

# Freudian *das Ding* and the Origin of Kantian Categories

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**Abstrakt** Autor artykułu analizuje wzajemne powiązania między Freudowskim ujęciem pojęcia Rzeczy w jego projekcie psychologii naukowej a problemem pochodzenia kategorii w filozofii Kantowskiej. Opierając się na „epigenezie czystego rozumu” Catherine Malabou, artykuł proponuje alternatywne podejście do przewycięzenia pętli korelacionizmu, oparte na homeomorficznej relacji między treścią reprezentacyjną a materialną strukturą, która leży u podstaw opisu aparatu umysłowego Freuda.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Sigmund Freud, Immanuel Kant, Catherine Malabou, kategorie, dedukcja transcendentzna, nieświadome, korelacionizm, materializm transcendentny, popęd śmierci, czasowość

**Abstract** The author of the paper examines the interrelationship between Freud’s account of the concept of the Thing in his Project of Scientific Psychology and the problem of the origin of categories within Kantian philosophy. Drawing on Catherine Malabou’s “epigenesis of pure reason,” the article proposes an alternative approach to overcome the correlationist loop, based on the homeomorphic relationship between representational content and material structure that underlies Freud’s account of the mental apparatus.

**Keywords:** Sigmund Freud, Immanuel Kant, Catherine Malabou, categories, transcendental deduction, the unconscious, correlationism, transcendental materialism, death drive, temporality

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**A** fundamental split defines the condition of contemporary philosophy. On the one hand, post-Kantian thought, which can be equated with continental philosophy, claims that the symbolic system (language, power of judgement, discourse, superstructure, etc.) determines pre-conceptual reality: a Hegelian *nothing-in-itself*. In such a constructivist ontology, the subject, or the conceptual system in which it is immersed, determines the ultimate horizon of possible problems that philosophy can examine.

On the other hand, the sciences have become increasingly effective in answering questions concerning the nature of non-human reality. The development of astronomy has allowed us to observe events in outer space that occurred even before our planet was formed; whereas we are digging up and studying fossils from billions of years ago when the first living organisms had not yet appeared in the world. Moreover, the theory of evolution, expanded by the theory of abiogenesis, can prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the origin of man and his conceptual apparatus should be sought in random mutations, genetic drifts, and other transformations that living organisms have experienced over billions of years; and whose ultimate genesis may be traced back to processes of organic chemistry. Thus, over the course of the past 200 years, the once-connected *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis* have seen themselves moving further and further apart. One is closed off from the other one within a transcendental loop, within which thinking of any real genesis is impossible, where a formal *quid juris* has completely overtaken and is in conflict with the material *quid facto*.

Quentin Meillassoux responded to this state of affairs with his book *After Finitude* (2006), which demonstrates the inability of correlationism<sup>1</sup> to meet the challenge of ancestral questions, i.e. questions whose referents existed before any living being appeared. Research by the French philosopher led to the formation of many currents in contemporary materialist thought: speculative realism, new realism, and new dialectical materialism, that try to address this very challenge. One of the most prominent voices in this debate belongs to Catherine Malabou, who is concerned with one central question: “Is the transcendental innate or fabricated?”<sup>2</sup> For her, to respond to this question is to find an origin of Kantian categories. My response to her contentions can be divided into four parts. First, I analyse her book *Before Tomorrow* which is a starting point for my inquiry. Second, the limitations of her approach have led me to form my own criticism of Kant based on her fundamental tenet. Third, I present a Freudian account of psychical apparatus from *Entwurf einer Psychologie* as a way of overcoming the shortcomings of Kantian transcendentalism. Fourth, I examine the interrelation of metapsychological concepts: temporality, drive and repression so as to demonstrate how we may use them as theoretical tools in order to avoid the trap of naïve reductionism. Lastly, I present my conclusions regarding the future of non-Kantian materialism based on psychoanalysis.

<sup>1</sup> This is Meillassoux’s term for transcendental paradigm, within which thought is inseparable from the object and vice versa.

<sup>2</sup> C. Malabou, *Before Tomorrow: Epigenesis and Rationality*, trans. C. Shread, Cambridge 2016, p. 5.

## ■ The Argument of *Before Tomorrow*

We immediately face an impossible dilemma when we question whether categories are innate or fabricated. If we agree with the latter and claim that categories are fabricated, how can we reconcile this fact with their *a priori* transcendental status? If, at some point, we derive them in any way, that destroys the whole premise of them as the condition of any possible experience and reverts our transcendentalism to another form of empiricism. On the other hand, taking the former to be true, how can we rationally explain innateness in the light of evolutionary biology without appealing to some form of religious obscurantism? Nevertheless, Kant had a solution to this problem, which he called the original acquisition (*acquisitio originaria*), which represents the temporal space between birth and experience. Malabou has to contend with the problem of time when accounting for this mysterious in-between state. Temporality, contingency, and biological sciences form a conceptual landscape utilised by the French thinker so as to confront the challenge of original acquisition; but the novelty of her approach is derived from the fact that she found a concept used by Kant that focuses all of the aforementioned areas of thought into one single signifier, which is *epigenesis*. In this way, Malabou does not confront the founder of German idealism from the external perspective of the natural sciences. Instead, she draws out the potential already rooted within his work. In other words, her critique is immanent. There are two passages in Kant's *oeuvre* where he discusses the problem of epigenesis. First in §27 of *Critique of Pure Reason (CPR)*, and later in §81 of *Critique of the Power of Judgement (CPJ)*. Let us examine the context in which both of these fragments appear, consider their relationship, and finally look at the conclusions which Malabou drew from them.

Only two possible ways exist to establish a necessary agreement between objects of experience and concepts. It could be that the experience allows these concepts to form or that these same concepts allow the experience to occur. The first is not the case with categories (nor with pure forms of sense intuition), for they are *a priori* concepts independent of experience. Kant explicitly states that there are only two possible explanations for this necessary correspondence between concepts and objects, *generatio aequivoca* and epigenesis. Malabou claims there are three: *generatio aequivoca*, epigenesis, and preformation. The first theory, known as *generatio aequivoca*, explains the formation of life by distinguishing between the origin of life (inert matter) and the force that caused its emergence (vital initiative). Malabou claims that it is false and considers it a “theoretical monstrosity that warrants no further consideration.”<sup>3</sup> The second

<sup>3</sup> C. Malabou, *Before Tomorrow: Epigenesis and Rationality*, p. 22.

possible explanation is preformation. It is a theological explanation that posits the existence of a creator who, at some point in time, grants us categories that perfectly correspond to the objects in the world. The argument against this thesis is based upon the dialectic of necessity, which turns it into the opposite, that of *contingency*. Understanding can only receive the categories because the Creator decided it to be so, making them external to understanding's logic and thus purely contingent, which leaves only one option, that of *epigenesis*. Epigenesis is defined as the "development of a plant or animal from an egg or spore through a series of processes in which unorganised cell masses differentiate into organs and organ systems."<sup>4</sup> A distinguishing feature of epigenesis is that it constitutes a self-differentiating process. Its conceptual advantage consists of its autonomy and dynamic self-relation.<sup>5</sup> So what is the epigenetic answer that Malabou is giving to our correspondence problem between categories and reality? One cannot but see that it amounts to a series of failures. Going through the myriad interpretations of §27, engaging with Zöllner, Genova, Heidegger, Foucault, Meillassoux, her argument is a profoundly Hegelian one. Like the founder of absolute idealism in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, after over 100 pages of detailed analysis, the French philosopher notes that none of the previous exegetical keys were sufficient to account for the complexity or relation between *a priori* and *a posteriori*.<sup>6</sup> There is only one thing to do, "one last step to make."<sup>7</sup> It is Kant's own move, which is a "retroactive move of his retort to posterity."<sup>8</sup> In other words, the failure to elucidate the content of epigenesis that is working **within** the conceptual confines of *CPR* forces us to see how this concept organises the movement of the *Critique* **itself**, the way it morphs between first and third one. Just like the fact that the *Science of Logic* has to enter at the moment of complete effacement of self-consciousness in *Phenomenology of Spirit*<sup>9</sup>, so too does the *CPJ* enter in order to account for the internal impasse of the first *Critique*. What does the *CPJ* bring to an understanding of our problem of the origin of categories?

What Malabou considers to be of the utmost importance in *CPJ* is the encounter with the phenomenon of life. Life is not just another object of experience that can be subjected to the determinative judgement of the first *Critique*. As Kant writes, the complicated manifold of a living organism is "undetermined by those laws that the pure understanding gives *a priori*,"<sup>10</sup> which in Malabou's interpretation means that confrontation with life is a confrontation with the different rationality that we encounter within the first *Critique* and factual rationality; and indeed the self-sufficiency of life that is indifferent towards us and our act of judgement.<sup>11</sup> Everything changes, even the categories. Necessity within the *Critique of Pure Reason* was a mechanical necessity modelled on

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/epigenesis>

<sup>5</sup> See C. Malabou, *Before Tomorrow: Epigenesis and Rationality*, p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> See *ibidem*, p.153.

<sup>7</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 156.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>9</sup> See R. Comay, F. Ruda, *The Dash—The Other Side of Absolute Knowing*, Cambridge 2018, p. 83–84.

<sup>10</sup> I. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, trans. P. Guyer, E. Matthews, Cambridge 2001, p. 68.

<sup>11</sup> See C. Malabou, *Before Tomorrow: Epigenesis and Rationality*, p. 169.

physics. It excluded any form of contingency. Now, necessity is teleological in that it includes contingency: “lawfulness of the contingent is called purposiveness.”<sup>12</sup> This is crucial point, because Malabou notes a shift within the meaning of purposiveness between the first two *Critiques* and the third one. In the earlier *Critiques*, causality was linked to the concept’s impact on its object. This way, purposiveness “requires no specification of causality, of which it is only a representation.”<sup>13</sup> In the third *Critique*, it assumes that the thing is itself an end without the intervention of the conceptual causality. In this way, self-organisation of the organism is not merely the law of the mind, but **factual** in itself.<sup>14</sup> Here, germinative “epigenesis of the Pure Reason” from the first *Critique* finds its actualisation. Reason itself is subjected to epigenetic metamorphosis. What at the beginning seemed like totally Other to transcendental – life, has now demonstrated that transcendental is a “living structure”<sup>15</sup> in itself. In this deconstructive move, the whole question of whether categories or innate or not loses its meaning, the difference between transcendental and biological has been abolished: “epigenetic temporality cannot be separated from the biological process it refers to.”<sup>16</sup> The transcendental has been sublated. It is at the same time relinquished, given that it is no longer this unchangeable logical structure that is purely determinative towards reality, but its critical and self-reflective aspect remains preserved.<sup>17</sup> Despite my immense respect for Malabou’s ambitious and original reading, I want to present what I take to be the shortcomings of her approach and present an alternative psychoanalytical relinquishing of the transcendental.

The first problem is that of temporality. Malabou focuses on the problem of categories. Her approach to epigenesis effectively temporalizes the transcendental analytic without referring to the transcendental aesthetic. However, when we accept the Kantian view that time is merely transcendently ideal, that time and space are only forms of intuitions and formal intuitions, but not entities independent of subjectivity, then how could even something like the biological subject (as a basis for the transcendental one) emerge through the temporal pre-subjective biological process? How can a living organism be subjected to its own rationality without having access to some time in itself? Evolution, in the broad sense, becomes impossible. The second issue concerns the *transcendental unity of apperception* (TUA). Malabou treats categories as abstract entities, referring to their actualisation in judgements but not in their relationship with TUA. In short, if the unity of apperception and unity of judgement are inseparable<sup>18</sup> and “categories are nothing other than [these very] functions for judging,”<sup>19</sup> than it’s impossible to separate the problem of the

<sup>12</sup> I. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, p. 274.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, p. 171.

<sup>14</sup> See Ibidem.

<sup>15</sup> C. Malabou, *Transcendental Epigenesis*, in: A. Morgan (ed.), *The Kantian Catastrophe? Conversations on Finitude and the Limits of Philosophy*, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne 2017, p. 183.

<sup>16</sup> See eadem, *Before Tomorrow: Epigenesis and Rationality*, p. 176.

<sup>17</sup> See eadem, *Transcendental Epigenesis*, p. 189.

<sup>18</sup> M. Pendlebury, *Making Sense of Kant’s «Critique of Pure Reason»*, London 2022, p. 49.

<sup>19</sup> I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. P. Guyer, Cambridge 1999, p. 252.

putative origin of categories from the one of TUA. These shortcomings lead me to the next part, my critique of Kant, which accounts for these overlooked aspects.

## ■ Alternative critique of Kant

Given the first problem of temporality outlined above, my first premise is that within a materialist paradigm, the idealist (regarding space and time as mere forms of intuition) aspect of transcendentalism is untenable, effectively making transcendental realism to be my only object of polemic. With this premise, I move to the central problem of my inquiry, the problem of TUA.

For many post-Kantians, this challenge seems insurmountable. Similarly, like categories, it is just a brute-given, transcendental condition of objective knowledge that cannot be questioned about its origin. Manfred Frank claims that “self-consciousness is consciousness that is originary, unmediated, pre-conceptual, unconceptual and irreducible to any descriptions, because they all already presuppose it.”<sup>20</sup> Despite using a different term, *Selbstbewußtsein*, referring to post-Kantian idealism, it is rooted in the Kantian notion of TUA. It seems as if shifting our focus from categories to TUA does not get us any further. However, as Dennis Schulting notes, it is far from being so when it comes to Kant. Positing TUA as an originary and a self-standing principle leaves it to being subjected to the infinite regress of its *a priori* source<sup>21</sup>. Here he focuses on the distinction and relation between the synthetic unity of apperception (SUA) and the analytic unity of apperception (AUA). AUA is the self-awareness of me as an identical subject in time that does not fall apart into separate moments of empirical apperception, as it happens to the Human subject. This unity, according to Kant, is only possible due to synthetic unity.<sup>22</sup> Schulting’s interpretation underlines the simultaneity of these unities. AUA “comes about precisely in the act of adding one representation to the other, namely precisely **through** synthesis.”<sup>23</sup> Synthesis is absolutely foundational for AUA, which is a “thoroughgoing identity of consciousness”<sup>24</sup> being not only its necessary, but **sufficient** condition.<sup>25</sup> If synthesis of representations is sufficient to constitute AUA, would not that make Kant plain empiricist that accounts for the emergence of self-identical consciousness by acts of syntheses? The answer is, of course, no. Kant made a distinction between the empirical synthesis of apprehension and the intellectual synthesis of apperception<sup>26</sup>, and only the latter one is a condition of AUA. Transcendental syntheses, in contrast with empirical syntheses, are guided by

<sup>20</sup> M. Frank, *Świadomość siebie i poznanie siebie*, trans. Z. Zwoliński, Warszawa 2002, p. XV.

<sup>21</sup> D. Schulting, *Kant’s Deduction and Apperception: Explaining the Categories*, London 2012, p. 114.

<sup>22</sup> See I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 247.

<sup>23</sup> D. Schulting, *Kant’s Deduction and Apperception*, p. 112.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>25</sup> See Ibidem.

<sup>26</sup> See I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 262.

categories, connecting various representations in judgements.<sup>27</sup> It seems that we have returned to the question that we originally started with, namely what is the origin of categories? But that is not true, for now we no longer see categories only as *a priori* concepts that are necessary for any objective experience, but as: 1) the synthetic activity that 2) gives rise to AUA 3) through language (judgement; discursive thinking). Malabou treats categories as logical entities, but she does not examine their actual content.

There is one more issue we need to return to: the problem of the second part of Kantian transcendental deduction, which is often considered to be highly problematic; and indeed, led to a split between conceptualists and nonconceptualists within contemporary Kantian reception. This particular problem deals with the issue of relating categorically constituted intuitions to space and time as *a priori* forms of intuition. However, given the premise of the present paper (rejecting the ideality of space and time), there is no need to provide any account for this part of Kant's *Critique*. I shall give due consideration to this point while examining Freud's empirical syntheses.

## ■ Freud and *Entwurf einer Psychologie*

How can psychoanalysis help us with the genesis of categories in Kant? Responding to Eugene Fink's critique of the concept of unconscious, Adrian Johnston states that "only by theoretically presupposing the unconscious can consciousness become a consistent, fully illuminated object of investigation."<sup>28</sup> This simple, yet profound idea governs the conceptual frame of this article. Freud's *Entwurf (Project for a Scientific Psychology)* is an attempt to link his findings regarding psychoneuroses with the rigor of natural sciences. Its effect was a complex account of psychical apparatus approached from a quantitative perspective, and based on the fundamental laws of thermodynamics.<sup>29</sup> Despite the fact that it was never published, remaining as an attachment to one of the letters to Fliess, and later renounced by Freud himself<sup>30</sup>, I claim that not only does this text lay foundations for later Freudian metapsychology, but it can also function as an enormous source of inspiration for post-Kantian materialism. Indeed, all the three characteristics of categories mentioned above: their synthetic activity, giving rise to phenomenological unity of subject through judgement and problem of judgement and symbolisation, are of implicit and explicit interest for the Freudian *Project*. Also, the fact that Freud unknowingly dealt with the derivation of category of substance and accident will be crucial for my reading.

<sup>27</sup> See J.J. Williams, *Kant on the Original Synthesis of Understanding And Sensibility*, „British Journal for the History of Philosophy” 2018, 26, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> A. Johnston, *Time Driven: Metapsychology and the Splitting of the Drive*, Evanston 2005, p. 14.

<sup>29</sup> See P. Bob, *The Brain and Conscious Unity: Freud's Omega*, New York 2015, p. V.

<sup>30</sup> See S. Freud, *The Unconscious*, in: J. Strachey et al. (ed.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XIV, London, p. 174.

There are two fundamental rules underlying Freud's project. The first one is the principle of neuronal inertia, which states that "neurones tend to divest themselves of quantity (Q)."<sup>31</sup> The second one is the principle of constancy, constancy by which the more organised, emergent levels of apparatus remain in an equilibrium of excitation. These rules govern the neuronal system, which is divided into three classes ( $\phi$  phi,  $\psi$  psi,  $\omega$  omega).<sup>32</sup> Interactions between these classes which form the basis for the dynamic processes between consciousness and the unconscious are a central theme of this work.  $\Phi$  (phi) is the first system of *receptive perceptual* neurons, which means that they also have to discharge any energy that is related with the process of perceiving, because of the principle of inertia. They are fully permeable, meaning they offer no resistance and they retain no quantities of energy. They embody the reflex system in which the discharge is instantaneous.<sup>33</sup> Hence they function only in the present moment. In other words, they are responsible for registering sensations during every "now." They **constitute** the present.  $\Psi$ , the second system is connected to the first one by contact-barriers which permit only high quantities of energy to pass from the former to the latter. Its main difference consists in its ability to be permanently altered. This alteration, in turn, results in a capability for storing information. In this way Freud introduces the concept of memory into his system, which is defined as "the facilitations existing between the  $\psi$ -neurones."<sup>34</sup>

His account is short but profound because it forms a material basis for perception, synthesising and storing these perceptions, and thus forming a subjective sense of temporality. In this regard, I completely agree with Wang, who utilises Kantian account of three syntheses from Deduction A, as an interpretative key for *Entwurf*.<sup>35</sup> We shall come back to the strictly cognitive role of the neuronal system; but firstly, we have to look at the affective role of these systems. Like in Kant, they cannot be separated. Pure Reason has to be supplanted by a practical one. The  $\Psi$  system doesn't exclusively deal with the storing of memories that were received from perceptual  $\phi$  neurons. Besides the exogenous stimuli (perception) that are easily discharged by  $\phi$  through motor neurons, Freud looks at the stimuli (hunger, sexuality) that inevitably arise when an organism reaches a certain complexity. These same stimuli have to be discharged. But how? One cannot totally rid oneself of all the needs that cause frustration. One way is motor action that is supposed to change external circumstances, like the screams of a baby who is trying to communicate hunger to his mother.<sup>36</sup> Another mode of recourse when reality cannot be changed is to hallucinate the desired object. How does this happen? After experiencing satisfaction, the object's mnemonic image is stored in the system  $\omega$ .<sup>37</sup> To experience satisfaction faced with a lack

<sup>31</sup> Idem, *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, in: J. Strachey et al. (ed.), *The Standard Edition*, vol. XVII, p. 354–356.

<sup>32</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 360.

<sup>33</sup> See *ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 361.

<sup>35</sup> See C. Wang, *Subjectivity In-Between Times: Exploring the Notion of Time in Lacan's Work*, London 2019, p. 51–52.

<sup>36</sup> See S. Freud, *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, p. 379.

<sup>37</sup> Given the importance and complexity of  $\omega$  in Freud's topography and its ramifications for my article, I am leaving details of this system for a separate paper.



that cannot be easily changed; one simply has to “re-cathect the mnemonic image of the perception”<sup>38</sup> in order to rid of frustration. This concept of hallucinatory phantasy is crucial for Freud, because it leads to the formation of two entities central for psychoanalysis – *primary process* and *ego*. Primary process is nothing other than a “wishful cathexis carried to the point of hallucination.”<sup>39</sup> The first problem is that if you **really** try to eat or drink this hallucination, you will inevitably face disappointment.<sup>40</sup> The second problem is that, if a hallucination were to give you satisfaction, then you would lose the ability to discern between reality and hallucinatory fantasy. To moderate this process, in order for the organism to survive, we need a secondary process. A secondary process is supposed to change the means, but not the aim of the primary process<sup>41</sup>. This is where the necessity for a functioning of the ego comes in, because it is responsible for moderating the primary one.

## ■ Ego and Consciousness

We have arrived at the moment where Freud deals with the emergence of ego. Given the importance of AUA in Kant and its crucial connection to categories, we cannot but turn to ego as a potential successor for AUA. Here we shall examine the concept of ego in detail, and explore how it relates to both consciousness and the unconscious; and ask what it brings to our understanding of the problem of categories. Ego, as defined by Freud in *Entwurf*, is the “totality of  $\Psi$  at any given time.”<sup>42</sup> In other words, ego is the sum of memory traces left in  $\Psi$  by perceptual neurons  $\phi$ , as well as an endogenous excitation coming from the organism.<sup>43</sup> If we go back to the putative moderating function of ego in the primary process, we face a big difficulty. If memories and perceptions come from the same source, then how can one distinguish them from each other? In his second seminar, Lacan famously deals with this problem, which he calls the “paradox of the system of consciousness.”<sup>44</sup> He claims that on the one hand, consciousness is included as only a part of the energetic  $\psi$  system, so it cannot play a role in reference to reality, and on the other hand, it must be separated from reality and receive only small investments of energy from  $\phi$ . First of all, I think that Lacan only reiterates the same problem in a slightly different way; because in being only a part of energetic system,  $\Psi$  does not have an immediate access to reality, hence it is separated from it, and has access only by energy received from  $\phi$  neurons, so there’s no need to call it a paradox. Secondly, Lacan replaces “ego” or “ $\psi$ ” with “consciousness” as if it were the same thing. And they are not.

<sup>38</sup> S. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in: J. Strachey et al. (ed.), *The Standard Edition*, vol. V, p. 565–566.

<sup>39</sup> S. Freud, *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, p. 387.

<sup>40</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 381.

<sup>41</sup> See C. Wang, *Subjectivity In-Between Times*, p. 60.

<sup>42</sup> S. Freud, *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, p. 384.

<sup>43</sup> This is what Freud means when he says that ego is always “a bodily ego,” see *idem*, *The Ego and the Id*, in: J. Strachey et al. (ed.), *The Standard Edition*, vol. XIX, London, p. 26.

<sup>44</sup> J. Lacan, *Seminar II: The Ego in Freud’s Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis*, trans. S. Tomaselli, Cambridge 1988, p. 117.

Processes within  $\phi$  and  $\psi$  take place beyond consciousness.<sup>45</sup> They have to, because Freud claims that “consciousness emerges during the passage of a quantity (Qn), that is to say that it is not aroused by a constant cathexis.”<sup>46</sup> Given that ego is defined as a sum of  $\psi$  neurons in constant cathexis, we cannot equate consciousness with ego. Additionally, at one point Freud states: “consciousness is not restricted to the ego but can be attached to any  $\psi$  process.”<sup>47</sup> One has to be, as Lacan emphasised many times, very attentive to the words Freud uses. Consciousness is **attached** to ego or  $\psi$ .<sup>48</sup> What does this mean? To understand the issue, we have to see the response that Freud himself gave to the problem of differentiating between perception and memories. It’s the process of inhibition performed by ego, supplanted by indications of a  $\omega$  discharge that serve as a reality indicator. In this regard, we have to deal extensively with  $\omega$  neurons.

$\Omega$  neurons are the third system that Freud introduces when he asks where and how qualities emerge in a hitherto purely qualitative system. He calls them perceptual neurons. This might be perceived as very odd, because it seemed as if Freud had established  $\phi$  as perceptual ones. But no. This difficulty is reflected in the argument that Lacan and Valabrega make recourse to during Seminar II, where they argue which system is responsible for perception.<sup>49</sup> Actually they both contribute to the emergence of perception.  $\Phi$  takes up the manifold from external reality, passes some of it to  $\psi$  as a quantitative charge, which passes even less of it on to  $\omega$ . At this point  $\omega$  retroactively turns this quantitative discharge into a quality that is transferred to  $\psi$  as a memory. Given that 1) consciousness can be attached to any  $\psi$  process; 2) it has to come about through passage, Freud can only mean passage from  $\omega$  to  $\psi$ . But it’s not confined to the process of generating qualities, but also judging. Freud agrees with Kant that conscious thought processes have to rely on the making of judgements,<sup>50</sup> so we have to assume that  $\omega$  is also related to the process of judgement formation. So how are judgements formed? Well, we can’t find any explicit account on judgement formation, but what we can find are two examples of cognitive judgements, and not just any judgements. These are judgements explicitly related to categories of substance and accident. And we may find them in the Freudian account of *das Ding*.

## ■ Das Ding and the Origins of Categories

I will start with a Lacanian reading of *das Ding* from *Entwurf*, which significantly differs from my own. In many ways it is one of the most important moments of Lacanian theory. As a precursor of *petit objet a*<sup>51</sup>, *das Ding* represents for Lacan

<sup>45</sup> See M. Reher-Langberg, *Faces of the Freudian I: The Structure of the Ego in Psychoanalysis*, Oxfordshire 2017, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> S. Freud, *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, p. 404.

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem, p. 402.

<sup>48</sup> The importance of this phrasing can be seen by the fact that it reappeared without any change 28 years later in *Ego and the Id*, see ibidem, p. 17.

<sup>49</sup> See J. Lacan, *Seminar II*, p. 121.

<sup>50</sup> See S. Freud, *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, p. 440.

<sup>51</sup> There is an ongoing debate concerning the difference between *das Ding* and *object a*. However, precise nature of this problem goes beyond the scope of this article. For the discussion, see: D. Finkelde, T. McGowan, *Žižek Responds!*, London 2023, p. 317–333.

the part of human experience that completely resists symbolisation, which is the Kantian thing-in-itself. This is, of course, taken from Freud's *Project of a Scientific Psychology* and functions as a "first notion in his entire oeuvre with which he tries to give a proper status to the real in its symbolic implications."<sup>52</sup> In other words, a Lacanian *Real* is based on Freudian *das Ding*. So let's look at *das Ding* as it actually appears in Freud.

In one passage, Freud states that "What we term 'things' are residues that have evaded judgement."<sup>53</sup> At the first glance, one might say that this passage corroborates the Lacanian approach to the Real. But in fact, Freud was referring to something totally different. In the previous sentence Freud writes: "It is perhaps justifiable to suspect that judging also indicates the way in which quantities coming from  $\phi$  can be transmitted and discharged."<sup>54</sup> As we have seen, judgement is a process in which  $\omega$  retroactively applies a linguistic concept to stored perception (memory) in  $\psi$ . Without this concept, we have perception without a meaning attached to it, and **not** a completely undetermined thing-in-itself. Moreover, there are two passages in Freud that suggest that he uses *das Ding* as a way of deriving the categories of substance and accident. Let us quote them at length:

Language later applies the term "judgement" to this process of analysis, and discovers the resemblance which exists between the nucleus of the ego and the constant portion of the perceptual complex on the one hand and between the changing cathexes in the pallium and the inconstant portion of the perceptual complex on the other; language describes neurone a as a "thing" and neurone b as its activity or attribute-in short, as its "predicate."<sup>55</sup>

And:

The beginning of the thought-processes that branched off from practical thinking lies in the process of making judgements. The ego arrived at this through a discovery made in its organization-through the fact (which has already been indicated) that perceptual cathexes partly coincide with reports from the subject's own body. In this way perceptual complexes are divided into a constant, uncomprehended portion – the "thing" – and a changing, comprehensible portion – the attributes or movements of the thing.<sup>56</sup>

Freud assumes that  $\psi$ <sup>57</sup> is fundamentally divided. It divides into pallium, which is cathected from  $\phi$ , and nuclear neurons which are cathected by endogenous

<sup>52</sup> M. de Kesel, *Eros and Ethics: Reading Jacques Lacan's Seminar VII*, New York 2010, p. 70.

<sup>53</sup> S. Freud, *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, p. 396.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>55</sup> Ibidem, p. 390.

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem, p. 440–441.

<sup>57</sup> Given that Freud defines ego as "totality of  $\Psi$  at any given time," divided  $\Psi$  means that ego is divided as well.

paths of conduction<sup>58</sup>, as we previously discussed. Freud argues that judgement allows us to “form” category of substance and accident by fundamental experience of bodily constancy and perceptual change; between constant tension of permeating lack, and changing flux of experience of external reality. In this way Freud performs an anti-Kantian move *par excellence*. Kant used unity of apperception to derive the category of substance and accident<sup>59</sup> as a transcendental entity that makes experience possible. Freud, on the other hand, used empirical experience of a divided bodily ego to derive the possibility of the empirical emergence of these concepts. I claim that Kant overlooked this, because in his account of *Critique of Pure Reason* the transcendental subject is disembodied. It does not have any endogenous energy formed by lack that could oppose to an ever-changing stream of perceptions. What is important about this approach is that it avoids both simple empiricism according to which cognitive processes can form *ex nihilo*, as well as transcendentalism and its loop of self-relating. It is rather based on the ontological assumption that the subject is not only opposed to the object, but is an object as well. In the first quote, Freud underlines an isomorphism between the structure of the nervous system and perceptual complex. This feature is responsible for the possibility of perception and later cognition. Why is that? The premise underlying Freud’s *Entwurf* is that the material structure of the brain is reflected in the structure of consciousness and the unconscious. If the objective reality and brain have the same structural properties (as Freud is claiming), then categories derived from a self-perception of divided ego can be a source of knowledge of objective reality outside of the subject as well. This interpretation of Freud seems to situate him as being totally opposed to contemporary dialectical materialism as represented by Žižek, particularly given its outright dismissal of bodily experience<sup>60</sup> as having any philosophical relevance.<sup>61</sup> However, it also seeks to breach the gap between the symbolic and the Real, through the analysis of the subject, who represents substance gaining full awareness of itself.<sup>62</sup>

In this sense, I believe that Freud created a complex and comprehensive theory that explains the emergence of categories and consciousness; one that resolves the problem of the unexplainable genesis of the latter ones in a Kantian system. This theory starts with the synthetic activity of neural systems embedded in objective space-time, where charges of quantity travel to  $\phi$ , establishing the subjective present moment (1<sup>st</sup> synthesis), then to  $\Psi$  to form a memory and subjective past (2<sup>nd</sup> synthesis) as well as ego, whose role is to stop the immediate gratification of the primary process and to create an anticipation of the fulfilment; it is oriented towards the future (3<sup>rd</sup> synthesis). Ego is understood as

<sup>58</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 377.

<sup>59</sup> A detailed account of this derivation can be found in Schulting, see *idem*, *Kant’s Deduction and Apperception*, p. 125–135.

<sup>60</sup> This hostility towards ego presented by materialists inspired by Hegel and Lacan stems from the latter’s critique of Ego psychology. For Lacan, Ego and imaginary order should be treated as strictly antagonistic to the symbolic order and unconscious. The French psychoanalyst could make such an argument only by strictly separating Id and the unconscious, which has its radical implications, and one of them is severing the genetic tie between Ego and unconscious (and consequently Real and Symbolic order) which Freud has emphasised, see *idem*, *The Ego and the Id*, p. 24.

<sup>61</sup> See S. Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, London 2012, p. 384.

<sup>62</sup> See S. Žižek, *Indivisible Remainder*, London 2007, p. 57.

divided and non-conscious, but consciousness can be attached to it through the process of cathexis from  $\omega$  to  $\Psi$ , not only to create qualities but also judgements that have their source in  $\omega$  system. A fundamental judgement that considers ego as divided between pallium and endogenous paths of conduction can form the basic categories that allow the proper cognition of external reality. Here, I would like to examine Paweł Dybel's comparison between Kant and Freud, according to which there are 3 differences between Kantian's "I" role in the process of forming cognition, and that of Freud's primary process. In his reading, 1) without relating to the transcendental unity of apperception, representations do not form any unity, 2) I "connects" itself to given representations and is an active agent of their syntheses, whereas 3) I is conscious of itself during this process.<sup>63</sup> First, one might wonder what the contrasting of a Kantian account of cognition with a Freudian primary process can tell us, because a primary process is not a cognitive operation, but rather one of endeavouring to fill lack inherent to reality. In my reading, cognitive processes related to the reality principle relate to Kant in following way: 1) there is no central faculty that guarantee objective knowledge, it can be validated only by internal split within the ego, 2) Kant is referring to the **possibility** of such a connection, the I "must be able to accompany all my representations"<sup>64</sup> and besides ideas that are subjected to primary repression, all representations might eventually be connected to consciousness by system  $\omega$ ; 3) Here I agree with Dybel when he states that the three syntheses that establish the past, the present and the future are passive; but there has to be an "observing" capacity situated in  $\omega$  that can judge the ego as being internally split. Unfortunately, we can't explain its genesis at this moment, for that we would need a phylogenetic account of the emergence of language.

Earlier, while elucidating a Kantian account of AUA, we noted Kant's idea that the transcendental synthesis of apperception is responsible for that unity, and not the empirical synthesis of apprehension. Therefore, how can we situate the cognitive processes derived from Freud's *Entwurf* within this distinction? Firstly, the three temporal syntheses that are taking place within  $\phi$  and  $\psi$  are definitely empirical. On the other hand, I consider the retroactive movement from  $\omega$  to  $\psi$  that involves judgement to be very close to what Kant called transcendental. It involves category and is related to the dis-unity of bodily ego. One might immediately object and contend that Kant spoke of apperception, and not an empirical experience of oneself. It is true; he distinguished between empirical self-consciousness (inner sense) and logical self-consciousness (apperception).<sup>65</sup> If we view them as separate entities, it becomes difficult to justify this concept from an ontological perspective. If pure apperception belongs to the realm of logic

<sup>63</sup> See P. Dybel, *Freud i Kant. Dwie koncepcje podmiotu i Ja*, „Przegląd Filozoficzny–Nowa Seria” 2004, 4, p. 300.

<sup>64</sup> H. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense*, Yale University Press, New Haven–London 2004, p. 164.

<sup>65</sup> See D. Schulting, *Apperception and Self-Consciousness in Kant and German Idealism*, London 2020, p. 88.

and is devoid of any real content,<sup>66</sup> then how to explain its putative agency or spontaneity?<sup>67</sup> Kant secures the possibility of *a priori* synthetic judgements by returning to some mystical Platonism of causative ideas, separated from material processes. Materialism is therefore burdened with explaining the emergence of the symbolic from the material by way of the causation of the empirical.

Nevertheless, by proceeding this way, do we not slide into the simple empiricism that can't account for all the phenomena that take what is human beyond the realm of nature? Can we account for that which transforms animal *Instinkt* into properly human *Trieb*? Dealing only with primary processes, so far we have not considered the unconscious. We shall do so by turning to the notion of *Nachträglichkeit*, a deferred action as a fundamental property of the unconscious, that actually establishes a new temporality inherent in human subjectivity.

## ■ *Nachträglichkeit* as a different temporality

Kant's transcendental aesthetic, which I reject, not only grounds the possibility of *a priori* synthetic judgement, but is also crucial for his understanding of freedom. It is, for Kant, the only way of salvaging freedom from the grasp of Spinozian determinism and scientific mechanisms. The noumenal realm is a retreat allowing for autonomous human action and responsibility. One cannot but notice a similar gesture performed by Lacan, because his reading of *das Ding* (structurally isomorphic to the thing-in-itself) functions as an introduction to the ethical dimension of the unconscious. Within the realistic paradigm, the objective existence of space-time is a necessity that allows for the materialistic genesis of the subject. But it is not the only time that we can access.

The temporal aspect of Freud's *Entwurf* is reflected in the concept of "period."<sup>68</sup> Every passage of quantity in the neural system takes place in some unit of time, in a period. This aspect of the *Project of Scientific Psychology* does not distinguish Freud's theory from any other form of naturalism based on thermodynamic principals. Up until the emergence of  $\omega$ , time flows one way. In the phenomenological sense, we experience time as linear, parallelly to objective space-time. But with the introduction of repression, things change. As Freud stated one numerous, a repressed idea doesn't immediately cause any trauma, it does so only after the time when one is able to understand it.<sup>69</sup> Trauma is retroactively constituted after acquiring proper signifiers in order to describe previously experienced "raw" perception. I claim that this mechanism of *Nachträglichkeit* can successfully be understood using neural topography from *Entwurf*. Perceptions

<sup>66</sup> See *ibidem*.

<sup>67</sup> My critique of the transcendental mirrors Derek Hook's analysis of death drive in Žižek's philosophy "Death drive [as understood by Žižek] is at once agency and absence, psychical attribute and excess of negativity. How then are we to bridge these seemingly incompatible descriptions?" This similarity is not accidental, Žižek explicitly refers to death drive as "transcendental form." I provide material basis for death drive in the last chapter of this article, see: D. Hook, *Of Symbolic Mortification and «Undead Life»: Slavoj Žižek on the Death Drive*, „Psychoanalysis and History” 2016, 2, p. 222–227.

<sup>68</sup> See S. Freud, *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, p. 371.

<sup>69</sup> See *idem*, *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis*, in: J. Strachey et al. (ed.), *The Standard Edition*, vol. XVII, London, p. 45.

are always retroactively created in the  $\omega$  system, but Freud claims that during the first event we are already dealing with perception. But there is no meaning attached to this perception. However, as has been indicated,  $\omega$  is also a locus of language signifiers. After the occurrence of fixation (primary repression), ideational representation is stored in a  $\Psi$  system, but it lacks an empirical concept that could describe it. After some time, the concept is formed, but it has to be repressed by a secondary repression. Through the work of analysis, we try to breach the ego's defences and rediscover the signifier that brings this representation into the consciousness. The unconscious is not timeless, as Freud claimed.<sup>70</sup> If this were the case, how could the unconscious prioritise earlier ideational representations (that are responsible for fixations) over later ones?<sup>71</sup> The emergence of the unconscious is coextensive with the emergence of another temporality, the one in which the future can influence the past. This resembles the Hegelian dialectic of causality, wherein cause is responsible for the appearance of an effect, but cause is a cause only because there is an effect.<sup>72</sup> Effect is determining cause as well. They constitute a dialectic of reciprocal action that leads to self-determination. And the same can be said of analytic work, which opens up the analysand to the possibility of freedom.

## ■ Repression as the originary source of consciousness and the unconscious

When we examine the way cognition is formed and compare it to the mechanism of *Nachträglichkeit*, we see retroaction at the heart of both these operations. This similarity has been noted by some scholars<sup>73</sup>, but they have heretofore failed to investigate the potential reasons behind it. In my view, it is not accidental. They are strictly isomorphic. My explanation for this fact is that repression is responsible for emergence of **both** consciousness and the unconscious, and this is the reason for their isomorphism. We can start the argument by referring to Robert Samuels, who maintains that it is the possibility of confusion between perception and memory that represents the condition for thought and consciousness.<sup>74</sup> In other words, a primary process makes the emergence of the thinking subject possible. Samuels's explanation for this is that the primary process designates the first basic symbolisation based on a metaphor, where hallucination replaces the real object. Here is where I disagree, because I believe that it is not yet a properly symbolic process. Hallucination of the satisfying breast is identical to the real breast taken at the phenomenological level. It is

<sup>70</sup> See S. Freud, *The Unconscious*, p. 187.

<sup>71</sup> See A. Johnston, *Time Driven*, p. 18.

<sup>72</sup> See G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. G.D. Giovanni, Cambridge 2010, p. 502–505.

<sup>73</sup> See K. Noel-Smith, *Freud on Time and Timelessness*, London 2022, p. 68.

<sup>74</sup> See R. Samuels, *(Mis) Understanding Freud with Lacan, Žižek, and Neuroscience*, London 2022, p. 13.



with repression that true symbolisation begins. As Freud writes, “[memories are] repressed and replaced by symbols.”<sup>75</sup> The hysteric cough in Dora’s case represented fellatio, wherein five white wolves represented a primal scene for Wolf-Man. But how can repression come before consciousness? This idea seems to be incompatible with the fundamental Freudian discovery that we repress sexual representations, because “the ego anticipates danger resulting from socially proscribed desires.”<sup>76</sup>

I claim that this is only true for the secondary (proper) repression. In *Entwurf*, the problem of the social context is almost non-existent, besides a detailed account of the case of hysteria in chapter II. How to account for this? As Boag notes, Freud actually provides two different explanations for repression<sup>77</sup>, one is related to instinctual impulses being so intense that the organism has to find a way to suppress them, the second one being the result of the threat of castration. Freud’s theory becomes more consistent when we attribute the first kind to primary repression, and second to repression proper. In this way, we can coherently treat primary repression as caused by not yet conscious ego. The reason for primary repression would amount to excessive sexual excitation that cannot be satisfied the same way as hunger or thirst can.<sup>78</sup>

Given the isomorphism between the process of cognition and *Nachträglichkeit*, how to account for the persistence of unconscious ideas and the much more fleeting nature of conscious memories? The most common answer given to the former is the existence of the death drive as the source of incessant compulsion to repeat the same. In Johnston’s account, the death drive represents the essence of every drive. It is internally split between two axes, the “axis of iteration” consisting of drive-source and drive-pressure, and the “axis of alteration,” consisting of drive-aim and drive-object. They are in constant conflict, between a demand for the eternal return of the same and the changing, frustrating reality of experienced objects. This conflict is the essence of the *Trieb*.<sup>79</sup> The split between constancy and change represents the same schema as that of the split ego that earlier gave rise to the category of substance. Here, all of our concepts intersect. The ego split between constant endogenous stimuli and fleeting external sensations gives rise to cognition through the formation of categories, which arises through judgement; simultaneously this formation represents the structure of drive responsible for the working of the unconscious and different temporality based on repetition. This intimate relationship between ego and drives was established by Freud in his later works<sup>80</sup>, leading some scholars to believe that ego is actually just a fluid collection of drives that do not submit to repression.<sup>81</sup> Here it may be maintained, that the relationship between the

<sup>75</sup> S. Freud, *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, p. 409.

<sup>76</sup> S. Boag, *Freudian Repression, the Common View, and Pathological Science*, „Review of General Psychology” 2006, 1, p. 78.

<sup>77</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 77.

<sup>78</sup> This seems to contradict Freud’s account of an “orgasmic” satisfaction that follows from breast sucking in his second essay on theory of sexuality. But when we look closely at his third essay, things get more complicated. There he states that sexual excitement produces tension, and that every tension involves unpleasure. He tries to diminish this aspect by introducing different levels of pleasure (fore-pleasure and end-pleasure) but he totally misses the dialectic of pleasure and unpleasure that Lacan later developed with his concept of *jouissance*.

<sup>79</sup> See A. Johnston, *Time Driven*, p. xxxi–xxxiii.

<sup>80</sup> See S. Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, in: J. Strachey et al. (ed.), *The Standard Edition*, vol. XIX, London, p. 24.

<sup>81</sup> See S. Boag, *Freudian Repression, the Unconscious, and the Dynamics of Inhibition*, Oxfordshire 2011, p. 192.



split structure of the ego, drive and repression needs to be examined in order to make Freudian metapsychology a coherent project.

## ■ Conclusions

The main idea behind this article is that Freudian psychoanalysis can overcome the limitations of Kantian correlationism without falling into simple reductionism. I decided to start with an analysis of *Before Tomorrow* because Malabou focuses on the most critical question for contemporary continental philosophy. The origin of categories taken within the larger context of the phenomenon of life and neuroscience must be addressed and answered if we ever hope to create any coherent materialist project. Where we differ is that I believe that psychoanalysis alongside biology is the best tool for making this step forward, putting my work closer to Adrian Johnston's transcendental materialism. I wholeheartedly agree with his idea that the ontogenetic frame of reference is not sufficient for the creation of any materialistic system, and it must be supplanted by a phylogenetic account of the origin of language.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, I do not think that we should completely relinquish the transcendental, because Freud himself does not do so. If we were to situate *Entwurf* within Kant's distinction between transcendental deduction, empirical deduction, and physiological derivation of categories<sup>83</sup>, Freud would represent both empirical deduction and physiological derivation, given that his project offers an account of the physiological mechanism of physical apparatus inscribed into speculation about how it has to function to explain psychoneuroses. It is a transcendental project but not in a strictly Kantian sense. It is transcendental as far as it investigates conditions of possibility but does not examine conditions of possibility as unconditionally *a priori*. In *Entwurf*, language is that which is given as an *a priori* from the point of view of ontogenesis, but this capacity must have emerged from an actual material process (spontaneous mutation within the genome); and is thus both transcendental as that which makes cognition possible and empirical as a natural phenomenon that natural science can explain. It is a mistake to reify the transcendental and treat it as ontologically separate from the empirical, like Kantian transcendental and empirical subjects. Transcendentalism understood this way repeats the mistake of *generatio aequivoca*, the theoretical monstrosity we encountered in the first chapter. Within the transcendental paradigm, the split between empirical consciousness and subject as noumenal "transcendental x" is attributed to inner sense.<sup>84</sup> However, inner sense designates our

<sup>82</sup> See A. Johnston, *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism: A Weak Nature Alone*, Evanston 2019.

<sup>83</sup> See I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 220–221.

<sup>84</sup> See A. Johnston, *Time Driven*, p. 88

empirical experience of temporality, which as Freud demonstrated, makes up the conscious part of our existence and is not responsible for the fundamental alienation of human subjectivity, but rather it is a condition of relating to the world. It is the split between inner sense and pure apperception that is responsible for the existence of the noumenal subject and our alienation within the transcendental loop. Furthermore, dealing with the problem of correlationism, we cannot limit ourselves to Transcendental Analytic the way Malabou does. Rather, we have to listen to Freud when states that Kantian idea about time and space as necessary forms of thought “would merit the most exhaustive treatment.”<sup>85</sup> Unfortunately, he never deals with this problem explicitly, but he provides us with an alternative for the derivation of temporality from the system of *Pcpt.-Cs.* as well as the other temporality of *Nachträglichkeit*. What contemporary materialism needs is precisely this exhaustive treatment of the fact that idealism of time and space, as understood by Kant, is untenable. And we must draw every ramification from this fact. I hope that my article will represent a small contribution to this endeavour. One more thing that seems to be left unanswered is a question that motivates Kantian critique itself: “How are synthetic judgements *a priori* possible?” (*CPR*, B19). In others words, how can ideal entities emerge out of contingent materiality. Meillassoux’s idea consists in demonstrating that Hume’s problem of induction contains its own solution: there is no necessity, there is only hyper-chaos.<sup>86</sup> But here I am once again in agreement with Johnston, who point to a discrepancy between posited lawless ontology of hyper-chaos and empirical experience of stable ontological causal orders and rejecting Meillassoux’s solution to this problem.<sup>87</sup> The Freudian answer, contrary to Meillassoux, would rather state there are no totally *a priori* judgements, each one of them is based on categories formed by the divided ego that is structurally isomorphic to external reality. Both object and subjective psyche are subjected to laws. The problem is rather how this ontological stability came about in the first place. In Zizek’s terms: how did the One emerge from less-than-nothing? But this strictly ontological question remains outside of the scope of this paper.

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<sup>85</sup> S. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in: J. Strachey et al. (ed.), *The Standard Edition*, vol. XVIII, London, p. 28.

<sup>86</sup> See Q. Meillassoux, *After Finitude. An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, New York 2011, p. 85.

<sup>87</sup> See A. Johnston, *Hume’s Revenge: À Dieu, Meillassoux?* in: L. Bryant, N. Srnicek, G. Harman (eds.) *The Speculative Turn. Continental Materialism and Realism*, Melbourne 2011, p. 103.

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