⁵⁴ Ruda (2011) op. cit. p. 176

⁶⁵⁵ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 21

as they are retroactively produced. This is what Andrew Hass describes as ‘negativity *for itself*’, or ‘freedom’, which ‘gives our own self to its own internal otherness’. ‘It is a freedom’, he continues, ‘*with* that otherness, and it is a freedom *as* that otherness’⁶⁵⁶. The development of capacities or organs that whilst latent only retroactively emerge allows for both the figuring of the other and the othering of the One. There is freedom, it could be said, only in doing the impossible, which is nonetheless latent in a totality that denies its possibility.

This belatedness means that although Spirit is capable of permuting itself, it is not constantly permuted in its turning to the past. There remains a temporal block that precludes the reconfiguration of Spirit that conceptual labour, according to Hegel, is intended to invoke. This is why the reading and re-reading of Hegel must be repeated. Modernity has not yet been comprehended such that Spirit’s reach has not yet extended over its other. Transforming the ‘beautiful voice’ from refuse into the conceptual remains philosophy’s task because, for Hegel, it is only in the universal that change occurs. The materiality of timeliness has not yet been dissolved. With Kant, and the French Revolution, the idea of reciprocity, as the negation of linear time, was subjected to a process of infanticide, which is precisely what Adorno means when he says that the chance for philosophy to realise itself was missed, the opening that arose dissolved. Reciprocity, which emerged as a subjective principle, not yet determined and not yet actual, remains both too late and not yet. It is in this sense that the present is anachronistic, forever racing on ahead of a notion of reciprocity that it can never catch up to. Despite its poverty, philosophy, in its Hegelian guise, can nonetheless maintain that the reconfiguration of Spirit is possible, whilst, at the same time, refusing the premature affirmation of the present. Philosophy opens up what Hamza refers to as different fields in the possibility of thinking, which includes the unconscious, class struggle, scientific creativity and political radicalism⁶⁵⁷. In this opening, what must be guarded against is the tendency to transport Hegel’s philosophical claims into the realm of the political as if reconciled society is

⁶⁵⁶ Hass (2013) op. cit. p. 126

⁶⁵⁷ Hamza (2016) op. cit. p. 168

obtainable by way of program or method, the Eastern Bloc *Diamat* being an obvious case of what Ruda terms Aristotelianism⁶⁵⁸.

For Hamza, the disasters carried out in the name of dialectics stem from a misreading of Hegel's famous line that 'the wounds of Spirit heal and leave no scars behind'⁶⁵⁹.

It is in the very attempt to heal without remainder, to efface the refuse the dialectic produces, that barbarity manifests. As Hegel suggests, 'the deed [die Tat] is not eternal [Unvergängliche]', but nonetheless, it is 'taken back by Spirit' such that its individuality 'immediately vanishes [ist das unmittelbar Verschwindende]'⁶⁶⁰.

Vanishing for Hegel is not what it appears to be however. As an earlier quote from Hegel suggested, what vanishes must also be regarded as 'essential' [Wesentlich], that is, not 'cut-off' [abgeschnitten] from the true⁶⁶¹. The claim here is that what vanishes is the appearance of the given as ontologically singular. In being 'taken back by Spirit' the singular no longer appears unmediated. Which is to say, to repeat the earlier argument, that the other continues to pertain, albeit in perverted form, that is, as plural or 'undead', neither given, nor absent. Insofar as the problem that Hegel is dealing with is one of spectation, and the associated absence of otherness which reduces experience to the timely image, the very vanishing of that which is negated opens up the possibility of experiencing the untimely. The negation that determines the One and also produces the otherness of the other is precisely that which untimely experience is predicated upon. What is comprehended, if mere spectation is avoided, is not the other as empirically present, but the sense in which the given cannot be exhausted by the empirical, what Adorno refers to as the 'more' of any object, and which Žižek posits as a lack that is internal to the thing-in-itself.

That life is predicated upon the production of otherness means that what initially appears as the negation of life is in fact that which it is predicated upon. Following Hamza's reading of Hegel's passage on the wound, it is not the case therefore that what was initially a wound is healed, but rather, the scar must be undone by reopening the wounds of Spirit. In this, the premature claim to reconciliation of which the scar

⁶⁵⁸ Ruda, F. (2016) "Dialectical Materialism and the Dangers of Aristotelianism", *Slavoj Žižek and Dialectical Materialism*, op. cit. p. 155

⁶⁵⁹ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 407

⁶⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶⁶¹ *ibid.* p. 27, trans. amended.

suggests is refused. As Hamza writes, ‘the movement of Spirit leaves no scars (leaves nothing behind) because it is the healing that produces the wound’⁶⁶². To heal is to wound rather than scar⁶⁶³. He continues:

Spirit leaves behind not a trail of scars – it does not “stick” to what was already there – but a trail of fantasmatic wounds (losses that were never present to begin with, losses that only had any being insofar as they were lost) which, precisely because they are not events in the sense of reality (of identifiable interruptions in the continuum of time), make no “marks” in history (scars)⁶⁶⁴.

Hamza picks up here on the sense in which the event is always both belated and effaced in the unfolding of linear time. Events ‘in the sense of reality’ are mere occurrences rather than the co-presence of ontological difference. It is only in refusing to read history’s visible scars as history itself that the possibility of attending to the event as co-presence is opened up. It is precisely this opening that both wounds and allows a process of healing in which recompense is paid to both the One and the other. Conceptual labour therefore must invoke loss, the plurality of what has been, by interrupting the tendency, which abounds with the constant reawakening of the forces of tradition, to unify history by subsuming its discontinuities under a

⁶⁶² Hamza (2016) op. cit. p. 169

⁶⁶³ From a different angle, Catherine Malabou, drawing on the field of regenerative medicine, argues that what hinders the development of new organs is scarring itself. To inhibit scarring is to allow the dialectical process to run the whole course of its development, which, rather than erasing scars, enables the reproduction of lost organs (Malabou (2007) op. cit. p. 35). However, although Malabou would seem to allow for the production of what, from the position of the given, would appear to be impossible, such production only restores the organism to some prior norm, the ‘original germ’ maintained. Malabou takes the absence of scarring to mean a regeneration has occurred that extends the body beyond its previous configuration. In the place of scars a new organ or capacity emerges. She writes, ‘when the tail of a salamander or lizard regrows, we have a healing process without scars. The limb identically regenerates itself without leaving a trace’ (ibid. p. 31). As Malabou goes on to argue, the healing that belongs to the salamander involves neither rebirth nor elevation to a higher life form. Which is to say that the salamander remains marked by finitude. Malabou takes this to mean that there is no ‘reconstitution of presence’, but rather, the mere recovery of ‘finite survival’ (ibid. p. 34). It is hard to take this argument as anything more than one for adaptation. There will be loss, there will be violence, but so long as a living on occurs by way of regeneration, life continues. And it is just this dependency on a notion of biological life that, it could be argued, proves Malabou’s undoing. Malabou claims that the concept of ‘plasticity’ suggests of a capacity for organisms to ‘modify their program, to break away from their text’ (ibid. p. 36). What is produced is neither, Malabou argues, present, nor absent, nor is written. It is something that comes from neither ‘the same nor from the other’ (ibid. p. 36). Again, she takes plasticity to be something that escapes the dialectical logic of Parousia and trace. This survival however, despite evading Derridean text, would seem to merely prolong what was framed in the opening chapter as ‘mere life’. Although Malabou conceives of a notion of the ‘in-between’, the gap between presence and trace, the salamander does not defy its text. Rather, its text is merely convoluted.

⁶⁶⁴ Hamza (2016) op. cit. p. 169

transcendental principle, including that of “Hegelianism”. The recovery of loss, that is, ontological lack, produces wounds that open up the possibility of healing the antagonisms of unreconciled society precisely because they open up the possibility of historical change. In Simon Skempton’s formulation, ‘appropriation is not then a violent assimilation of the other, but an opening to it’⁶⁶⁵. And yet, it is not only an opening; it is also the production of the otherness towards which the subject opens. To repeat Andrew Hass’ wording, ‘negation ‘makes us available’ for what is coming, as it makes the coming available (in us, as us, for us, against us)’⁶⁶⁶. Which is to say that the messianic stands in need of work, which both opens the space into which it may emerge, and determines that which emerges. From scar to wound the present becomes a site of contestation, one in which time itself is transformed, the scar reversing into the wound, and a future emerging from the anamnesis of conceptual labour. Only by way of such non-synchronicity can the wound be both immanent to and yet arrive from beyond the present.

‘And so you did not live on their lips’: A Secret Name for God

Reciprocity, as temporality, remains a one-sided idea. It is an organ, a capacity, a condition that whilst possible, has not yet become actual; its dialectic has not yet run its course, its passage still remains to be worked. To proclaim that the present is reciprocal (or for that matter, plastic) is, in Hegel’s parlance, to ‘stop short’ and preclude its becoming, that is, its passing from contingency into necessity. In stopping short, the becoming of reciprocity has continually reverted into the Aristotelianism that Hegel so vehemently tried to avoid such that the raising of the Hegelian head has not been able to avoid Kantian decapitation. Another way to say this would be that Hegel has not been able to dislodge Kant and his temporality of succession, a temporality that informs an ontology of the singular and spectation. Dialectics, in all its post-Hegelian forms, has, in the reading and re-reading of Hegel that attempts to make room for reciprocity, and at the same time invoke the destruction of a ‘bad modernity’ marked by the dichotomies of the Critical

⁶⁶⁵ Skempton, S. (2010) *Alienation After Derrida*, New York: Continuum, p. 75

⁶⁶⁶ Hass (2014) op. cit. p. 120

Philosophy, failed to materialise⁶⁶⁷. This failure is however internal to its manifestation. It is part of the ‘formative movement’ in which the actual is actualised, which is why such failure is no reason to renounce Hegel.

To return to Rebecca Comay’s argument, the contradictions of modernity, the divergent rhythms running along separate tracks and set to different beats, are precisely that which allows the recovery of the other⁶⁶⁸. To recall the argument made in the opening chapter, time has its image and its effect, the former, as straight-line, diverging from the latter, a knotted line. It is this very divergence that for Comay invokes the loss of objects. Imbued with a successive form of time that does not occasion what it appears to, that is, historical change, experience under the conditions of *Neuzeit* is aporetic, the spectator at a loss. Rather than remain with the mere melancholic gaze that longs for what is lost however, Comay argues that Hegel attempts to come to terms with modernity’s untimeliness via the invocation of a form of consciousness that recognises the untimely as constitutive of objects, including the subject itself. The German *misère*, she suggests, is itself a ‘mode of historical engagement’ that, in Hegel’s deft hands, does not end in mere stupefaction⁶⁶⁹.

This is why Žižek claims that the reproach that Hegel only resolves antagonisms in thought alone misses the mark. Thinking cannot, he suggests, sublimate society’s antagonisms, but it can, by resolving them in thought, invoke a re-orientation in which such antagonisms are comprehended by way of the transformation of consciousness, which is not an admission of defeat, but a refusal of the premature claim to reconciliation⁶⁷⁰. There is, from this point of view, a misalignment between consciousness and the materiality of civil society despite their mutual constitution,

⁶⁶⁷ As the conclusion to this thesis will argue, the Kant being presented here is itself ‘husk’ or ‘chaff’ like in the sense that it is an immediate Kant, one that has not been ‘worked-through’. As Völker argued, there is no “the” Kant that precedes the labour of the concept. Kant is neither responsible for nor reducible to what has been framed throughout as the excesses and barbarity that have arisen at the behest of successive time, nor the reification of the subject as spectator. Nonetheless, there are tendencies in Kant that, when amplified, are somewhat damning. And yet, Kant was certainly cognizant of these problems and how they are/were inherent to his critical project. The claim then is that neither Hegel nor Kant has been able to dislodge “the” Kant. This is why the reading and re-reading of not only Hegel, but also Kant remains still to come.

⁶⁶⁸ Comay (2011) op. cit. p. 2

⁶⁶⁹ Comay & Nichols (2012) op. cit. p. 313. Hegel, Comay argues, in contrast to Marx and Engels, tries to account for the logic of spectatorship, not only inquiring into what experience is (always that of the missed encounter), but how such experience is ‘registered, embellished and occluded’ (ibid. p. 312), which opens up a reading of Hegel as Freudian *avant la lettre*.

⁶⁷⁰ Žižek (2011) “Hegel and Shitting”, *Hegel and the Infinite*, op. cit. p. 225

which, it can be added, follows from the misalignment of time's image and its effect. Only by way of a re-orientation towards time's effect can the thing-in-itself be comprehended, which does not end in the unity of subject and object, but opens up the possibility of work on the Real beginning. Which is to say, such a re-orientation is neither politics nor an end in itself, but that which would allow politics to occur, being the intensification of the present upon which political action would follow.

The re-orientation that Hegel attempts to instil occurs at the end of the *Phenomenology* when nature makes a return, albeit in a perverted, 'weak' form. Hegel writes of a 'final coming-to-be' in which Spirit is emptied of itself [entäußerte Geist]⁶⁷¹. This, he suggests, is nature. Nature re-emerges in the 'externalising' [Entäußerung] of Spirit's 'existence' [Bestehens], which conceptual labour had devoured in order to work its passage. This process of externalisation releases what Spirit has consumed in bending back upon itself. Otherness emerges in this release, being neither given nor absolutely other, which is to say that the other is both particular and universal, being and non-being, at the same time. Žižek takes this to mean that consciousness lets go, leaves off or discards nature rather than reappropriating and maintaining it under the spell of reified consciousness⁶⁷². This is what was described earlier as the production of the otherness of the other that accompanies the conceptual comprehension of the thing-in-itself. In being released, nature is no longer burdened with the weight of expressing the subjectivity of the subject. It is free, one could say, to be otherwise. The labour of the concept thus only draws to a close in a final act of abrogation or kenosis that retroactively gestures towards labour's dependency upon nature. Although nature only re-emerges in this final act, culture will have always already depended upon it. Spirit's emptying of itself figures as the negation of immediacy in which being is represented by the timely image. It is this final act that allows the recovery of the non-being that is the essence of subjectivity, the 'weak nature' that it depends upon. The return of nature is thus predicated upon the negation of the subject understood as parousia, the subject who takes itself to be the result of its labour alone. In this, the totality of social labour breaks open at the behest of the non-being that is also internal to it despite being released. Only then does this movement, in Hegel's words, 'produce [herstellt] the

⁶⁷¹ Hegel, (1977) op. cit. p. 487

⁶⁷² Žižek (2011) op. cit. p. 222

subject'⁶⁷³. As an after-effect of relations, subjectivity only abounds by rendering such relations non-relational, that is, ontologically different from it. As Žižek notes, Spirit develops itself out of nature precisely because the latter is its inherent self-sublation; to deny nature is to deny culture, the latter only possible by way of the former, and vice versa.

For Comay, the process of self-emptying or externalisation that produces the other is one of confession and forgiveness. Confession figures as the disclosure of Spirit's failure to synchronise the clocks and render experience timely, an act which is itself untimely⁶⁷⁴. What is confessed is not only the untimeliness of experience, but the terror, philosophical or otherwise, visited upon the untimely in the attempt to render the present punctual. As a 'pathway of despair', the various configurations of Spirit that the *Phenomenology* charts are all marked by the same failure. And although such failure is always specific (each family unhappy in its own way, as she remarks), they are nonetheless marked by the repetition of the logic of melancholia. It is the latter that continues despite the discontinuities of history, which, to draw on Walter Benjamin's suggestion that 'for the materialist dialectician discontinuity must be the regulative idea of the tradition of the ruling classes, continuity that of the oppressed classes', aligns confession with the non-being of the other excluded from the One. Confession thus figures as a means of bringing to account a history of not only failure, but also terror. In the same manner that Hegel describes the work of the all-powerful Understanding, disclosing history's 'non-synchronicity' brings that history to absolute 'dismemberment' [Zerrissenheit], each and every configuration of consciousness dead on its feet. What the dialectic discloses is the impossibility of 'untrammeled or undistorted experience'⁶⁷⁵; it never was and nor can it be said that it will be.

Rather than approach non-synchronicity as a form of pathos, its very insistence suggests for Comay that it is structural. In other words, the non-synchronicity that renders experience traumatic cannot be evaded without the transformation of the conditions of possibility that pertain in the present, Hegel's critique of Kant and the

⁶⁷³ Hegel (1977) op. cit. p. 492 (trans. amended). Which can be contrasted with Kant's notion of the subject invoked in the opening chapter, the mature subject who has reversed into its other in the forgetting of its dependency on the co-presence of difference, which effaces the 'critical construction of being' that politics is predicated upon.

⁶⁷⁴ Comay & Nichols (2012) op. cit. p. 317

⁶⁷⁵ *ibid.* p. 315

Jena romantics pointing to the various ways in which the evading of such trauma fails. The dialectic, Comay suggests, ‘turns out to be a model of vicarious experience’⁶⁷⁶. Precisely because this trauma is structural rather than pathological, the attendant violence that accompanies the anxious erasure of the untimely proves forgivable. To confess of the sins of the father is to also admit of fallibility or weakness, the immaturity that continues to mark the subject and preclude the moral, upright posture. This, Comay suggests, amounts to the relinquishing of the ‘isolated autonomy of the self’, which, in turn, is the abandonment of ‘the spectatorial position of the immaculate perceiver’, or what has been framed throughout as the spectator⁶⁷⁷. To allow that the very structure of experience is traumatic is to forgive what would otherwise invoke the judgement of the absolute subject in its moral posturing. ‘Every judgement’, Comay writes, ‘must incorporate itself within its own judgement, ruining every fantasy of immaculate innocence’⁶⁷⁸. The self-emptying of which Hegel speaks is thus akin to release from what Comay refers to as the logic of punishment and compensation, or what is the same, exchange. Comay writes that ‘if I am no longer the prisoner of my act, this is because I am not its proprietor either’⁶⁷⁹. Confession, as self-emptying, is a loss of propriety, what ‘late Kant’ referred to as a process of concession. The word Hegel uses repeatedly at the end of the *Phenomenology*, *Entäußerung*, speaks to this process of divestiture, or what Michael Inwood refers to as the ‘voluntary disposal of one’s own property’⁶⁸⁰. Lukács as well suggests that the term was used in economic theory to refer to the sale of a commodity⁶⁸¹. But as Simon Skempton has pointed out, what Lukács ignores is Luther’s use of the word as a translation of the Pauline ‘ekenosen’, which, he suggests, refers to spiritual divestiture [kenosis] rather than anything specifically economic⁶⁸². Far from the ‘belly turned mind’, to return to Adorno’s phrase, what occurs at the end of the *Phenomenology* is a process of emaciation. If confession admits of both past sin and fallibility, it not only gestures towards what Spirit secretes in its labouring, but also

⁶⁷⁶ *ibid.* p. 314

⁶⁷⁷ Comay (2011) *op. cit.* p. 131

⁶⁷⁸ *ibid.* p. 134

⁶⁷⁹ *ibid.* p. 133

⁶⁸⁰ Inwood, M. (2002) *Hegel Dictionary*, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, p. 36

⁶⁸¹ Lukács, G. (1975) *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations between Dialectics and Economics*, trans. Livingstone, R. London: Merlin Press, p. 334

⁶⁸² Skempton (2010) *op. cit.* p. 54-55. Further, Skempton argues, Lukács is wrong to take the dialectic for a process in which a ‘reintegration into the subject, conceived as an overcoming of all externality through an interiorizing reappropriation’ (*ibid.* p. 70).

what it could not stomach or digest. The social totality constitutes itself not only via devouring the past, but also by taking the ‘middle road’ in which, to draw on Schönberg once again, a ‘nibbling at dissonances’ occurs. As a bad form of Hegel’s *Aufhebung*, the ‘middle road’ sublates difference into dialectical flux, what is preserved a truncated version that allows for easy digestion. This has the effect of not only reducing the past to a timely image, absent of dissonance, it also renders the present absent of a future by confining the latter to a temporal domain situated beyond the ‘now’, which, as Joshua Nichols has pointed out, contradicts Hegel’s citing of the *hic Rhodus, hic salta* in the *Preface to the Philosophy of Right*⁶⁸³. To confess is thus to enter into the domain of the indigestible, which reduces Spirit to an emaciated state, no longer coinciding with or present to itself. In this, the second nature of culture, which has reverted into its other in the forgetting of nature, becoming what Comay refers to as ‘the power of unchecked natural consumption’, or Kronos, is interrupted⁶⁸⁴. Culture that has banished nature and in doing so becomes nature, interrupts its own rapacious march via the absolute dismemberment invoked by confession. The latter, to return to Hegel’s language, punches a hole in the existing order of things by countering the logic of exchange and its temporality of continuous discontinuity.

Forgiveness, conversely, thus figures as the negation of the negation insofar as it is bound up with the rendering of non-synchronicity structural. If confession is a means of invoking woundedness, forgiveness functions, Comay argues, as a form of erasure. To forgive (remembering that only the unforgivable can be forgiven⁶⁸⁵) necessitates a reconfiguration of consciousness, as only the latter can erase the barbarity of the past without translating it into pathos. Forgiveness does this by transforming belatedness into the very structure of consciousness. For Comay, it is thus geared towards a re-

⁶⁸³ Comay & Nichols (2012) op. cit. p. 335. ‘Here is Rhodes, jump now’, the insinuation being that the exceeding of the present does not belong to a future still to come, but is already present.

⁶⁸⁴ Comay, R. “Hegel’s Last Words” in *The Ends of History: Questioning the Stakes of Historical Reason*, eds. Swiffen, A. & Nichols, J. (2013) London & New York: Routledge, p. 145

⁶⁸⁵ It is this that distinguishes Comay’s notion of forgiveness from Arendt. For Arendt, what cannot be punished cannot be forgiven, which means forgiveness falls within the purview of the law. What exceeds the law also exceeds the economy of forgiveness. The problem, it would seem, is that forgiveness, in its lawfulness, is the mere fulfilling of a predetermined expectation; the law determines what is forgivable such that no demand is made on either forgiver or forgiven. Such forgiveness is predicated upon equally constituted subjects recognised as such by the law. Forgiveness must be extended to those, such as the rabble, not recognised by the law, to those who cannot forgive because not included in this limited economy (see Comay (2011) op. cit. p. 135).

orientation of consciousness in which non-synchronicity becomes the very essence of the subject. It is not enough that confession brings immediate existence to ruin and invokes the production of otherness. To end here is to remain with deconstruction, the erasure of the trace merely producing more scars, as Malabou argues in relation to Derrida. In accord with Agon Hamza's argument, the illness is for Comay also the cure. If what ails is the melancholia that accompanies each failed configuration of consciousness, rendering the non-encounter of each experience ontological has the effect of transforming melancholia into mourning⁶⁸⁶. Forgiveness thus figures as a means of transforming lack into the very essence of the thing-in-itself, just as Žižek sought to do. In this, the woundedness that is 'non-synchronicity' heals rather than leaves scars. Forgiveness is not therefore a pardoning in which the desire for making good on loss is unleashed, which, Comay notes, formed part of the retributive circle of the Terror. Rather, it is the very thing that transforms consciousness, which, at the same time, would sublate retributive desire. From Comay's perspective, it is the unexpectedness of forgiveness (when it follows the unforgiveable), which lends it a transformative potential. Insofar as what is expected is not given, there is a circumvention of the economy of exchange, which invokes something not reducible to instrumental logic⁶⁸⁷. In turn, 'the obduracy of the deed remains, but it no longer confronts me as a stony obstacle, a Nietzschean "it was", before which I must forever gnash my teeth while conjuring up vengeful fantasies of retribution'⁶⁸⁸, she writes.

There is, in this circumvention of exchange, the opening of a domain outside of punishment and compensation, which Comay refers to as 'a chasm in which time starts again and the world is suddenly reinvented'⁶⁸⁹. This is the negation of negation in which otherness becomes not a transcendent being situated in an ethereal domain, but inscribed within the thing-in-itself. Comay refers to forgiveness as a 'collective

⁶⁸⁶ Comay is careful to point out that the distinction between melancholia and mourning is not so easily drawn. Moreover, both, she suggests, 'risk betraying the object', Spirit either consuming it for its own purposes, and thus instrumentalising it, or fetishizing the melancholia that non-synchronicity begets. She turns to Derrida's notion of an 'impossible mourning' as an alternative that seeks to maintain the passage between melancholia and mourning. 'Perhaps it's about a permanent passage or porosity between melancholia and mourning – an incessant movement towards mourning that never quite settles... It would be a question of neither metabolizing or embalming the past as a substantial content: these culinary and consumerist models have to be rejected' (Comay & Nichols (2012) op. cit. p. 321-325).

⁶⁸⁷ Comay (2011) op. cit. p. 129

⁶⁸⁸ *ibid.* p. 133

⁶⁸⁹ *ibid.* p. 132

affirmation' in which otherness or non-being is affirmed in its existing. This erasure cannot be a commemoration, as nothing is lost. In turn, no scars are left, only the wound that is internal to both subject and object, which suggests of a qualified overcoming of the problem of melancholia. There is, Comay maintains, a moment of conversion in the interval between confession and forgiveness in which time itself 'seems to turn around'⁶⁹⁰. The very delay, its being too late, of confession, would seem to precipitate a future in which the too early moment of forgiveness invokes the movement to a new configuration of consciousness. It is here that nature returns; imbued with the untimeliness that the 'pathway of despair' had sought to deny by insisting upon the possibility of accessing nature as parousia and successive.

This inscription of non-synchronicity into the thing-itself by way of the recovery of the non-being of the past opens up a different perspective on the status of reciprocity in Hegel's work, this new time or time turned around that Comay draws out. Having emerged as a subjective idea in the past, reciprocity awaits future actualisation in the present. In this light, it is not yet actual; it remains the mere subjective principle that it emerged as with Kant. What the reading maintained throughout suggests however, is that the actualisation of reciprocity will occur only too late, on the 'day of its funeral'. If, following Comay, 'non-synchronicity' is structural (comprehension being the very act that renders what is comprehended obsolete), bringing reciprocity to hand will not lead to the synchronisation of the clocks. From too early, the idea not yet actual, to too late, the idea already past, the 'formative movement' that belongs to the dialectic precludes the possibility of an orientation that comprehends the absolute absolutely. Whilst reciprocity is geared towards coming to terms with the 'non-synchronicity' of experience, its very arrival is untimely. Which is to say that there can be no final *Aufhebung* in which the knowing subject ascends to the level of God, and yet, what is opened up is the possibility of 'laying hold of the divine', the conditions of possibility subject to a reconfiguration in which terror no longer awaits the other. To dwell in the 'in-between' is to insist on non-synchronicity. Moreover, insofar as the forces of tradition remain a constant threat, there can be no passing in which this passage is left behind for good. The labour of the concept, as Hegel

⁶⁹⁰ Comay & Nichols (2012) op. cit. p. 318

suggests in *The Science of Logic*, must be repeated ‘seven and seventy times’⁶⁹¹. As Safatle has argued, ‘mourning is neither substitution nor forgetting... We might state that a compromise operation proper to the work of mourning is inseparable from the establishment of a form of existence [‘in-between’, perhaps? - CW] between presence and absence, between permanence and duration’⁶⁹². Spirit’s working its passage, its dwelling in the ‘in-between’, is an incessant demand, one that refuses the premature claim to reconciliation. It is, Comay remarks, a form of absolutism that ‘marks a decisive departure from every form of absolutism’, a departure that needs to be continually repeated⁶⁹³. However, this does not mean that change is not possible. Although comprehension is always too late, it nonetheless produces the other that the reconfiguration of Spirit is predicated upon. As Hegel emphatically asserts at the beginning of the *Phenomenology*, now is a ‘birth-time’. The secret name for God, the touching of the divine, what in the Jewish tradition goes by the name Golem, is, it would seem, untimeliness.

⁶⁹¹ Hegel (2010a) op. cit. p. 21

⁶⁹² Safatle (2015) op. cit. p. 128

⁶⁹³ Comay (2013) op. cit. p. 52

Conclusion

The Future as Question

'It festers as a sore on the prevailing health'

What would it take for there to be a future, one not given by the mere successive movement of time in which its form remains unchanged? That is, what would it take for time itself, and the experience it engenders, to change? It is this question that has guided the reading of Hegel pursued throughout. Such a question is not merely applied to Hegel however, like a measure to the measured, but is implied by dialectics despite Hegel's seeming neglect of the future. Another way to conceive of the problem is to ask what would it take to bury our dead? If the past is that which, in Adorno's wording, 'festers as a sore on the prevailing health'⁶⁹⁴, and in doing so precludes the leaving behind of what is, nonetheless, unable to be comprehended with present measure, what chance a future that does not remain under the spell of the past? What would it take to bury one's dead when the present, informed by successive time, precludes the dead from figuring? Moreover, if every experience is recouped in terms of a successive form of time that effaces the untimely, what chance the possibility of experience being the means with which difference presses upon the subject in such a way as to lead to its transformation? How can change occur when its very precondition is the transformation of change? Again, this is the paradox in which philosophy both finds itself and must confront.

It has been argued throughout this thesis that it is Hegel that provides the resources for just such a confrontation. Indeed, it could be said that Hegel is this paradox, a figure writing in that 'in-between' moment in which the gradual crumbling of the old gave way to the new, when the metaphysical suddenly seemed to be teetering, and no longer metaphysical at all. And yet, the victory over the obstinate and dogmatic that appeared to materialise with the coming of the French Revolution, and, in the philosophical domain, the lifting of the head from the mist of guilt, the emergence of

⁶⁹⁴ Adorno, T.W. (2007) *Negative Dialectics*, trans. Ashton, E.B. New York: Continuum, p. 144

the self as conscious and in command, the overcoming of pre-critical dualism, was a not so new dawn after all. There is a formalism, one that can be located in the Critical Philosophy, that has also persisted as the material condition of modernity, and which has precluded a movement beyond bourgeois dichotomy and its attendant sectarianism, whispering, 'adieu, adieu' to any and every attempt to sublate it. To dwell in this 'in-between' is to insist on the mutability of the metaphysical, but also recognise the obstinacy that accrues from the metaphysical evading present grasp.

The present, as a Kantian modernity born of a lifted head, is a problem precisely because that which gave birth to it was subjected, subsequently, to a process of infanticide that accompanies every reawakening of the forces of tradition. In modernity, tradition itself is new, its becoming both a movement away from the past, as linear history's interruption, and the re-instantiation, in a particular, traditional form, of what Adorno has called the 'old devil', a transcendental logic in which change becomes programmatic, unperturbed by the contestation had and that to come. As what could be described as a foundation that forgets its founding, a failure of memory that informs both philosophy and the material conditions that belong to civil society, this logic of tradition papers over history's cracks and discontinuities by rendering what is incommensurate commensurate, a process that necessitates the exclusion of what does not accord with present measure, and which has gone by the name of untimely. The result is the founding of a totality in which what figures does so only on terms that belong to that totality. In turn, the present that emerged was shorn of what has been framed as the plural being that its very emergence depended upon. From the co-presence of ontological difference to the reduction of the present to the singular ontology that informs the spectator and its window into the world, the present became circumscribed within itself, there being nothing beyond both its conditions of possibility and what figures in immediacy. In this, the present's future is nothing more than the continuation of what already belongs to it such that history, with the coming of a Kantian modernity, is at an end.

And yet, the formalism of Kant, his insistence that to renege on the division between the sensible and intelligible, and the phenomenal and noumenal, would be absurd or inconsistent [ungereimt, his word], also figures as a refusal of the premature claim to reconciliation in which all dualisms and dichotomies are taken to have been overcome

by way of dialectical movement, or mere force of will. It is Kant's very insisting upon a division between what can be named a sensible intelligibility and what he terms an 'intelligible being' that allows of dialectics despite his reluctance to entertain such onto-logic⁶⁹⁵. Only by way of this division does dialectics prove possible, its collapse signaling the erasure of difference, which would preclude rather than beget the possibility of dialectical movement. At least this is the argument that Robert Kaufman, for example, finds in Adorno⁶⁹⁶. For the latter, Kant figures as the 'block' that tempers an enthusiasm that accrues from the forgetting of nature, or what could otherwise be described as the other of culture, that which is not merely produced by and thus a reflection of social labour. As Robert Hullot-Kentor has remarked, 'obsolescence indicates something blocked'⁶⁹⁷, something that no longer figures as present, yet continues to exert a hold over it.

As chapter 1 argued in relation to Marx's notion of the 'alms of nature', even a totality that would seem to be self-sufficient (precisely because what figures is that which is allowed figure by way of its parameters) necessarily depends on what does not figure on its own terms. To think the present as marked by stasis and repetition is to suggest of its inability to both know and sublate what it is subject to, and produce the necessary co-presence of ontological difference that would allow of the present's intensification. There being nothing but itself and its social labour, the present becomes a mere empty play within itself, a form of self-flagellation in which the desire for the other becomes neurotic, still manifest yet denied.

A Consistent Inconsistency

To briefly employ the tenor of positivism, there are two figures that suggest of the difference between Kant and Hegel, and thus of their differing modernities. If Kant intends to turn the critical path into a 'highway', the appropriate figure for Hegel, which he himself suggests, is that of the knotted line. In place of the continuity that Kant wishes to attribute to the Critical Philosophy (a continuity that comes in more

⁶⁹⁵ Kant, I. (2000) *The Critique of the Power of Judgement*, ed. Guyer, P. trans. Guyer, P. & Matthews, E. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 255

⁶⁹⁶ See Kaufman, R. "Red Kant, or the Persistence of the Third "Critique" in Adorno and Jameson", *Critical Inquiry*, Summer 2000, vo. 26, no. 4

⁶⁹⁷ Hullot-Kentor, R. (1991) "Theory of the Future", *Telos*, no. 87, p. 139

ways than one: successive time, the in-kind difference between the phenomenal and noumenal, the warning against destruction Kant finds in the tale of Sisyphus, to name a few), Hegel, as dialectician, is a thinker of interruption and discontinuity, or what Rebecca Comay describes as a ‘pleating and bunching of consciousness’⁶⁹⁸. The *Aufhebung* that accrues from Spirit losing itself in its other before finding itself again by way of appropriating that other, the negation of the negation, aligns Hegel’s ontology with history’s leaps and transformations, its divergences and returns. For Hegel, the present configuration, in Kantian form, cannot be the last because it remains unresolved, and thus marked by contradiction. Moreover, by framing the past as also marked by such co-presence, Hegel recovers, by way of his notions of ‘bending back around’ and ‘working-through’, that ‘bitter labour of Spirit’⁶⁹⁹, a differential past not given in the present, a recovery that allows of ontological contestation in a now re-intensified present. Invoked by Hegel, in this turning back, is what was named a reciprocal form of time, one in which time itself, by way of social labour, bends back upon itself, pleated, bunched and knotted. As a counter measure to the successive time that governs phenomenal experience in both the Kantian dwelling and modernity, the time of reciprocity is one in which both the One and the other press upon each other precisely because they prove incommensurate. If, under the terms of a Kantian modernity and its successive time, what is to come is always already past, a Hegelian modernity allows of the new precisely because the future does not follow the present, but is instead an after-effect of its interruption. What are interrupted are the parameters upon which something could be said to follow. This is why history as continuous and as straight line can only be rendered as such retrospectively, which opens up the possibility of retroactively recovering interruption and refusing the reawakening of the forces of tradition.

And yet, there is a portrayal of Hegel, one that reduces the dialectic to mechanical form, that suggests not an overcoming of Kant and his dichotomies, but a rendering metaphysical of a logic of reciprocity. If for Hegel the Kantian move of incorporating the sensible impressions furnished by the object into the subject’s process of cognition

⁶⁹⁸ Comay, R. (2013) “Non-Metaphysical, Post-Metaphysical, Post-Traumatic (Response to Lumsden, Redding, Sinnerbrink”, *Parrhesia*, no. 17, pp. 50-61

⁶⁹⁹ Hegel, G.W.F (2010) *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline - Part I - The Science of Logic*, trans. Klaus Brinkmann and Daniel O. Dahlstrom, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 48

evinced, in the end, another subjectivism, the becoming instrument of the dialectic suggests the same problem. As Andrew Hass has written of this version of Hegel, negation ‘is often described as part of the dialectical process, and as such it presupposes something upon which its force can be directed’⁷⁰⁰. What remains presupposed, and, consequently, recovered, is the originary unity of subject and object, negation coming on the scene subsequent to this unity. The dialectic, to the extent that it becomes an instrument directed upon the given, merely affirms the latter in its unity. Which is to say that if reality is construed dialectically, and thinking assumes dialectic form, the outcome is the reduction of the thing-in-itself to a logic also assumed by thought, which ends in the thoroughgoing unity of subject and object.

This is the worry found in the critique of Hegel that belongs, amongst (many) others, to Lukács, Derrida and Foucault, and which was detailed in chapter 3. By drawing on the logic of the organism, Hegel renders the thing-in-itself a self-contained unity, which then becomes graspable by a consciousness also informed by dialectics. Another way to put the problem is to say that to the extent that consciousness and reality are both dialectical, there is nothing that remains external to thought. In reaching over the other, as Hegel frames the workings of the One, what is instantiated is a totality in which nothing is lost. As Foucault has written, this *homo dialecticus*, a being of departure and return, an animal ‘that loses itself only in order to find itself again, illuminated’, recovers the unity of the ‘self-same’⁷⁰¹. There is no movement beyond the problem of spectation and its subjectivism here because what continues to inform experience is a past reduced to a timely image. Which is to say that dialectics remains representational. Kant is not therefore overcome with Hegel, but rather, the space of experience, in remaining spectral, is merely extended beyond Kantian limit such that there is nothing the spectator cannot digest on its own terms. This too is a problem of time. To again draw on Adorno, ‘[Hegel’s] version of dialectics extends to time itself, time is ontologised, turned from a subjective form into a structure of being as such, itself eternal’⁷⁰². The dissolution of the division, Hegel’s absolute consistency, between form and content, has the effect of rendering the relationship of

⁷⁰⁰ Hass, A. (2014) *Hegel and the Art of Negation: Negativity, Creativity and Contemporary Thought*, London: I.B. Tauris, p. 9

⁷⁰¹ Foucault, M. “Madness, the Absence of Work”, *Critical Inquiry*, (1995), vol. 21, no. 2, p. 292

⁷⁰² Adorno, T.W. (2007) *Negative Dialectics*, trans. Ashton, E.B. New York: Continuum, p. 331

form and content itself a form that remains unperturbed by its content. The very inconsistency of Hegel, his crossing of Kantian limit, and the pleating and bunching of consciousness, becomes itself consistent, which aligns the dialectic with the logic of continuous discontinuity that belongs to the workings of capital. Hegel, it would seem, proves far more dangerous than anything Kant could conceive of precisely because his account of the spectator proves far more elaborate, and with it, insidious.

'All is the same, all has been'

But all this suggests a Hegel, and a dialectics, that remains unaware of its own failures, and thus fetishises the dialectic as a 'way-out' of Kantian dichotomy and the problems of spectation. To allow that Hegel, as has been argued, by way, in particular, of the work of Rebecca Comay, is a thinker of stasis and failed dialectical movement is to suggest, however, that an unreconciled present has persisted beyond its apparent demise. Which is to say that history is neither fulfilled nor at an end. It is the very reticence of Kantian mode, his refusal to go beyond limit, which proves problematic. What has tended to frame the Kant/Hegel debate is an either/or proposition. One is either Kantian and thus refuses the speculative reaching over the other that is portrayed as ending in absolute parousia, or one is Hegelian and refuses to acknowledge the critique of metaphysics that belongs to the Critical Philosophy such that a return to a pre-critical monism eventuates. And yet, what has been suggested is that it is the very refusal of limit, the One's reaching over its other such that nothing escapes from it, which opens up the possibility of both the figuring of difference and a historical movement born of the co-presence of ontological difference. It is the refusal of given limit that allows the circumscription of the parameters of the present, which, in turn, provides the means with which history may begin again.

Hegel's speculative approach, the exaggerations and absurdities that mark his work, is precisely the means with which limit is established. It is not the limit of history however, but that of the present, the very instantiation of which suggests of a future that follows not from the mere passing of time, but its complete overthrow. If Hegel can be approached as an anti-fetishistic thinker, who, as Comay suggests, shows the 'dissonance or spectrality' of modernity to be irreducible, his tendency towards

absolutism can be framed as a refusal of dialectical movement rather than an easy acquiescence to present condition and the seeming constancy of historical change. If difference is not ‘this’, nor ‘this’, but something else, something not given on the terms that belong to a Kantian modernity and its material conditions, then it is something more than ‘this’. And to the extent that the ‘this’ brings with it a particular ontology, Hegel is not just a thinker of the other, but of another ontology, one marked by an irreducible plurality. This is, to follow Andrew Benjamin, philosophy’s other possibility, a possibility that a future rests upon⁷⁰³.

There are two aspects to this argument, an argument in which Hegel’s absolutism, his tending towards totality, proves central. The first runs as follows: A ‘sufficient kinship’⁷⁰⁴ between a sensible intelligibility and an ‘intelligible being’, or what can otherwise be named the relating of culture and nature, conceives of the latter as having an always already differentiated presence alongside that of the former. Culture is *there*, and we *also* have nature. To recall the epigraph from the introduction, it is this *also* that philosophy, according to Hegel, calls into question. It does this precisely by refusing to see in the given an already constituted difference between the two. As a thinker of the One, and to repeat an earlier line, Hegel thinks difference in terms of identity, which, rather than effacing the particular, becomes the very means of refusing to allow that given universals grant access to the particular. By reducing every given, irrespective of the posture assumed, to the same, Hegel refuses to acknowledge that whatever is given to such positions is different and marked by difference. The absurdity of Hegel, his consistent inconsistency, becomes, particularly in the reading of Comay, an anti-fetishistic gesture whereby the varied and multiple modes, moods and configurations that belong to both the present and philosophy’s past are, one by one, dispatched by Hegel as failures. If, for Robert Kaufman, Hegel’s resistance to the non-conceptual is ‘at one’ with his ‘condescension to the aesthetic as a source of knowledge’⁷⁰⁵, what is being suggested here is that Hegel refuses to allow that such experience grants access to things-in-themselves,

⁷⁰³ This is how Benjamin frames his reading of Walter Benjamin, one founded on an irreducible plurality, the latter precisely what, it has been argued, the Hegelian dialectic also insists upon via the notion of ‘non-being’, which counters and does not figure on the terms of a Kantian modernity. See Benjamin, A. (2013) *Working With Walter Benjamin: Recovering a Political Philosophy*, Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, p. 21

⁷⁰⁴ Kant, op. cit. p. 19

⁷⁰⁵ Kaufman, op. cit. p. 723

irrespective of how ephemeral, exceptional or sublime they appear to be. For the dialectician, the refusal of difference is the refusal of movement, which is why Hegel can be approached as a thinker of stasis and repetition.

The second aspect of this argument, which is inextricably linked to the first, is this: To the extent that difference is not given, it is also the case that whatever difference is said to pertain in the present fails to press upon consciousness in way that would invoke historical change. The ‘this’, or ‘that’, which an either/or logic points to as imbued with difference, is on Hegelian terms shown to be only variation within modernity’s persisting and material conditions of allowing. What this opens up is the possibility (which is nonetheless impossible precisely because its possibility demands what is not, namely, a Hegelian modernity) of not just emphatic experience, to draw on the J.M Bernstein formulation used earlier, but of the experience of metaphysical truth, which, for Kant, has become obsolete. If the present is that in which such a possibility no longer holds (the metaphysical belonging to a long-dead past), more is required than ‘this’ in order to bring about the co-presence of ontological difference and intensify the present. Such co-presence remains a speculative claim whose truth, in a metaphysical sense, stands in need of a concomitant experience, which eludes a present in which experience is reduced to the singular ontology that informs the spectator. If consciousness effaces ontological difference and, consequently, renders experience singular, what is required is a reorientation of consciousness towards the ‘more’ of the singular that would allow such ontological difference to figure and, in doing so, recover metaphysical truth and the historical movement that is its accompaniment.

A ‘Way-out’ of the ‘Way-out’

Kant does not allow, in his attempt to do away with metaphysics, for the ‘shaking of the tormented world’⁷⁰⁶. For Kant, such a shaking belongs to the past, but neither the present nor future. There can be no ‘truth’ in a metaphysical sense for Kant because the true lies beyond human cognition in perpetuity. One is forced to rely, as is the spectator, on mere ‘chaff’ or a ‘husk’, a regulative principle shorn of its truth. In

⁷⁰⁶ Benjamin, W. (1979) “Fate and Character”, in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Jephcott, E. & Shorter, K. London, UK: NLB, p. 127

opposition to Robert Kaufman's claim that Kant's formalism supplies the means of concretising an ideal, the claim here is that formalism is not enough. A limit, for Kant as for Husserl, must always, as Jeffrey Malpas has noted, remain at arms length⁷⁰⁷. Indeed, the experiential does not 'follow' Reason in its taking leave of the given, as Kant himself puts it, which means the latter remains prefigured by limits that reduce what figures to the timely image, irrespective of what is allowed formally. Which is another way of suggesting that Kant does not touch the divine, nor allow for the divine to effect the subject. In denying that Reason is constitutive of things-in-themselves, Kant leaves the 'actual objective processes' that govern the living out of a life unmoved.

To return to the paradox with which philosophy must begin, if the transformation of change is a precondition of change, it is via the reorientation of consciousness, which is not itself change, in a material sense, that change is transformed. There are several parts to this argument that need reiterating.

In a discursive totality, what counters that totality can only be produced by way of it. The discursive must do what it cannot do, namely, allow for the figuring of the non-discursive on discursive terms. This is because truth itself is discursive. To recall Alison Stone's formulation, dialectics refers to the pulling of speech or reasoning [legein] between [dia] two directions at once⁷⁰⁸. This is the anoriginal condition of a present, the latter being the after-effect of the event and the co-presence of ontological difference.

What is co-present is not mere difference however, but conflicting notions of being, which must, moreover, figure at the same level, that is, as discursive. A mere aesthetic counter does not press upon the One in a manner that begets its transformation. Rather, it is dismissed, on Kant's own terms, as a 'shadowy image' that is 'nothing for us' [für uns soviel als gar nichts sein]⁷⁰⁹, or 'even less than a

⁷⁰⁷ Malpas, J. (2003) *From Kant to Davidson: Philosophy and the Idea of the Transcendental*, London & New York: Routledge, p. 1

⁷⁰⁸ Stone, A. (2014) "Adorno, Hegel and Dialectic", *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, vol. 22, no. 6, p. 1121

⁷⁰⁹ Kant, I. (1998) *Critique of Pure Reason*, eds. & trans. Guyer, P. & Wood, A. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 234

dream' [weniger, als ein Traum sein]⁷¹⁰. Because the plural ontology of dialectics is an anoriginal condition rather than a force directed upon what already pertains, difference must be co-present at the level of the universal. This is why Hegel tended towards the use of *Nichts* rather than *Nichtsein*: 'non-being' is not merely the negation of being, but a form of being in its own right that has an anoriginal presence. The universal, despite being universal, is necessarily plural.

If this 'non-being', as irreducibly co-present, is negated in its being recouped by the process of cognition and its discursive categories, it is only via the negation of this negation that the recovery of this 'non-being' may occur. And yet, because such a recovery occurs only retroactively, it nonetheless depends upon and remains discursive, which, in turn, means the figuring of the non-discursive only takes place via the discursive and the reach of the One. One does not renege on the discursive as a means of accessing the particular, but goes further with it.

In Hegel's case, this means taking it to its ends, which becomes the preparatory work that allows the event to come again. To repeat the Andrew Hass line, such work "makes us available" for what is coming, as it makes the coming available (in us, as us, for us, against us)⁷¹¹. Although what is coming does so from the outside, or from beyond the present totality, its very figuring is predicated upon that totality making itself available to such a coming. This is precisely what a reorientation of consciousness demands. To reorientate is to allow figure ontological difference.

Turning to the past, and recovering the event, becomes the means with which space is made in the present for such a figuring. However, what is recovered is not the past 'as it really was'. As Hegel's portrayal of Absolute Knowing as an invocation of a 'gallery of images' [Galerie von Bildern] makes clear, both the past and the event can only be recovered via the representational and discursive means that belong to the modern subject. The past as event necessarily exceeds such measure, the latter an after-effect of the former. There is no return to an immediacy in which direct access to the thing-in-itself is granted, despite all the differing configurations dispatched in Spirit's bitter labouring. As Adorno has remarked, 'whoever wants to experience

⁷¹⁰ *ibid.* p. 235

⁷¹¹ Hass, *op. cit.* p. 120

[erfahren] the truth about life in its immediacy must scrutinize [nachforschen] its estranged configuration [entfremdeter Gestalt], the objective powers [objektiven Mächten] that determine [bestimmen] individual existence even in its most hidden recesses [Vorborgenste]⁷¹². The going forwards, backwards, sideways, and, as Comay remarks, often nowhere at all, of consciousness, its pleating and bunching, is the very means with which consciousness comes to inhabit these hidden recesses in which the past that festers as a sore on the prevailing health dwells. It is this estranged inhabiting that proves to be internal to the ‘formative movement’ of consciousness. And here the specificity of Hegel’s use of language becomes important. A ‘formative movement’, as a *bildende Bewegung*, retains the emphasis on the image [Bild] and the representation. A movement is occasioned, or, as the prefix *Be-* suggests, inflicted, upon what has hitherto remained obstinate. Which is not the thing-in-itself, but consciousness. The traversing of the ‘pathway of despair’, despite the continuing dissonance and spectrality, nonetheless occasions a movement and reorientation of consciousness.

Hegel insists therefore on philosophy remaining a form of idealism and, as Žižek contends, reconciliation belonging to thought alone. But he also insists that to both idealism and the discursive belong abilities that extend beyond the domination that accrues from a Kantian mode of spectation, the working through of which reorientates consciousness towards the thing-in-itself. The latter is not *mere* reorientation however, because what is occasioned is the transformation of the otherness of the thing-in-itself from unknowable noumena to metaphysical truth, a movement that is formative precisely because the way in which the thing-in-itself figures and presses upon the subject is constitutive of both subject and object. It is the very evading of consciousness’ grasp in all its different configurations that suggests its universality, and thus its truth. The very failure to leave the metaphysical behind gives the truth of the metaphysical, namely, that it exceeds the representations with which consciousness apprehends its world. Subject to what it cannot apprehend, but now conscious of its various failed attempts to do so, consciousness comes to comprehend its own limits and, in turn, goes beyond them in making itself available for the coming of the event. It is in this sense that comprehension is also productive. It produces, by

⁷¹² Adorno, T.W. (2005) *Minima Moralia: Reflections From Damaged Life*, trans. Jephcott, J.F.N. London: Verso, p. 15, trans. amended

way of an allowing, the space in which the other may figure as metaphysical truth, a figuring that becomes the fourth moment of the dialectic, which isn't the future itself, but its condition of possibility.

This does not mean however that what is comprehended is the other as presence. Because every encounter is a missed encounter, to draw again on Comay, the comprehension of such metaphysical truth is itself untimely. The coming again of the event, like its predecessor, will be both too early and belated, the opportune moment both already here and not yet arrived. There is a difference between the thing-in-itself as presence, and the way in which it figures. And yet, because the figuring of the thing-in-itself is transformed by the reorientation of consciousness induced by dialectics, the latter is also constitutive of the former. Despite an object's figuring not granting access to the thing-in-itself, it is nonetheless the thing that figures. And to the extent that a reorientation allows something to figure differently, it also suggests a thing's plurality, its figuring in more than one way. This is how one can both maintain Kant's critique of metaphysics, and follow Hegel in allowing that subject is also substance. Indeed, it is the very untimeliness of consciousness' dialectical movement, its moving in all directions at once and in doing so going nowhere, that allows reorientation. If the transformation of change is predicated upon change, untimeliness becomes the means with which philosophy, confined to a discursive totality absent of difference, invokes the necessary opening in which ontological difference may come to figure. By 'working-through' the past and allowing manifest the untimeliness of cognition, the given is no longer given such that what 'is', the 'this', or 'that', must always be accompanied by what is 'more', towards which consciousness now directs itself⁷¹³. And with this 'more' comes a different time.

What has been argued in the pages prior is that the retroactivity of 'bending back around' and 'working-through' is seismic precisely because it also entails the production and maintenance of a different temporality, one that does not merely counter the successive time of a Kantian modernity, but figures as the temporality of a universal co-presence, upon which the very possibility of a present, and a future, is

⁷¹³ It must be reiterated that this 'more' does not increase the count of existents. Rather, it refers to being's plurality. This means that the 'actual objective processes' that govern the living out of a life, and which do not figure as such, cannot be accessed via recourse to the minutiae of everyday life. The particular cannot stand in for the universal despite being an after-effect of the latter.

predicated. Which is to say that such time is the time of metaphysical truth. And although Horkheimer has argued that there can be no metaphysics of time, there is nonetheless a time of metaphysics, which is not the realised past that informs historicism, but the past that never was, an intensified past of co-presence and event in which the metaphysical both re-emerges and is transformed⁷¹⁴. To engage in dialectics is to change time by refusing the successive movement in which each experience is that of a non-experience, everything already past. A time of metaphysics suspends the continued movement of successive time, an interruption upon which the figuring of ontological difference is predicated. And although, as has been argued, the very possibility of history depends upon the interruption allowed by such time, the latter does not assume a form that transcends the former (and thus contains it) because, with the coming of the event, the very parameters of the present in which metaphysical time manifests are exceeded.

Retroactive dialectics, as a reorientation of consciousness, provides the resources for allowing the event to come again. What is opened up is the possibility of an experience denied a Kantian modernity, which follows from the making of a different time. It is precisely this experience that both depends upon but nonetheless exceeds the time invoked by dialectics. As Marx contends, such work is not a matter of making the ghosts of the past ‘walk about again’, but of ‘finding once more the spirit of revolution’⁷¹⁵. This means that retroactive dialectics is not simply a matter of disinterring one’s dead, as it is not the dead, but the ‘undead’, on Marx’s terms, that is of concern. And yet, the very possibility of recovering revolution’s spirit demands letting go of all those reified objects and fetishes that dot the landscape of revolutions past. Under the conditions of a Kantian modernity, there is a past, but it is the wrong one. Which is why a time must be made that counters not just the futural orientation of *Neuzeit*, but also allows figure a past denied by nostalgic mood. To make of the present more than what it is by making of the past more than what it was. It is only via contestation at the level of time that such a counter measure manifests. To abjure time is to allow remain in force a form of time for whom past, present and future are constantly rendered equivalent.

⁷¹⁴ Horkheimer, M. (2005) “On Bergson’s Metaphysics of Time”, *Radical Philosophy*, no. 131, p. 13

⁷¹⁵ Marx, K. (1975) *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, New York: International Publishers Co, p. 17

The 'way-out' of metaphysics and its attendant dogmatism comes not from its dissolution, its being left behind in the movement of history, but its reappropriation as that which is dependent upon social labour yet exceeds its grasp. Social labour is productive only to the extent that it produces what exceeds the parameters in which it takes place. Which is to say that the 'way-out' is the recognition that there is no 'way-out'. But rather than this ending in a blunt and dogmatic determinism, 'working-through' the past, and all its hidden recesses, invokes a slight shift, what determines, despite exceeding subjective grasp, coming to figure differently, not as freedom's dissolution, but the very means, in both its differing and obstinancy, with which history is made. This time of reciprocity allows of historical experience, not as insight into the way in which things were experienced previously, but as the experience of history in the present. When Hegel talks of the present as a 'birth-time', the experience of the present as such is not given, but stands in need of conceptual labour and the figuring of ontological difference. To give up the metaphysical is to renege on the possibility of history precisely because what is also effaced is historical experience in the present. If the teetering of the metaphysical suggests historical change and the end of dogmatism, it also precludes the possibility of future historical change by effacing the past that continues to hold the present under its spell. To insist that metaphysical truth is necessary in order to invoke change, but also maintain that such truth eludes the present configuration of consciousness, is to demand of the present more than what it allows. Only by way of such a demand will a future prove possible.

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