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Contributi/3

Escaping the Anthropological Circle

Kant and Hegel on Madness and Habit

Michael Lewis

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Michel Foucault considers the Kantian critical approach to anthropology to end up in a circle, which is only to be surpassed in a direction which has come to be known as posthuman. But there are other ways in which to approach anthropology, which suggest a way out of the circle, or a different way of understanding it. By comparing and contrasting Kant and Hegel on the notions of madness and habit, we find spread out before us a map that might lead us towards the possible future of philosophy itself.

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Introduction

In the work of both Kant and Hegel, anthropology at first sight constitutes an anomaly: it dares to treat the human in all its empirical natural particularity, and in a certain continuity with other animals, and thus it risks impugning the exceptionality that metaphysics is said to have attributed to the human being: its reason and freedom, its spirit. Anthropology *is* the deconstruction of the oppositional understanding of the relation between the animal and the human.

It is the hypothesis of this paper that an essential choice is presented to philosophy in the three general forms which anthropology can take: first we have Kant's anthropology, which examines man 'from a pragmatic point of view' in terms not of what he is, but of what he can and should make of himself; and then two genetic approaches: a purely naturalistic anthropology, and Hegelian dialectics: in short, naturalism, transcendentalism, and dialectics[1].

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First impressions suggest that with these three solutions we already have something like a dialectical triad, which in itself urges us towards a dialectical understanding of anthropogenesis in general: (pre-critical) empiricism, critique, dialectics. Dialectics would provide us with an attempt to rethink experience in its immanent development towards self-consciousness, an attempt which would refuse to accept the conditioning of experience *from outside*.

The prominence of neo-Hegelian approaches in contemporary continental philosophy may urge us towards a blithe acceptance of this schema. This near hegemony is perhaps partly to be explained by the need to fill a void left by a certain waning of the deconstructive, critical, post-*Kantian* and *non*-Hegelian French philosophies of the 1960's. In light of these pressures, we shall wonder if the Kantian account has been unjustly eclipsed: we shall expose it in such a way as to bring it as close to the Hegelian discourse as possible, all the better to bring out the subtle discrepancies that remain between the two, and what these tell us about the possibilities for thought today.

The particular way in which the debate we shall stage between Kant and Hegel will be formulated is in terms of the relation between the *particular* and the *universal*: if particularity is the endowment bestowed upon us by nature, then universality amounts to a liberation from that determinacy – freedom is always a certain *negation of* particularity; but what is crucial is how differently Kant and Hegel understand the negation involved here, a negation which will amount to a purely *philosophical* manner of describing anthropogenesis itself.

For both philosophers, this negation, or denial of one's own natural givens, involves the pain of labour; indeed, Hegel inherits from Kant the notion that the evacuation of particular ('pathological', heteronomous) content from the formal law of the categorical imperative (the self-relation – auto-nomy – of the human in terms of *reason*) gives rise to a (non-pathological) feeling of burdensomeness: this is the affective passive sign of the active 'labour of the negative'. For Kant it seems that to be a man is to have altogether – 'abstractly' – negated the nature within us, to become a wholly universal, indeed cosmopolitan subject of law; while for Hegel, the particular remains subsumed under the universal in the form of a 'moment' within a systematic, organic totality (the concept), not abstractly but 'determinately' negated. This transition from nature to spirit is described by

[1] In place of our tripartite distinction, V. Metin Demir's contribution to the present volume demonstrates how the scholarly reception of Hegel's notion of 'second nature' may be distributed according to an analogous division – McDowellian naturalists; anti-naturalists who lay stress upon 'normative practices' which are not to be found in nature (Terry Pinkard and Robert Pippin, in particular); and finally those who allow habit to open up a properly ontological – and not merely 'practical and normative' – distinction between nature and culture. If one adopts the perspective of the Anthropology, rather than that of Objective Spirit, as Demir does, then one is compelled on his account to uphold the third position. One wonders whether a similar structure may be found in Giulia Lanzirotti's text, in a certain reading of the triangulation of Hubert Dreyfus's anti-intellectualist or 'non-conceptualist' account of skilful or habitual 'coping'; McDowell's 'conceptualist' notion of second nature (on Dreyfus's critical account); and Lanzirotti's own solution which returns to the later Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty in a way that demonstrates the limits of Dreyfus's own reading of all of them.

Hegel under the heading of 'habit', and we shall determine the extent to which, though none of the major contemporary philosophical commentators on Hegel – or indeed Kant – from Michel Foucault to Catherine Malabou and Slavoj Žižek bring this to the fore, the same may be said of Kant.

1. Kant: two types of self-relation

The anthropological circle entered into by the anthropology of a critical thinker like Kant may be described in terms of freedom and nature, the noumenal and the phenomenal: nature being that which is given to us, phenomenally, in and as experience, in all its determinate particularity, while freedom is the ability to act in light of something beyond the phenomenal: the ideas of reason, which motivate such action, and in the form of which, the subject gives itself an entirely non-phenomenal law[2].

On the other hand, in the act of carrying out an anthropological study of a Kantian type, the philosopher is observing not external nature but rather themselves, insofar as their transcendental selves appear in empirical form. So we can say that there are two forms of quite distinct self-relation in Kant: the appearance of the self according to the conditions that make experience possible, a self-experience laid out in its barest form in the first Critique but explicated in terms of the multiple forms, defects and excesses of self-examination in the Anthropology; and on the other hand, the pure self-affection of autonomy, in which the transcendental subject gives itself a transcendent law, and thus allows its own behaviour to unfold in complete freedom with respect to empirical givens.

The two circles – the two aspects of self-hood – seem entirely distinct, with no way of providing a genetic or indeed any sort of account of the transition between them. The Third Critique would in its own way address this problem, but also the Second, in their shared concern with the way in which freedom may be manifested empirically, within nature, and thus mechanical determinism contravened thanks to Reason. It was this gesture which the later German Idealists would fasten upon and develop, with or beyond Kant. And yet the Anthropology has its own approach to this question, and this indeed is what

[2] I take the notion of an 'anthropological circle' to a large extent from Michel Foucault's *History of Madness*, in light of the way in which his theory of the human is developed through his Introduction to Kant's *Anthropology* and *The Order of Things*. Speaking of a transformation in the way in which madness is spoken about and begins to speak at the end of the 'Classical Age' in such a way as to render manifest the truth of man, Foucault tells us 'In a single movement, the madman is given both as an object of knowledge […] and as a theme of recognition, investing in return all those who apprehend him with all the insidious familiarities of their common truth', M. Foucault, *History of Madness*, trans. by J. Murphy and J. Khalfa, London 2006, p. 519, cf. 512ff. Man becomes knower and known, subject and object of a human science, an anthropology.

allows thinkers such as Foucault to consider it a moment that allows something to reveal itself in Kant's work which the German Idealists elided.

The challenge of anthropology *from a pragmatic point of view*, in terms of what man can and should (freely, rationally) do, is to gain some sort of (quasi-empirical) access to moments at which the circles *coincide*, to gain access to *empirical* manifestations of the *free* self, rather than simply the empirically determined one. That the empirical self can be animated by ideas of reason means that a purely empirical or 'physiological' anthropology will not meet the case for Kant[3].

We are speaking then of freedom in the world – how precisely freedom might express itself within determinate historical socio-cultural institutions, which would seem to restrict it. This is why Foucault describes anthropology as dealing with 'ruses' and 'dissimulation'[4], but more positively also with politeness and compliment, gallantry and such conventional measures, which, though not straightforward «do not *deceive,* because everyone knows how they should be taken»[5]. Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view describes the mind (*Gemüt*) not in the way the Critique does, in all its transcendental necessity, abstracted from all concrete contexts and particular situations, universal, necessary, but rather considers «the concrete life of the mind»[6].

At stake in the Anthropology is a very particular configuration of the post-Kantian problem of the unity of nature and reason, nature and freedom. For Foucault, the Anthropology thus sets itself the aim of overcoming the transcendental-empirical divide – a 'vicious circle' at the level of *critical* thought[7]. But it is crucial in this gesture not to leave behind the Kantian project altogether, for example in taking the German idealist route of sublation. And yet our question shall be whether Foucault truly understands this sublation,

[3] I. Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. by R. B. Louden, in G. Zöller, R. B. Louden (eds.), *Anthropology, History, and Education*, Cambridge 2007, p. 231. Cf. M. Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's* Anthropology, trans. by R. Nigro and K. Briggs, ed. by R. Nigro, Cambridge (MA) 2008, p. 64.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[5] I. Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, cit., p. 264. According to Foucault, the space that *pragmatic* anthropology occupies is somewhere between the practical and the juridical, the purely moral, as commanded by the absolute freedom embodied in the categorical moral imperative, and civil society ruled by the particular laws of a particular culture. M. Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's* Anthropology, cit., p. 42ff. In other words, we are living in the pragmatic, concrete space in which we do ordinarily take our moral decisions and yet are bound by the contingent empirical laws of the society in which we happen to find ourselves: between the necessary and the contingent, then, or the transcendental and the empirical. It is a question of how *pragmatically* freedom may realise itself in the context of any number of constraints and indeed the presence of other human beings with different ideas: and this often involves ruses, subtleties, manipulation of conventions – *strategies*. In any case, it involves man as immersed in the world, and indeed capable of responding to different cultures with different laws, in which freedom, and moral law, which is universally the same, must subtly insinuate themselves. For something like this reason, Kant describes the subject of pragmatic anthropology as a 'citizen of the world': in Greek, a 'cosmopolitan'.
[6] M. Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's* Anthropology, cit., p. 65.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

and if he does not, then perhaps the Kantian and Hegelian solutions to the division and thus the conditioning of experience (or the formation of objects) by a transcendental and transcendent instance will be more similar than Foucault often seems to imagine.

2. The Genesis of the Kantian Faculties and its Vicissitudes

In investigating the arising of those selfhoods which define the human being, Kant is asking after the ontogenesis (and by extension phylogenesis) of the 'I', the ability to *say* 'I' which raises the human above the irrational animals[8]. Thus Kant asks about the child, and how it goes about acquiring the ability to think and to say 'I'. He thinks about the genesis of self-consciousness, the genesis of all those transcendental faculties that we take for granted.

The 'I' may be said to be a 'universal' in that this 'transcendental unity of apperception', the 'I think', endures through all the alterations in particular mental contents that the subject undergoes. Kant himself traces the development of the ability to use the first person pronoun that runs from self-feeling, to self-thinking, to speaking.

Kant's anthropology might be described as a work of old age, when the faculties start to weaken and be lost[9]; but it is also a work of childhood, or of a philosophical apprenticeship, the period during which one is not yet in full command of one's faculties, and has not perhaps yet reached 'the age of reason'.

What vision of the faculties of the mind laid out in the Critique do the perspectives of senility and infantility give?

First of all, if Kant asks here not just about the fully fledged or still capable adult human being, in whom the transcendental unity of apperception, the constituting universal I is already – or is still – functioning, this allows him to consider the practical ways in which, de facto, the development of the mental faculties can go wrong[10].

One of the facts of human mental development is that we acquire *habits*, customs, a 'second nature' as Aristotle put it. And there are bad habits and good habits, a mechanical abrogation of freedom and a subtle accommodation of one's freedom to the nature and culture in which one finds one's self 'thrown'.

In general, though, Kant seems to be more worried by habits than complimentary of them, as they are always slanted towards the 'bad', always risking the reduction of freedom to mechanism, man to a machine (or an animal). To this end, Kant distinguishes between habit and *custom*:

> Habit (*assuetudo),* however [in comparison with becoming accustomed, *consuetudo*], is a physical inner necessitation to proceed in the same manner that one

[8] I. Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, cit., p. 239.
[9] M. Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's* Anthropology, cit., p. 51.
[10] Cf. F. Fantasia, *Il mondo perduto. Follia e senso comune* nell'Antropologia *di Kant*, «Consecutio Rerum», VII, 2019, p. 22.

has proceeded until now. It deprives even good actions of their moral worth because it impairs the freedom of the mind and, moreover, leads to thoughtless repetition of the very same act (*monotony*), and so becomes ridiculous. […] [Habitual phrases 'turn the speaker into a talking machine']. The reason why the habits of another stimulate the arousal of disgust in us is because here the animal in the human being jumps out far too much, and because here one is led *instinctively* by the rule of habituation, exactly like another (non-human) nature, and so runs the risk of falling into one and the same class with the beast[11].

Habit still has its share of ambiguity, but only up to a point:

Nevertheless, certain habits can be started intentionally and put in order when nature refuses free choice her help; for example, accustoming oneself in old age to eating and drinking times, to the quality and quantity of food and drink, or also with sleep, and so gradually becoming mechanical. But this holds only as an exception and in cases of necessity. As a rule all habits are reprehensible[12].

And yet the way the Anthropology itself unfolds perhaps restores a certain balance, along with a more positive conception of habit, and this happens largely in the context of madness[13].

3. Attention and Abstraction

One particularly interesting way in which the acquisition of Reason can misfire may be explained in terms of the distinction between two forms of attention: *concentrated* attention and *abstracted* attention – not quite distraction, but precisely a lack of obsessional attention to some trifling particular flaw.

Kant is interested in how *both* forms of attention, when either comes to predominate, can lead to unreason. Despite that, Kant suggests, in a way that is perhaps surprising initially, that of attending and abstracting, the latter is far the better of the mental functions: «because it demonstrates a freedom of the faculty of thought»[14]. «Many human beings are unhappy because they cannot abstract.

[11] I. Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, cit., p. 261.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 261.
[13] In a passage devoted to the '*easy* and the *difficult*', Kant suggests that 'skill' (*Fertigkeit*) might be taken as a translation of '*habitus*' (*ibid.*, 259), and he describes habit as 'subjective-practical *necessity*', 'a certain degree of will, acquired through the frequently repeated use of one's faculty'. In addition to this, the contrast Kant later draws between the cultivation which expands our capacity for pleasure, and overindulgence, which dulls that capacity, seems to mirror the 'double law of habit' (C. Carlisle, *On Habit*, London 2014, p. 7, citing Joseph Butler). I. Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, cit., pp. 339- 340. We shall present this notion more precisely in the following section, in the context of madness.
[14] I. Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, cit., p. 243. Later on, Kant makes it clear that (concentrated) attention and abstracted attention are *both* crucial – and complementary – parts of the understanding qua faculty of cognition. Kant speaks of the faculty of apprehending (*attentio*) as apprehending representations in order to produce *intuition*, and the faculty of abstracting what is common to several intuitions, as producing *concepts*: both together engendering *knowledge* of the object. *Ibid.*, 249.

The suitor could make a good marriage if only he could overlook a wart on his beloved's face, or a gap between her teeth»[15]. It is «an especially *bad habit*» of our faculty of attention «to fix itself directly, even involuntarily, on what is faulty in others»[16].

The way to extricate one's self from this habit is by acquiring *better* habits, through *practice*: «But this faculty of abstraction is a strength of mind that can only be acquired through practice»[17]. In other words, one is not innately born with this balance, this ability; one has to accustom one's self to it, to get in the habit[18].

But, as anthropologists, we are not simply observing this attention and its deficit in *others*; perhaps more importantly, we are scrutinising our *own* behaviour, we are observing ourselves, and here Kant demonstrates more fully how self-observation can go astray. Kant tells us that an uncommon attention paid to our inner life can easily lead us into *Schwärmerei,* enthusiasm or fanaticism, as well as madness (*Wahnsinn*)[19].

Kant speaks of *madness* very soon after laying stress on the 'bad habit' of fixation, the inability to be 'abstracted', unable to forget or to let something go. In other words, madness as an exacerbation of a bad habit of strict concentrated attention when focussed on the contents of one's own mind. And as we have already seen, the only way out of this bad habit, is to practise in the face of it a *good* one.

Kant describes this fixation, the bad kind of self-observation (to which the practice of anthropology itself can lead us, if we perform it in an introverted way) as 'spying' or 'eavesdropping' upon one's self. He warns us «not to concern oneself in the least with spying and, as it were, the affected composition of an inner history of the *involuntary* course of one's thoughts and feeling», for this is «the most direct path to illuminism or even terrorism, by way of a confusion in

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 243.
[16] *Ibid.*, emphasis added.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 243.
[18] Kant also distinguishes between voluntarily and involuntarily diverting attention ('*abstractio*') from particulars and describes the exacerbation of the latter as a madness, and one which follows from a certain habituation: «if it is involuntary it is *absent-mindedness (absentia)*». He goes on explicitly to speak of a habituality: «Absentmindedness is one of the mental deficiencies attached, through the reproductive power of imagination, to a representation on which one has expended great or continuous attention and from which one is not able to get away; that is, one is not able to set the course of the power of imagination free again. If this malady becomes *habitual* and directed to one and the same object, it can turn into dementia». *Ibid.*, p. 313. That said, distracting oneself «is a necessary and in part artificial precautionary procedure for our mental health. Continuous reflection on one and the same object leaves behind it a reverberation, so to speak». *Ibid.*, p. 313. Elsewhere Kant speaks of the salutary effects of abstraction as distracting the mind from the excessive attention paid to local impressions that amounts to or leads to hypochondria, the *Grillenkrankheit. Ibid.*, p. 317. And here we find a *positive* counterpart to the negative maddening habituality of abstractedness: «if the abstraction becomes habitual» we can keep this illness altogether at bay.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 272. Kant aligns the two elsewhere: enthusiasm assumes that certain judgements and insights spring from inner sense without the help of understanding, and thus «stands in close relation to derangement of the senses». *Ibid.*, p. 258.

the mind of supposed higher inspirations and powers flowing into us, without our help, who knows from where»[20].

It is necessary not only for Anthropology but also for Logic and Metaphysics to observe the acts of the mind, but only when I *voluntarily summon* those acts:

> to wish to eavesdrop on oneself when they come into the mind *unbidden* and on their own (this happens through the play of the power of imagination when it is unintentionally meditating) constitutes a reversal of the natural order in the faculty of knowledge, because then the principles of thought do not lead the way[21].

Kant thus speaks of a too intense anthropologising self-observation which somehow loses control of the mind, a slackening of the rational mastery which we would ideally wish to wield over our own thoughts. We are passive bystanders to our own mental processes, as if separated from them, lacking responsibility for them, as if thoughts had a life of their own: «This eavesdropping on oneself is either already a disease of the mind (melancholy), or leads to one and to the madhouse»[22].

In this movement towards what psychoanalysis would later describe as obsessional, Kant even goes so far as to deal with «the representations that we have without being conscious of them», those areas of the mind which it is not entirely within the power of the conscious subject to control.

4. Madness

In distinguishing between two types of illness «with respect to the cognitive faculty», melancholia (hypochondria) and derangement (mania), Kant describes the former as a state in which «reason has insufficient control over itself», while derangement involves «an arbitrary course in the patient's thoughts which has its own (subjective) rule, but which runs contrary to the (objective) rule that is in agreement with laws of experience»[23].

While distracting attention from particulars can avoid the obsessive self-monitoring of the hypochondriac anthropologist, an *excess* of abstraction can lead the mind into a hallucination unbound from real objects. Attention and abstraction are the mental habits which go to produce the enduring faculties of sensibility and understanding, and the formation of such habits involves a certain mental hygiene (mental 'dietetics'), and indeed education or training, which allow both to remain present in their proper proportion: only in this way will they produce in our minds an experience of a particular (that is attended to) which is possessed of universal properties (abstracted *from* particulars)[24]. Sanity

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 244.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 245.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 245, cf. pp. 257-258.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 309.
[24] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 249.

is the mutual tempering of equally maddening propensities, and it amounts to a 'normal' genesis of the ability to *know*.

5. Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit: Madness and Habit

We have isolated the two notions of madness and habit from the rest of Kant's Anthropology because these terms play an essential role in *Hegel*'s anthropology. At the same time, we have cast our reading of their relation in terms of 'universality' and 'particularity' because these are the notions which Hegel employs. It is to Hegel that we now turn.

Catherine Malabou's *The Future of Hegel* may be credited with bringing Hegel's anthropology to the forefront of the attention of more than a small handful of specialists[25]. It is also responsible, in part, for the recent resurgence of philosophical interest in habit[26].

To begin generally: Hegel's *Philosophy of Spirit*, the third part of his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, is divided in three: subjective, objective, and absolute spirit. The first is in turn divided into Anthropology, Phenomenology, and Psychology, dealing with the soul, consciousness, and spirit itself respectively. The Anthropology follows on almost immediately from the account of organic life given at the culmination of the Philosophy of Nature, and it is here that we find Hegel's principal account of habit and madness. The Anthropology, Hegel's own *De Anima*, considers the soul to take three separate forms: a) The soul «in its immediate *natural determinacy* – the *natural* soul, which only *is*»; b) the soul «as *individual,* [… which] enters into relationship with its immediate being, and, in the determinacies of that being, is abstractly *for itself – feeling* soul»; and c) «its immediate being, as its bodiliness, is moulded into it, and the soul is thus *actual* soul»[27].

[25] C. Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*, trans. by L. During, London 2005. Although Derrida makes something of the structural place of the Anthropology within the *Encyclopaedia*, in the supplanting (sublation) of man in the form of soul with consciousness and then spirit. This text stands in the background of all our concerns here, as it should for any work on philosophical anthropology. Cf. J. Derrida, *The Ends of Man* [1968], trans. by A. Bass in *Margins of Philosophy*, New York 1982.

[26] Clare Carlisle offers an excellent account of the development of the notion of habit and its philosophical importance, especially today, in *On Habit*. London 2014, drawing some inspiration from Malabou's *Preface* to her and Mark Sinclair's translation of Félix Ravaisson, *On Habit* (London 2008), entitled 'Addiction and Grace'.

[27] G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind* (*Encyclopaedia*, Part III), trans. by W. Wallace and A. V. Miller, revised by M. Inwood, Oxford 2007, § 390. References are given throughout to the numbered paragraphs of the *Encyclopaedia* (§), with 'Z' for the supplementary '*Zusatz*' and 'R' for 'Remark'. Catherine Malabou, and Slavoj Žižek in her wake, will interpret this transition to materialist ends by suggesting a priority of the body, and affirm that, by means of habit, body becomes ensouled: 'man's habit-formed soul marks the birth of the spirit' (C. Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, cit., p. 27). Žižek, rereading Malabou, will describe these passages as 'dialectical materialist' (M. Gabriel, S. Žižek, *Mythology, Madness and Laughter: Subjectivity in German Idealism*, London 2009, p. 107). Žižek even suggests, albeit in a somewhat contorted way, that only a materialist interpretation can make *sense* of what is happening here: «The pure Self as

Only at the stage of the feeling soul does an incipient self-relation emerge within nature, at least in a way that anticipates, even though it is *not yet*, an intellectual self-consciousness: here, reflexivity, emerging from the pre-human organism's own form of mereological relation, is constituted by self-*feeling*. The feeling soul, the outset of the Anthropology, thus constitutes a crucial moment in the animal's approach to self-knowledge, and nature's ascent towards spirit, for in its conception, reflective identity is for the first time understood to involve *difference*. In order to identify one's self with one's self, one must first be divided from one's self. Thus does spirit distinguish itself from substance[28].

But this anthropogenic process brings with it an essential possibility of *alienation*: for the feeling soul constitutes the *second* stage of a dialectical development, and this is the moment of contradiction, which is often spoken of as *Entfremdung*, and to remain at this stage is to be permanently alienated, which is to say mad, or deranged: «This *opposition* existing in the *contradictory* form of *identity*, must be *posited* as *opposition*, as *contradiction.* This first happens in derangement [*Verrücktheit*]; for in derangement the *subjectivity* of the soul first *separates* itself from its *substance*»[29].

At the initial stage of the Anthropology, natural soul, «the soul still lies in *immediate, undifferentiated unity* with its objectivity», an objectivity we shall risk identifying with the soul's *body*, at least for the sake of argument[30]. In the feeling soul, this indifference is opened up to become difference, as the

the 'inner of nature' [...] stands for this paradoxical short-circuit of the super-natural (spiritual) in its natural state. Why does it occur? The only consistent answer is a *materialist* one: *because spirit is part of nature*, and can occur/arise only through a monstrous self/affliction [sic] (distortion, *derangement*) of nature» (*ibid.*, p. 117). Spirit is not fully formed outside of nature and in advance but rather «has to emerge out of nature through its derangement», and this means that, «there is no spirit (Reason) without spirits (obscene ghosts)» (*ibid.*, p. 117).

[28] Malabou tells us that Hegelian anthropology «returns us to the founding Greek moment of the 'substance-subject'», which is to say the *hypokeimenon* and precisely the question of how objective substance (nature in this case) becomes subjective, which is to say reflexively aware – it describes how the self-identity of substance is developed into the type of reflexive possession of identity that we might picture in the form of the circle that leaves itself and returns, refinding itself anew (C. Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, cit., p. 25).

[29] G. W. F. Hegel *Philosophy of Mind*, cit., § 408Z.

[30] *Ibid.*, § 402Z. We shall soon be concerned with potentially bodily manifestations of madness in the form of symptomatic tics, but as Allegra De Laurentiis points out, the very distinction of soul and body is one that may be made only *in hindsight* from a later stage of soul's unfolding: «in feeling, there is no distinction *for the soul* between inner and outer, so that the question of whether the centre towards which she [the soul, *die Seele*] refers all her affections is inward or outward, subjective or objective, or indeed mental and bodily, is meaningful only from the subsequent perspective of objective consciousness, the end stage of being-soul» (A. De Laurentiis, *Derangements of the Soul*, in M. F. Bykova (ed.), *Hegel's* Philosophy of Spirit: *A Critical Guide*, Cambridge 2019, pp. 83-84). For what is perhaps a more unfettered assertion of the bodily moment, see M. Failla, *Dormire, vegliare e sognare: la vie della follia nell'antropologia di Hegel*, «Consecutio Rerum», VII, 2019, p. 70; and on the question of soul and body, cf. C. Maurer, *Il contributo dello studio delle malattie magnetiche al superamento del dualism anima-corpo. Una lettura hegeliana*, «Consecutio Rerum», VII, 2019, p. 47ff. The suggestion that here it may be mistaken to speak of a (distinct, material) *body* without further ado will allow us to broach a fruitful criticism of Žižek's reading later on.

particular determinations that we are naturally endowed with are seen to be merely 'qualities' that belong to me *without* being identical *to* me. Hegel for this reason even goes so far as to identify the feeling soul with the «standpoint of *derangement*, i.e. of the soul *divided against itself*»[31].

Hegel will have made it clear that these qualities are the *natural* determinants of man: «The *first* stage here is therefore the entirely *universal, qualitative* determinations of soul. Here belong especially the *racial differences,* both physical and mental, of humanity and also the differences of national mentality»[32]. We are barely raised above the animals, still largely a part of nature, and that means in hock to all of the determinants which we find to be simply *given* to us: the *particular* characteristics that we are born with or at least find ourselves endowed with without having (freely) chosen.

Broadly speaking these are 'natural qualities'[33], the givens of the soul. Such natural determinacies remain – in retrospect – in contradiction with spiritual freedom, since to be free is to be free *from* determination or givenness. This 'freedom from…' is a liberation, but it does not involve annihilation; rather it amounts to a suspension and a placement of these *particulars* each at a certain logical moment in the *universal*, a suspension which goes by the name of 'sublation'. Such would be a *free* relation to the particular, and the unification of the universal spirit or at least the 'I' capable of moving freely among its natural particularisations (and seeing them as particularisations *of* itself). Hegel speaks of this liberation as the surpassing of alienation:

> *derangement*, as the second of the three developmental stages passed through by the *feeling soul* in its struggle with the immediacy of its substantial content in order to rise to the *simple subjectivity, relating itself to itself,* present in the I, and thereby become completely *conscious* and *in control* of itself[34].

But let us tarry awhile at this second stage: here we remain simply aware that this 'I' is something distinct from its determinations, which are unruly and have not yet been subdued. We remain sundered from ourselves. Hegel suggests that it is in fact a prerogative of the *human being* to remain snagged at this intermediary stage, precisely because it is on the way to a destination at which the animal as such will never arrive: since only man reaches the stage of saying 'I', only he can become truly mad: «Only *man* gets as far as grasping himself in this complete *abstraction of the I*. This is why he has, so to speak, the *privilege* of folly and madness»[35].

Particular natural determinations «are in the soul demoted to mere *qualities*» (§391Z), which is to say they *belong* me (as the universal 'I'), but they are not the *same* as me. I have not 'negated' them yet, overcome them, but

[31] G. W. F. Hegel *Philosophy of Mind*, cit., § 402Z.
[32] *Ibid.*, § 390Z.
[33] *Ibid.*, § 391.
[34] *Ibid.*, § 408Z.
[35] G. W. F. Hegel *Philosophy of Mind*, cit., § 408Z.

I know that there is at least *some* distinction between myself and them, I stand at least somewhat apart from nature and am not simply submerged within it; and yet we are not reconciled. Thus the way is open for two equally essential possibilities: madness and reason – freedom.

6. Habit and Madness

Habit is the moment at which the second moment of soul, feeling soul, achieves this reconciliation, sublates its natural particularity, and makes its transition into *actual* soul: the fully fledged human. It is thus the moment at which the development of the mind stands at a crossroads. The aim of normal psychic development, for Hegel, is rationality and freedom. It thus demands that we overcome our contingent (and hence irrational) particularity, its sublation *into* universality. Failing to develop along the lines of progressive rationalisation and freedom is a kind of madness for Hegel, a wrong turning. If we cannot overcome, in thought, our natural particularity, if we even tarry here for a while on the way to full self-possession, we may be said to be deranged[36].

In madness, the unreason of reason, the natural givens which characterise us, that force their way unbidden into our minds and bodies, do not obediently take up their place in the massed ranks of other ideas, feelings and bodily movements, but rather stand out, and insist: we «are *captivated* by a *particular* idea»[37]. Thus Hegel concludes: «madness essentially involves the *contradiction* in which a feeling that has come into *being* in a bodily form *confronts* the totality of mediations that is the concrete consciousness»[38].

The unsublated particular persists, hindering sublation, retarding psychic development, and this constitutes a 'derangement' in the literal sense of putting the rational arrangement of conceptual moments out of kilter:

> the subject, though educated to intellectual consciousness, is still susceptible to the *disease* of remaining fast in a *particularity* of its self-feeling, unable to refine it to ideality and overcome it. […] [W]hen it remains ensnared in a particular determinacy, it fails to assign that content the intelligible place and the subordinate position belonging to it in the individual world-system which a subject is. In this way, the subject finds itself in the *contradiction* between its totality systematised in its consciousness, and the particular determinacy in that consciousness, which is not pliable and integrated into an overarching order. This is *derangement*[39].

This is the *philosophical* way of describing mental illness: it involves a *contradiction* between the greater part of psychic life, which remains at the level of the universal, and this irritating particular thought which obsesses it and will not go away. This is the *schizein* of the *phrenos*: «the soul *divided against itself,* on

[36] Cf. *ibid.*, § 408Z.
[37] *Ibid.*, § 408Z.
[38] *Ibid.*, § 408R.
[39] *Ibid.*, § 408.

the one hand already in control of itself, on the other hand not yet in control of itself, but held fast in an *individual particularity*»[40]. Thus madness is not simply a total loss of reason (total Unreason), but «only a contradiction within the reason that is still present, just as physical disease is not an abstract, i.e. complete, loss of health (that would be death) but a contradiction within health»[41].

Madness is thus a stage in the development of rationality, a necessary stage, – we all have to go through our particular fixations, our «*limitations, errors, follies,* and […] *non-criminal wrongdoing*», even if we do not all have to become mad[42] – but it is important not to stay there[43]. *Habit*, if it does not remain the bad habit of addiction and mechanism, is what will allow us to overcome our fixation and to sublate the particularity upon which we have fixated. It thus lets us become *freer* in our relation to ourselves, to our natural particularities. The once clumsy, or at least machinic mechanical body, repeating endlessly its actions and reactions (as animals may be said to), can learn new habits, or refine old ones, and thus become skilled, graceful, breaking free of any putatively innate responses: and this skilled grace is the beginning of spirit, and hence of freedom[44].

In other words, habit smooths the passage from nature to spirit, it is what *naturally* enables nature to move definitively beyond itself, into freedom: *habit is the natural analogue of sublation*. Such is the interest that this notion, in its plasticity, holds for Malabou[45].

Good habits, and more precisely habituation, accustoming one's self, allow us to get out of bad habits. They allow us to free ourselves from the mechanism and routine that can lead to fixation and madness. By habituation, we can become *used* to things. The fire of the obsession is thus dimmed by repetition, the madness subsides, and we become simply indifferent. That particular thing which obsessed us sinks back to a level at which it cannot be told apart from all of the other particular thoughts and feelings now thronging around it. Only by achieving this habituated equality can the last recalcitrant moment be made to participate in the general sublation of all particular contents.

Habit thus allows sublation to be *learned* by the spiritual soul, which inculcates it as its very 'second nature'. Habit may thus be said to mediate between nature and spirit, and to see us home in the transition from being animals to being humans. It is a way to incorporate the particularity of natural

[40] *Ibid.*, § 402Z.
[41] *Ibid.*, § 408R.
[42] Cf. *ibid.*, § 408Z.
[43] *Ibid.*, § 402Z and 408Z.
[44] Malabou describes the process of habit formation in the following way: «If an external change is repeated, it turns into a tendency internal to the subject. The change itself is transformed into a disposition, and receptivity, formerly passive, becomes activity» (C. Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, cit., pp. 70-71).
[45] «Habit, a process whereby the psychic and the somatic are translated into one another, is a genuine plasticity» (*ibid.*, p. 26). And as if to demonstrate that this insight may be translated into the terms that we are using to say how things stand between Hegel and Kant: «The adjective 'plastic' indicates the nature of what is at once universal and individual» (*ibid.*, p. 71).

givens into the universality of the 'I' which is capable of roaming among them, as they have been transformed from actualities, which determine our behaviour mechanically, into potentialities, skills and states which we are free to actualise or not.

7. Malabou on Kant, Hegel, and second nature

According to Malabou, the centrality of habit to the Hegelian anthropology *by itself* demonstrates that it may be directly opposed to Kant's Anthropology, for the latter presupposes a chasm between freedom and nature, addressing it after the fact of its yawning open: «Reversing all 'pragmatic anthropology', Hegelian anthropology returns us to the founding Greek moment of the 'substance-subject'»[46].

That Malabou should think as much seems to testify to the chief goal of her explication: to demonstrate that here we have something like a *materialist* explanation for the very emergence of opposition, of spirit from nature, and hence of the very opposition between nature and spirit[47]. That Hegel begins from *before* an opposition, and Kant afterwards, is marked by the following fact: in Hegel, habit is not a notion that one finds only in the philosophy of *spirit*, but also in the philosophy of *nature.* It thus constitutes a privileged moment in Hegel as it is the only time that «the same term plays the role both of result and of origin»[48]. To stress this, Malabou reads anew Aristotle's description of habit as '*second* nature' such that the animal and the human do not stand (simply or in the first place) in a relation of *opposition*, but rather one of *repetition*, and yet one which second time around involves something different. And the sublation of particular and universal is the only gesture which can properly articulate this repetition. The transition from nature to spirit is a reduplication, «a process through which spirit constitutes itself in and as a *second nature*»[49].

We shall come to wonder whether a certain modification of this materialist tendency in Malabou's interpretation will allow us to rethink this distinction between Hegel and Kant. But first we shall find it fruitful to turn to the way in which Slavoj Žižek builds upon Malabou's work, and entrenches the materialistic reading of Hegel even more deeply.

8. Žižek after Malabou

Žižek, in the reading of Hegel with which we are here concerned, stresses not so much habit as the situation in which one finds one's self if one fails to

[46] C. Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, cit., 25.
[47] Cf. V. Metin Demir's contribution to the present volume for a similar account of Hegel's materialism in this respect.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[49] *Ibid.*

adjust one's nature so as to render it a second nature, and remains at the level of a contradiction between universal and particular, obsessed by an apparently unsublatable particularity. Only his reading of 'sublation' is rather different to Malabou's and to ours, and seems to suggest an identification with *one particular* aspect of ourselves, rather than a stance equidistant from all.

Žižek follows Malabou in reading the Anthropology as describing a process of *individuation* (perhaps, given his psychoanalytical slant, inflected more than Malabou's interpretation towards *ontogeny*, rather than phylogeny). We have already seen how this process of individuation may be held up, fixated, perhaps forever, to the point of madness.

The way in which Malabou interprets Hegel here is to say that the two moments we have described as the universal and particular are the two moments of a *reflexive* relation: the free universal self as actively *relating*, and the self as passively related *to* (the self as a cluster of particular properties): the latter may be understood in terms of the self as an *other*. Hence the genesis of reflexivity entails the possibility of feeling one's self to be an alien. The process of individuation – habituation – involves the soul coming to learn that this other which haunts its wakefulness and its dreams is in fact its self[50].

So far we have barely gone beyond Malabou: but in the specifics of how this learning – this sublation of universal and particular – might take place, Žižek forges his own eccentric path.

9. Žižek on madness and habit

On the materialist interpretation we are concerned with in both Malabou and Žižek, habit is understood as the way in which a more or less mechanical body becomes pervaded by soul, as the latter learns to control the body as its instrument[51]. At this point, Žižek takes the reading of Hegel still further in a determinate materialist direction by presupposing that the 'other' within us is our *body*. If habit renders our body 'soulful', then the 'habitual body' will no longer appear alien to the soul; thus habit wards off estrangement: «Habit and madness are to be thought together: habit is the way to stabilise the imbalance of madness»[52]. Thanks to habit, we become used to that other which is our own fragmented and disorderly body. On this point, in fact, Žižek finds some support in Malabou: «With habit, a new form of the soul's relation to its body comes into view, and this delivers the spirit from the threat of madness»[53].

[50] Malabou claims that a certain form of habit is precisely deployed by Hegel to explain 'substance's auto-differentiation', «the logic[al] process of the *Aufhebung*, [...] is clearly associated with the Aristotelian concept of *hexis*. *Hexis* describes the manner in which substance entertains the reality of its *future* actualisations as if they were its 'possessions' or properties» (*ibid.*, p. 54).
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[52] M. Gabriel, S. Žižek, *Mythology, Madness and Laughter*, cit., p. 112.
[53] C. Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, cit., p. 37.

Žižek conceives Hegelian madness in the following manner: «The underlying problem here is the impossibility the subject faces in trying to objectivise himself: the subject is singular *and* is the universal frame of 'his world' [...] so how can the subject include himself (count himself) into the series of his objects?»[54]. Here Žižek's reading becomes more tendentious; in truth one might have thought a more neutral interpretation would have put it quite to the contrary: how can the plurality of particulars be understood as the self-particularisation *of* the one universal 'I', and thus be conceived not as contingently given but rather posited as necessities by the I, in its freedom? Perhaps this would be a genuinely *idealist* reading of Hegel, and in fact, this very interpretation will allow us to take our departure from Žižek's.

But Žižek's words are significant to us at least insofar as this way of putting the problem of madness, curiously, resembles the paradox that *Foucault* was addressing when he spoke of the 'anthropological circle': how can human beings both constitute their world *and* form one single part of it? This is useful, because it suggests that to solve the Kantian paradox would be to overcome the threat of madness, in Hegelian terms. We shall soon return to this as we hasten to a conclusion.

10. Madness and the *objet petit a*

But let us make a qualification: the other that is the self, with which one must identify oneself if one is to overcome madness, is not simply the body, but is a certain recalcitrant *part* of the body: the objective form that the subject takes in the field of experience, and this is what Žižek elsewhere describes, following Jacques Lacan, as the *'objet petit a'*.

By habit we precisely come to identify ourselves with that part of ourselves that seems to be always elsewhere, beyond control, only fully integrated by someone else, an ideal ego whom we want to be and so desire. This is only important to us because this transposition of the Hegelian problematic into a Lacanian context reveals something that might give us reason to step back from Žižek's interpretation at a certain point.

If to become a subject, one has to identify oneself with the objective form that reflects us back to ourselves from an obscure corner of our experience (the example of an *objet petit a* that Žižek is fond of using, again taken from Lacan, is that of the distorted anamorphic skull in Holbein's *Ambassadors*), and if it is madness to identify with a singular part of one's objective experience, then how can one ever become a genuine subject without going permanently mad? The answer is, it seems, still 'habit': «habit avoids this trap of *direct identification* by way of its virtual character: the subject's identification with a habit is not a

[54] M. Gabriel, S. Žižek, *Mythology, Madness and Laughter*, cit., p. 110.

direct identification with some positive feature, but the identification with a disposition»[55].

Nevertheless, even if the particular item is virtual rather than actual, Žižek is still reading Hegelian sublation as amounting to an *identification* of the universal with *one* of its particulars (this in truth seems to be his way of understanding the 'concrete universal' that is so significant to him throughout his œuvre).

11. Lacan, habit, and the pitfalls of naturalisation

One might wonder whether this identification with a *single* particular, even in the form of habit, is something that a human being does indeed go through, and indeed whether this is exactly what Hegel means here. Žižek's reading is, as we have suggested, greatly inflected by the Lacanian understanding of identification, which leads him to think of identity in terms of the identification of a subject with a *single* 'unary trait', the *objet petit a* as a partial object representing the last outstanding piece of the jigsaw that would complete our identity.

But notwithstanding that this focussing on a particular, even as a virtual habit rather than an actual entity, is difficult to reconcile with Hegel's own understanding of the sublation of the universal and the particular, this reading is also difficult to reconcile with its own inspiration: Lacan himself. Habit is a notion one only rarely finds in Lacan, and the idea that identification with the *objet petit a* is achieved by way of habit may be shown to be alien to him. For Lacan, the *objet petit a* is something to which we *never* reconcile ourselves. The object cause of desire is precisely what allows the supposed object of all our desires to stand permanently just beyond our reach. Only our ideal ego possesses it, and we find that we are never able altogether to identify ourselves with that ego. We live out our lives forever sundered, in contradiction with ourselves, an unhappy consciousness, dialectically irreconcilable, as Jean Wahl, not unknown to Lacan, might have put it.

If this is true then should we interpret Žižek as *supplementing* Lacan with a notion and a figure (habit, Hegel) whom he would fall short of here? In that case, from a Hegelian point of view, Lacan would remain at a Kantian level, at the level of the second stage of the dialectic, and would not attain – or wish to attain – the level of the *Aufhebung*. That Žižek should import the Hegelian notion of habit at this moment in Lacan, a notion incompatible with Lacan's own thought, would attest to his desire to shift Lacan himself or the prevailing interpretation of his work from a Kantian stage to a Hegelian one. But perhaps in fact the difficulties inherent in introducing both habit and this materialist reading of Hegel into the Lacanian context indicate two things: that Lacan is not in this respect Hegelian, or perhaps rather than neither Lacan nor Hegel, and certainly not the latter, are materialists.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 121, emphasis added.

For Lacan, the *objet petit a* is always other ('*a*' is for '*autre*'), and is never identified with, which is why human beings are always desiring creatures, always incomplete – this would mean that there was in turn something false – or at least non-Lacanian – about the Hegelian idea of habit as making possible a full identification with the *objet petit a*: that reading of Hegel would be forced to interpret the complete human being as a creature without desire. And perhaps here we have another respect in which Lacan remains at the level of Kant: given that desire can only be understood on the basis of a genuinely supernatural structure, the symbolic order (the 'space of reasons', the logical and legal order, comprised of oppositions and normativity), this attempt to force Lacan and Hegel together would bear witness to what happens when naturalism or a naturalisation is taken too far in the case of man. Indeed, it is noticeable that in this text of Žižek's the symbolic order itself is almost never mentioned. And yet without this symbolic order, one does not have the *objet petit a* and one does not have desire[56]. And so one does not have a human being – or at least one has fundamentally failed to understand what distinguishes him from the rest of the animals and thus one's anthropology remains inadequate.

Conclusion: A Way Out of the Circle

Do the near absence of Hegel in Foucault's writings on Kant's Anthropology and his own fixation on the ineluctable madness at the heart of reason prevent Foucault from seeing that there might be another way out of the anthropological circle that Kant bequeathed to contemporary continental philosophy? Was

[56] That said, if the *objet petit a* is the other of the *imaginary* relation, can we read the situation otherwise, without immediately invoking the Symbolic? Are we too fixated here on the symbolic, and are we presumptuous in assuming a transcendental-Kantian reading of Lacan (with the symbolic order as transcendentally conditioning the real and desire, but being rigorously separated from it). An attention to the imaginary, in the form of the animal Gestalt and the identifications that occur at the level of perception and the level of the fantasy might dislodge the Kantian interpretation of Lacan: the symbolic order, when it was finally introduced in its proper place, would then not be simply distinct from the real or the imaginary, but would provide phantasmatic stagings of imaginary situations in which desire would be fulfilled, the subject and its *objet petit a*, its imaginary otherness, reconciled. Naturalisation must also pay more attention to the function of the imaginary Gestalt in the genesis of the symbolic order from the real of nature. An element of animal perception which perhaps Hegel himself even arrived too early to take into account in his theory of anthropogenesis, but which we might well, and Žižek here might well have taken more seriously in his naturalisation (or materialistic dialecticisation) of Lacan. Even though not always focussing on that particular point, this dislodging of a transcendental reading of Lacan has recently begun to take place: a new reading of Lacan suggests that perhaps this means that we need to rethink the human being, no longer as a creature of desire, but as something else. Perhaps a creature of drive, if we can ever separate that from desire, or have it without also *immediately* having desire. Indeed, this kind of naturalisation is what seems to be the goal in a number of thinkers, not just Žižek, in their increasing focus on the Lacanian drive. In this instance one would have to advert to the work of Adrian Johnson, inspired by Žižek, particularly at this point in his career, when such a notion as drive was expanded upon particularly with the help of the philosophy of nature explored by Schelling.

Foucault, perhaps like Lacan, too caught up in a Kantian schema to see the Hegelian exit? And does the relative absence of Kant's own thoughts on habit in Foucault also testify to this?

For Foucault, what the investigation of the relation between the Anthropology and the Critical and Transcendental works makes clear is that human finitude cannot be thought either on its own basis or by reference to an ontology of the infinite (of the divine, as one finds in Descartes), but only in relation to the critical-epistemological delimitation of phenomenon and noumenon: finitude for Kant should be understood in terms of the absence of an intellectual intuition in the human. Purely empirical anthropologies would produce only an 'empirical knowledge of finitude', and any philosophy which attempted to ground itself in such sciences without further ado would fall short of what Kant will have shown us[57]. While any attempt to deny finitude and return to some infinite standpoint of absolute knowledge would similarly bypass the Kantian intervention.

Foucault forces us to contend with the complex effects this vision of man as 'transcendental-empirical doublet' has on the very notion of anthropology, at its inception, at least in the sense of the origin of *contemporary* attempts to relate the natural species *homo sapiens* and the transcendental subject, which for Foucault are confused and subject to illusion precisely because they are grounded upon the Kantian revolution and yet do not fully come to terms with its complexity, or simply bypass it altogether and rely solely on the empirical sciences of man and their conceptions[58]. Is something like this mistake also to be found in any of the growing number of today's continental philosophers enraptured by the empirical sciences after a long period of (transcendental) separation?

For Foucault, the challenge of any philosophy that calls itself post-Kantian is to make sense of the 'anthropological circle' that preoccupied him to such an extent that it formed the culmination of two of his most foundational works: *History of Madness* and *The Order of Things.* How can man be an empirical given of nature, the object of a science, and at the same time the transcendental condition for the possibility of that very nature and that science? Man as transcendental subject makes *himself* possible in the form of an empirical phenomenon.

Is there perhaps a way out of this circle that Foucault was at least half blind to, and that involved the *overcoming* of madness in the reconciliation of universal and particular that *habit* allows us?

Hegel, in the guise we have encountered here, hints at an escape from the 'vicious circle' that intrigued Foucault in the Kantian anthropology[59]: our nature

[57] M. Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's* Anthropology, cit., p. 117ff.

[58] Although Roberto Nigro implies that Foucault later had a change of heart as to the extent to which this passage through the convolutions of the relation between Kantian Critique and Anthropology was in the end necessary, which would explain why Foucault's most complex and detailed work on Kant's Anthropology went *un*published (cf. Nigro in *ibid.*, p. 139).

[59] M. Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's* Anthropology, cit., p. 105. Ugo Balzaretti offers an intriguing counterpoint to the present argument, which shifts attention away from Foucault's reading of the Encyclopaedia Anthropology towards the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and its consid-

is to be *both* given to us without our bidding and yet freely posited, assumed by us, in the gesture of habitual sublation: nature is thus repeated differently in the process of anthropogenesis, as habit is sublimated into sublation *stricto sensu*.

The Foucault of the early 1960's at least elides the Hegelian solution: not seeing that the circle is actually thinkable as the positing of one's own presuppositions in the sense of positing the given particulars of nature, in their contingency, as rational and necessary, freely posited moments of the universal concept. This freedom is introduced not as something that floats free of particularity, having abstractly negated it in the way of Kantian autonomy, but as standing in relation to these particulars in a certain way: and that is as having freely assumed them, as one's own: and indeed in the form of habits that are not actual but potential.

Not that Foucault ever became a Hegelian, in his own mind, though he did warn that a (Bataillean?) Hegel would always be waiting for us patiently at the end of whatever path we took, laughing at us, if we failed to take him seriously enough; but a Hegelian, habitual, vision of the sublation of universal and particular, whole and part, remains startlingly reminiscent of the Foucauldian notion of an immanent construction of objects, freed from a transcendental that would be transcendent to the empirical field itself.

Would this allow us to resist transcendental-critical thought, whilst avoiding a regression into pure empiricism or straight naturalism, and a purely unmediated relation between philosophy and the sciences?

The notion of habit is perhaps the principal instrument of an immanentist – perhaps dialectical – ontology and epistemology that would resist materialism and lead us out of the Kantian anthropological circle.

Michael Lewis
University of Newcastle upon Tyne
✉ michael.lewis@newcastle.ac.uk

eration of Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew,* urging in general terms a relinquishing of an exclusively naturalistic – and 'bio-medical' – account of madness in favour of an historical one: «The fundamental ground from which madness must be investigated has to be seen not in the *subjective spirit* and, particularly, in the *soul* of the anthropology as *Naturgeist*, consciousness's still natural state, but rather in the heart of spirit itself as *objective,* where in the shape of 'Bildung' it is already articulated as social praxis, language and institutions», U. Balzaretti, *Hegel and Foucault on* Rameau's Nephew. *The Discrimen between Madness and Mental Illness as Biopolitical Threshold*, «Consecutio Rerum», VII, 2019, p. 169. Very broadly speaking, for Balzaretti's Foucault, the attempt to escape the anthropological circle, or prevent its arising, by returning to a pre-spiritual form of nature would amount to just the kind of naturalisation – «a discourse providing access to the *natural* truth of man' – that Foucault diagnosed as being a consequence of '[t]he reduction of madness to mental illness'», *ibid.*, p. 166. Presumably the debate between these two positions would centre around the question of retroactivity, and thus the extent to which Hegel's Philosophy of Nature could and should be treated as straightforwardly 'naturalist', as well as a related debate according to which a fully historicist approach would prevent one from addressing any questions of natural genesis. I must thank the reviewers of the present essay and the editors for pointing me in the direction of this exceptionally rich essay, which I have too little space and time to do justice to here.