

Hegel, *Selbstischkeit*, and the experiential self

Paul R. Matthews

Philosophy, Leuphana Universität, Lüneburg, Germany

ABSTRACT

In this essay, I offer a corrective to the standard reading of Hegel as a social constructivist when it comes to matters of the self by shifting the focus from the *Phenomenology* to his 'Philosophy of Spirit' and 'Anthropology.' There, a kind-of self or *Selbstischkeit* is revealed, anticipating the pre-reflective, experiential of the likes of Zahavi and, by extension, Husserl, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty. I argue that Hegel's conception of the self enhances our understanding of the relationship between the pre-reflective, experiential self and the self of self-consciousness, contributing to the discourse on the continuity between biological and mental life. The self, as it emerges in consciousness, traces its origins to a primarily bodily selfness which is foundational to psychical life. Habit emerges as a vital bridge between this selfness and the self of self-consciousness, offering a dynamic, dialectical framework for thinking the development of the self of self-consciousness in and out of its bodily context.



ARTICLE HISTORY Received 29 October 2023; Accepted 1 August 2024

KEYWORDS Self; habit; consciousness; organism; soul

1. Introduction

My primary aim in this paper is rather modest. I want to contest what we could call the standard reading of Hegel's concept of the self by turning our attention to the 'Philosophy of Spirit' and, in particular, to the 'Anthropology', as well as Hegel's lectures so as to offer a corrective to the standard reading of Hegel concerning matters of the self.

As even the most cursory review of the literature on Hegel and the self reveals, most scholars have thus far turned to *Phenomenology of Spirit* to elucidate Hegel's understanding of the self. But I want to suggest that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is not necessarily the best place to look to

CONTACT Paul R. Matthews  paul.matthews@leuphana.de  Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, Institut für Philosophie und Kunstwissenschaft (IPK), Universitätsallee 1, Lüneburg, Germany

© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

understand Hegel's 'self,' if only because any account of the self based upon the *Phenomenology* will necessarily be one sided. In the *Phenomenology*, we encounter a self which has always already become conscious or else self-conscious.¹ Self-consciousness, as Hegel famously argues in the *Phenomenology*, arises out of a struggle for recognition between two 'selves,' each of whom take themselves to be independent in some way of the other.² In other words, in the *Phenomenology*, the self finds itself in the midst of other selves or subjects, in a social context. Yet, in the 'Philosophy of Spirit,' Hegel discusses the existence of another kind of self: a kind-of-self, selfness or *Selbstischkeit*, which conditions the self of self-consciousness.

Although a few authors have drawn attention to the existence of this kind-of-self in Hegel,³ Hegel is still regarded by many philosophers, psychologists, cognitive scientists, etc., as a social constructivist when it comes to matters of the self.⁴ They tend to embrace what Dan Zahavi describes as the 'standard reading' of the self in Hegel, where, in Zahavi's own words, 'selfhood is something which can only be achieved within a social context, within a community of minds, and that it has its ground in an intersubjective process of recognition rather than in some immediate form of self-familiarity' (Zahavi, 2014, p. 10). According to this reading, the self depends upon the pre-existence of other selves, which themselves do not become selves until they recognize themselves in others and vice versa. To be sure, we should not be surprised if the self as such turns out to be reflexive in just this way. That said, Hegel argues that the self does indeed have its ground in something like an 'immediate form of self-familiarity,' a kind of immediate self-familiarity which he furthermore often characterizes as *Selbstischkeit*. In short, *Selbstischkeit* appears to be a kind-of self-awareness, which fails to meet the conditions of consciousness, strictly speaking.⁵

¹To be sure, whenever Hegel discusses spirit, as he does in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he is also discussing the soul. Yet, as Stekeler-Weithofer points out, Hegel does not explicitly treat the soul in the *Phenomenology*, if only because the soul, as the general principle of life, is already presupposed in spirit or, that is, in the life of the mind (Stekeler-Weithofer, 2010, p. 223).

²Some argue that the famous struggle between lord and bondsman in the *Phenomenology* is not between two selves, but between two sides (the subjective and the objective sides) of the self-same subject. Pippin, in his *Hegel on Self-Consciousness*, takes John McDowell to task for arguing that the struggle need not take place in a place of intersubjectivity, but, quite simply, within a particular subject (2011, pp. 39–51).

³See especially Dahlstrom (2013), de Laurentiis (2021), Ikäheimo (2010), and Testa (2012).

⁴See, for example, Gallagher & Zahavi (2013); Marchetti & Koster (2014); Zahavi (2009, 2014).

⁵In her study of Hegel's 'Anthropology,' de Laurentiis describes *Selbstischkeit* as 'a preconscious feeling of selfhood [...], the opaque awareness of affective states as belonging to this selfness.' As such, it is one of the 'basic activities of Hegel's Seele' (de Laurentiis, 2021, p. 22).

At least within the context of Hegel's *Natur-* and *Geistesphilosophie*, Hegel begins using the adjectival form of the *Selbstischkeit*, *selbstisch*, in his Jena lectures from 1805/1806, where we find it in the margins of his discussion of the ideal character of the organism, its ability to exclude otherness from itself and live for-itself (GW 8 165).⁶ That said, Hegel does not begin to make consistent use of the term until the 1817 *Encyclopedia* where Hegel once again employs the term in his discussion of the organism, but even more so in his discussion of the soul in the 'Anthropology.' Indeed, it is only in the 'Anthropology' that this term *Selbstischkeit* begins to take on a life of its own, diverging from its typical eighteenth century usage to describe the quality of being selfish, egoistical, etc., and coming to designate, as de Laurentiis puts it, 'a preconscious feeling of selfhood [...], the opaque awareness of affective states as belonging to this selfness' (de Laurentiis, 2021, p. 22). Here, we will be attempting to elaborate on this understanding of *Selbstischkeit* and thereby establish a more solid groundwork for countering the claim that Hegel is a social constructivist through and through.

That many still take Hegel to be a social constructivist is unfortunate not only because it is inaccurate, but because Hegel offers a great deal to those, like Zahavi, who are sympathetic to the idea of an embodied, pre-reflective self. For his part, Zahavi refers to this self as the experiential self and, in what follows, I first want to consider this experiential self, if only to draw attention to certain similarities between Hegel and Zahavi so as to make clear that, not only would Hegel *not* endorse the view that the self is entirely socially constructed, he can help us better conceptualize precisely that kind of self which Zahavi, Gallagher, Moran, and others seek to elucidate.⁷ More specifically, he can help us think about how this kind of self first comes into existence through the workings of

⁶In the same lectures, Hegel also uses the cognate noun, *das Selbstische*, in his description of the plastic arts and, in particular, of painting, describing the way in which the colors used in painting play on sensation (*Empfindung*) (GW 8 278).

⁷We should perhaps here note that there has of late been something of an attempt to disclose the ways in which Hegelian philosophy touches upon and helps to elucidate some of the basic concerns of phenomenology as evidenced perhaps most saliently by a relatively recent volume of the *Hegel Bulletin* devoted to Hegel and Phenomenology. Yet, while interest in Hegel and phenomenology as grown in recent years, it remains true that phenomenologists (or those who would most likely see themselves as following in the tradition of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty), especially those working at the intersection of phenomenology and cognitive science, continue for the most part to ignore Hegel's philosophy of the (pre-conscious) self. As far as phenomenological discussions which explicitly take up Hegel's account of the self's development, we can point to the likes of Magrì (2017; Moran and Magrì 2017), Ciavatta (2017), and Ferrarin (2017). For us, the work of Magrì is especially helpful, as she explicitly explores how habit helps the (human) soul to become rudimentarily acquainted with itself in a way which 'is specifically different from self-consciousness' (Magrì, 2017, p. 5). For a general overview of recent work which takes up the relationship of Hegel to the phenomenological tradition see Lerner (2023).

habit and how this habitual, pre-conscious self might relate to the full-fledged self of self-consciousness.

To put my argument succinctly, while the self as such first appears in and for consciousness, it has its roots in another kind-of self or selfness (*Selbstischkeit*) which is, for lack of a better term, *physical* rather than *psychical*, even if it is, at the same time, the basis for psychical life. This selfness arises out of the life-process itself (specifically, out of sensation, drives, and desires), but only becomes a lasting, durable *feeling* in and through habit. While we will not be able carry out a detailed study of Hegel's concept of habit here,⁸ habit can be said to bridge the gap, so to speak, between this first kind-of-self and the self of self-consciousness as well as, for that matter, between the self of self-consciousness and all other kinds and levels of spirit (Enz §411 Z).⁹ As I see it, one of the advantages of Hegel's account of the self is that, in contrast to the likes of Merleau-Ponty and Husserl, who offer us primarily a description or *phenomenology* of the self at various stages, Hegel offers us a framework for thinking about how the self develops dynamically and/or dialectically in and out of itself and, more specifically, out of itself as body.¹⁰ Whether this is to be regarded as an advantage is certainly open to question,¹¹ but I am inclined to think it is, since it allows us to better think the continuity between the biological and mental *life* or else, to use Hegelian terminology, nature and spirit.

In what follows, we will first attempt to place Hegel in conversation with more recent attempts to detail a pre-social, bodily self, focusing

⁸Myriad authors have lately considered the role of habit in Hegel, including Alfredo Ferrarin (2001), Catherine Malabou (2005), Nicholas Mowad (2019), Thomas A. Lewis (1999, 2007), Simon Lumsden (Lumsden, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2016), Magri (2017), Christoph Menke (2018), and Andreja Novakovic (2017, 2019). See also Allegra de Laurentiis' Hegel's Anthropology (2021). Hegel's concept of habit or, more specifically, his concept of 'second nature' was also the theme of the International Hegel Conference, held June 14–17 2017 in Stuttgart. Generally speaking, interest in Hegelian habit can be divided into two camps: those who are generally interested in the 'anthropological' functions of habit, the role that habit plays in the workings of the (human) soul (de Laurentiis, Ferrarin, Malabou, Mowad, Lewis, Lumsden, Magri), and those who are primarily interested in the role that habit plays in the establishment and continuation of the ethical life (Menke, Novakovic).

⁹Unless otherwise noted, I will be referring throughout to the 1830 edition of the Encyclopedia (Enz). Zusätze or additions will be marked with a 'Z.' Translations are my own. As much as possible, I have avoided referring to the additions, due to their unreliability. References to Hegel's *Gesammelte Werke* (Felix Meiner) and the *Werke* (Suhrkamp) have been abbreviated GW and W, respectively.

¹⁰This not something I am necessarily committed to. Insofar as Husserl also practices a genetic phenomenology which emphasizes the emergent nature of the self, he offers us a 'dialectical' account of the emergence of the self out of itself.

¹¹Indeed, Moran appears to regard it as advantageous that Husserl develops 'a phenomenology of spirit that effectively re-invents Hegel although without [sic] any pretence at dialectical progression' (Moran 2016, p. 27). Yet, Spirit is always in progression or, at the very least, always changing. Moreover, it is hard to imagine how much insight into the nature of the self can be gained by examining the features of the self without, at the same time, trying to determine how the self comes to be in the first place.

on the work of Dan Zahavi and his notion of the experiential self. We will then move on to consider Hegel's understanding of the self, beginning by laying out certain preconditions for selfhood, beginning with a consideration of Hegel's soul. As we will see, for an entity to be a self or enjoy selfhood, it must be a sentient living subject, only then can it develop what Hege calls self-awareness or self-feeling and hence selfhood or at least a kind-of-selfhood.

2. Zahavi's experiential self

First of all, I want to sketch out the notion of experiential self as developed by Zahavi so as to highlight some important similarities between Hegel's notion of the self and those developed within and out of the tradition of phenomenology, broadly speaking. As already noted, Hegel is often taken to hold the view that the self or selfhood only comes into existence in a society or intersubjective community of other selves. Zahavi, for his part, opposes the claim that 'the self is nothing but a social construct' and argues for 'a more basic experiential notion of self' which conditions that self which, indeed, is socially constructed (2009, p. 552). Zahavi traces his notion of the experiential notion of the self back through the tradition of phenomenology, finding resonances in Sartre, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and, most decisively, in Husserl. Yet, I want to suggest that Zahavi could also include Hegel in this 'venerable ancestry' insofar as Hegel also admits to a kind-of consciousness which conditions self-consciousness and belongs to the phenomenological tradition (Zahavi, 2009, p. 552).¹² Moreover, this kind-of-consciousness bears striking similarities to Zahavi's notion of the experiential self and, for that, matter to that pre-reflective self espoused by the likes of Husserl.¹³

¹²This becomes more than apparent as Zahavi turns to Sartre to provide an example of a phenomenologist, possessing a minimal, pre-reflective notion of the self. Sartre's view can be summed up in the claim that 'consciousness is self-consciousness' (2009, p. 556). While Zahavi cites page 114 of the Tel Gallimard edition, it would appear that he is here referring to the passage where Sartre writes, 'C'est que la conscience préreflexive est conscience (de soi)' (Sartre, 1943, p. 112). This is a Hegelian (and Kantian) claim through and through. Hegel himself claims that the 'truth of consciousness is self-consciousness,' by which he means that consciousness always already is self-consciousness insofar as it always already is conscious of itself, even if this awareness has not yet been made explicit (Enz §424).

¹³Indeed, this has been pointed out before. See, for example, Ferrarin's article, 'Hegel and Husserl on the emergence of the I out of subjectivity' (2017). However, in his article, Ferrarin appears to use the terms self and subject interchangeably; here, we will be seeking to distinguish the self from the subject as much as possible and, furthermore, the self from the I or ego. While the I is certainly a kind of self-relation, we can speak of the self without necessarily speaking of the I; similarly, we can speak of the subject without necessarily speaking of the self, even though every subject is at the same time, at least implicitly, a self.

Zahavi presents the experiential self as a minimalistic, pre-reflective form of self-consciousness, which is primarily characterized by a sense of *mine-ness* or first-person givenness. At one point, Zahavi asks us to ‘compare two successive experiences, say a perception of a blackbird and a recollection of a summer holiday.’ While the experiences are radically different, we can nonetheless identify at least one commonality between them: ‘namely the first-personal givenness of both experiences’ (Zahavi 2009 p. 556). In some sense, every experience that I have is given to me; indeed, if it were not, it would be difficult to imagine how it could ever become conscious of it. Whether I am in the position to reflect upon it or not, every perception, sensation, representation etc., I have is in some sense mine. Even schizophrenic thought-insertions, insofar as they appear to me at all, are in some sense mine since they appear in *my* stream of consciousness. Thus, even if we are not yet prepared to reflect upon it consciously, every experience is necessarily, at the same time, an experience of myself. As such, the self (or at least this kind-of-self) is ubiquitous (Zahavi, 2014, p. 12).

Although Zahavi rarely mentions Kant in his *Self and Other*, one way of understanding what Zahavi means by the experiential self would be to compare it to Kant’s notion of the unity of apperception. As Kant puts it famously in the second edition of the first *Critique*, the ‘I think must be able to accompany all of my representations,’ otherwise, as Kant makes clear, we would not be able to think it at all, or else it would not have any significance at all ‘for me’ (2014, p. 136 / B132). As Kant himself makes clear, this ‘I think’ is not the ‘empirical’ I which appears in consciousness, at least not at first; rather, it is the ‘pure’ or ‘original apperception,’ which precedes and conditions the I of self-/consciousness. It is only by virtue of the unity or unifying activity of this I that representations appear to me as being mine, that they manifest themselves, as Zahavi might put it, in the dative (2005, p. 556). In every experience that we have, this dative quality, the for-which manifests itself as a rudimentary self, even if we are not in the position to reflect upon this for-which in a conscious manner. Zahavi summarizes his understanding of the self thusly: ‘an *ubiquitous* dimension of first-personal givenness in the multitude of changing experiences’ (2005, p. 556). While not fully equivalent to Kant’s I, it is this first-personal givenness, this *perspectival ownership*, which lends unity to our experiences and prepares the way for the I of self-consciousness.¹⁴ Yet, in contradistinction to Kant, this

¹⁴To be sure, for the self to be unified, consciousness need not necessarily be unified, as suggested in the case of split-brain syndrome. For more on this point, see Maiese (2015, pp. 63–64).

sense of unity and/or ownership does not arise through an act of cognition (regardless of how original it might be), but through a noncognitive, bodily act (if we can call it that). Yet, Zahavi does not go into the details of exactly *how* the body enacts such a sense, except to say, for example, that it involves ‘an immediate and noncognitive relation of the self to itself’ (2005, p. 21). Hegel, for his part, develops a rather detailed account of how this self arises the body or, more accurately, out of the soul and it is to this account that we will now turn.

3. The ingredients of selfhood: subjectivity, soul, sentience

Here we will be concerned with laying out the conditions for Hegelian selfhood: namely, soul, subjectivity and sentience with an eye to establishing the basis for that pre-reflective form of self-consciousness which Hegel refers to at times as *Selbstischkeit*. But where to start? While Hegel speaks of a kind-of abstract self in connection with light and material more generally in the *Philosophy of Nature*, such ‘selves’ are not for-themselves and thus not, strictly speaking, selves since they do not, we could say, actively care for-themselves. As Hegel has it, selfhood as such cannot be found in mechanical or chemical nature, but only in the ‘nature’ of the living organism or, that is, in life. To be sure, not all organisms are full-fledged selves. In part, this is because not all organisms are living but, even more to the point, not all organisms relate to themselves as parts to a whole and vice versa. Moreover, Hegel also makes it clear that, for a living-being or organism to be able to relate itself, that organism must be a sentient subject – two traits, sentience and subjectivity, that, in Hegel’s rubric, first appear in and for the *animal* organism specifically. To better understand how and why selfhood attaches itself to the animal organism specifically, it will be helpful to briefly consider the organism more generally beginning with the ‘geological’ and then moving on to the ‘vegetable.’

Hegel’s famously draws his understanding of the organism from contemporaries such as Kierkegaard, but also from his compatriot, Schelling, who first discusses the idea of an organism in his 1798 essay *Von der Weltseele*.¹⁵ For the early Schelling, the organism is not yet a living organism,

¹⁵Although Schelling entitles his essay, “Von der Weltseele”, he does not give his readers any insight into the heritage of this term. Franks (2020) traces the lineage of this term or, better, idea back to Lessing and Jacobi and, more proximally, to Maimon, all of whom, Franks argues, were inheritors to a greater or lesser extent of the kabbalistic tradition. Maimon saw in the idea of the world-soul. Maimon (and Schelling for that matter), saw in the idea of the world-soul, a way link between Blumenbach’s notion of a *Bildungstrieb* or formative drive (as presented to him through Kant’s Critique of Judgment) and

at least not necessarily. In the first place it is, as Engelstein puts it, ‘a dynamic but organized interplay of reciprocal forces that render a system *such as* a living being coherent’ (Engelstein, 2021, p. 44). Hegel too employs the term organism to refer to entities or systems which are not themselves living but which nonetheless display certain tendencies towards life or else give rise to life. Indeed, this is the case with what Hegel calls the geological life or the general organism (GW 24.2, p. 910). This ‘first organism,’ as Hegel writes in the *Encyclopedia*, ‘does not exist as something living; life is as subject and process essentially an activity, which mediates with itself’ (Enz §338). But the geological organism does not ‘mediate with itself;’ it does not, in other words, reproduce itself.¹⁶ For Hegel as well as for Kiemeyer, it is reproduction or the capacity to reproduce which differentiates truly living entities from those which only appear to be living. The earth and its geological formations are *generatio aequivoca* (to use the term popularized by Herder and Schelling): they are the source of life, but not life itself; the presupposition of life, of the ‘subjective totality’ (Enz §338). According to Hegel, life rises from the earth, but even more so from the sea: a drop of sea water, viewed through a microscope, is ‘a chaos of little animals’ (GW 24.2, p. 914). But such animals hardly count as living, since they are so small, their lives so transient. They are simply the ‘abstractly general livingness, not yet subjectivity, actually animal, plant’ (GW 24.2, p. 915). Seen as a whole, the earth or geological organism appears *as if* it were alive, but

the kabbalistic tradition. For Schelling the idea of the world-soul takes on the character of a hypothesis concerning how it is that external, mechanical nature gives rise to consciousness – a hypothesis that is, of course, still present in Hegel’s discussion of the soul.

¹⁶Indeed, it was Kiemeyer who first, building off the work of Albrecht von Haller, proposed that the three characteristics of every (living) organism are sensibility, irritability, and reproduction – three traits that Hegel also uses to delimit the concept of the organism at least in part. In Hegel’s breakdown, they appear under the heading of *Gestaltung* or Formation, the other main headings being Assimilation (or as the taking and through the senses of nutrition of the external environment as well as the *Bildungstrieb* or *Kunstrieb*, the alteration of the environment by the organism), and the *Gattungsprozeß* or species-process. Here, we will not be discussing the organism in detail except insofar as the organism can be considered a kind of self. For more on the notion of the organism in Hegel’s time, see Kiemeyer (1793), especially page 9 and following. In his lecture, Kiemeyer also mentions two other characteristics of all organisms: namely, *Sekretionskraft* or the power of secretion (the ‘ability to repeatedly secrete out of the mass of juices [*Saftmasse*] dissimilar materials of a determinate character at specific locations’) and *Propulsionskraft* or the power of propulsion (the ability to move and distribute the fluids to the solid parts in a determinate order’) ((Kiemeyer, 1793, pp. 9–10). Although Kiemeyer quickly notes that these two latter forces are to be distinguished from other three insofar as they only appear if begin to examine those traits which do not appear before us immediately. For more on Kiemeyer and his relationship to the likes of Goethe and Schelling see Engelstein (2021) and Bersier (2005). For a general overview of Hegel’s concept of the organism see Engelhardt, (1986). We should also note that Hegel was likely also influenced by J.H.F. Autenrieth, who would appear to have consolidated many of Kiemeyer’s ideas. Autenrieth was Professor for anatomy, physiology, psychology, surgery, and midwifery in Tübingen shortly after Hegel’s time at the Tübinger Stift and treated Hölderlin for a time after he fell ill.

it is not yet life; it is only the foundation, the presupposition of life. The earth once again fails to reproduce itself, both in part and as a whole. In contrast, plants do reproduce themselves; albeit in such a way that they only (re)produce themselves as different selves and thus fail to maintain themselves in what Hegel will call a 'self-like unity.'

Another way to put this might be to say that plants, unlike animals, lack subjectivity. In Hegelian terms, subjectivity can be characterized as the ability to maintain oneself, to reproduce oneself, in the face of incessant change. While we encounter intimations of subjectivity in plants, it remains only partial. Plants, Hegel maintains, are not yet subjects, because their individual parts, do not so much constitute the parts or else members of a single, *individual* organism, but are themselves simply other individuals. As Hegel's student Pinder records, 'the vegetable individual is a shape, but more of a collection of individuals' (GW 24.2, p. 910). As the plant grows, it reproduces itself in such a way that each new stem, branch, leaf, etc., is but a replication or repetition of itself; each plant is to be regarded as a collection of plants. The tree is, in reality, a collection of trees, of leaves and of sprouts. Although the plant 'tends' towards subjectivity, it has not yet been 'freed into subjectivity' (Enz §345).¹⁷

Subjectivity as such first appears in the animal organism. Indeed, it is first in the animal organism that we encounter an actual organism – an organism, that is, which corresponds to the concept of an organism wherein the 'parts exist as essentially members and the subjectivity as the permeating one of the whole' (Enz §349). Here, the 'organic individuality exists as subjectivity' and 'the organism, in its process outwards, maintains itself in a self-like unity.' This, Hegel continues, 'is the *animalistic* nature, which, in the actuality and externality of the immediate singularity, is also the self of the *singularity* that has been reflected into itself, *in itself* existing *subjective* universality' (Enz §350). In other words, insofar as the animal is an organism par excellence, it is a subject and therewith

¹⁷Plants, Hegel notes, are not yet capable of separating their 'self-like [*selbstisch*] generality, the subjective one of individuality does not separate itself from the real sundering but is submersed in it' (Enz §344). Although plants possess a kind of rudimentary subjectivity and/or selfness, this self immediately disintegrates into a 'perennial production of individuals' (Enz §344); they are powerless to hold themselves together. Additionally, in contrast to animals, plants lack both locomotion and 'self interrupting intussusception;' they neither determine their place in the world nor what, when, and how they eat and thus never develop distinct, negative relationships to their environments. Most importantly, they lack 'animal warmth and feeling,' since they are unable 'to drive back their members, which are in fact only parts and themselves individuals, into negative, simple unity' (Enz §344). All this is to say that, to be a self or else to have a sense of self, one must, at the same time be a 'a for-itself existing subject' (Enz §344).

a kind-of-self. Although the animal is a kind-of-self, it remains 'outside-of-itself;' even though the parts and organs are, in a certain sense, inseparable from the animal, they are nonetheless separable insofar as an animal can be dismembered (unlike consciousness, Hegel will argue). While animals admit of a certain kind of subjectivity, this subjectivity is composed of a number of external parts, of limbs and of organs, a nested system of systems. Its subjectivity is only 'in-itself the concept, but not for-itself' (Enz §374). That said, this is but one way of viewing the animal organism: the empirical, physical way.¹⁸

In the *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel confines himself to considering the animal organism from the perspective of nature, that is from the point to of view of externality. Yet, there is another way to view animals and, indeed, all of nature: namely, from the perspective of spirit. While it has been argued that Hegel treats the animal soul in the *Philosophy of Nature*, in truth, Hegel only treats what we might be able to call the exterior and/or material dimensions of the 'soul,' the animal organism as such.¹⁹ Nature, for Hegel, is defined as the realm of externality and the soul is, by definition, 'outside' the realm of nature as externality insofar as it designates, in the first place, 'the immateriality of nature' (§ 389). Soul or Spirit remains hidden away, appearing only at the very end of the *Philosophy of Nature* with the death of the individual animal organism and the appearance of the universal, the genus or species.²⁰

Of course, we may further wonder why Hegel only attempts an 'Anthropology' and not, let us say, a 'Zoology' of the soul. The soul, which Hegel considers in the 'Anthropology' is undoubtedly a human

¹⁸To borrow a distinction from Varela (1997) via Thompson (2007, p. 260) we could call this external, physical way of viewing subjectivity the biological. Whereas the internal, spiritual way would be the sensorimotor.

¹⁹Indeed, this is what Wolff argues (1992, p. 32). Catherine Malabou follows suit, writing that 'the *Philosophy of Nature* ends with the study of the soul and its functions; the *Philosophy of Spirit* begins with the study of the soul and its functions' (2005, p. 26). How is it, Malabou asks, that the same term (i.e., the soul), can play the 'role both of result and origin' (2005, p. 26). She argues that 'the transition from nature to spirit occurs not as a sublation, but as a reduplication' (2005, p. 26)

²⁰*Gattung* can be translated genus or species, and each term has its advantages and disadvantages. Most, including Daniel Lindquist (2020), for example, use the term species in the context of life forms, avoiding genus unless for the sake of convention. Yet, genus has the advantage of calling to attention the fact that Hegel's use does not entirely correspond with species; rather, it exceeds it to refer to that more general, universal category, to which individuals necessarily belong. With the passing of the singular animal we see the truth: namely, that as marvellous as the individual animal organism might appear, the 'greatest marvel,' in the words of Comte de Buffon, is to be found in 'the succession, in the renewal and the duration of the species' (Buffon, 1954, p. 233, as cited in Sloan, 1995, p. 131). Although it is tempting to think of a species as a collection of individuals, it is much more this succession, or the idea of this succession. Since non-human animals are not spiritual beings (again, according to Hegel), they fail to recognize themselves as spirit, they fail to reconcile their singularity with their universality, their particular lives with the universal life of the genus. That said, although the animal fails to make the transition to spirit proper, it is still spirit insofar as it is soul.

soul, even if this soul shares a great deal with both plants and animals. A ready-to-hand answer to this question might be that Hegel avoids discussing the souls of plants and animals because we cannot know what it is like to be or have another soul. At the same time, the human soul, according to Hegel (and Aristotle) contains those other, more rudimentary parts of the soul, the animal and the vegetable, even if we as thinking beings inevitably, according to Hegel, transform these 'older' parts of the soul, the natural and the feeling, into distinctively human potentialities. Indeed, Hegel maintains that humans as thinking and/or rational beings are not entirely without access to the animal and vegetative parts of the soul. As Hegel makes clear in the section on the feeling-soul in the 'Anthropology,' people often slip back into these older constellations in moments of sickness, insanity, or hypnotism. As Hegel makes clear as early as *Faith and Knowledge*, thinking and feeling (or else reason and faith) are not separate faculties, even if their means of communication have been hindered or otherwise transformed through the addition of thought. All this is to say that, while Hegel only treats the 'human' soul in the 'Anthropology,' humans are not the only animals with souls; moreover, this, human soul has much in common with the soul(s) of plants and animals. As Hegel has it, the soul is nothing other than *Naturgeist* or natural spirit, spirit in its most immediate form (in-itself not yet for-itself). In the soul, nature sublates itself, so that spirit no longer 'presupposes itself as this [nature] in its bodily singularity, which is existing-outside-of-itself, but in its concretion and totality [as this] *simple* universality, in which it [spirit] is *soul*, not yet spirit' (Enz §388). Here, spirit, which is still soul, is unconscious (*bewußtlos*); it is merely the first ideality of nature (GW 25.1, p. 211).

As for Aristotle, the soul is an entelechy, which makes real or actual that which is at first a mere potentiality. The soul can be regarded as a kind of form which enlivens the body in a particular way. As de Laurentiis discusses in her *Hegel's Anthropology*, Hegel's concept of the soul is hylomorphic, which is to say that, although we can speak of the *form* of the soul or else the *matter* of the body, form and matter are, in reality or actuality, inseparable (2021, pp. 14–16).²¹ Thus, we should not conceive of the soul as a general life force existing, in some sense, before any particular life-form. Just as we cannot speak of form without matter, we cannot speak of the soul without speaking of a particular living being, whether

²¹For a fuller discussion of hylomorphism in Hegel, see Chapter 1 of de Laurentiis' *Hegel's Anthropology* (2021). See also, Ferrarin's *Hegel and Aristotle* (2001), especially chapter 8.

plant, animal, or human. It is primarily this insight which leads Hegel to claim that ‘the *books of Aristotle* on the soul, with their discussions of the soul’s particular sides and states are [...] still the best or only work of speculative interest on this subject’ (Enz §378). As both Aristotle and Hegel have it (according to Hegel’s interpretation, at any rate), the soul is not a mere thing or else a conglomerate (as the empirical and rational psychologies of Hegel’s time had it), but as an activity which is always *im Begriff* or, in process. The various ‘parts’ of the soul do not fall apart (as they almost do, for example, in the case of the plant), but instead return into the soul, just like the parts or members of an organism. Like Spirit in general, the soul ‘is not something calm, but much more something absolutely restless, pure activity, the negation or ideality of all fixed determinations of the understanding’ (§378 Z).

Following Aristotle, Hegel partitions the soul into three parts: the natural (nutritive), feeling (sensitive), and finally the actual (rational), where the soul comes to determine itself freely for itself.²² Because Hegel’s subject in the ‘Anthropology’ is the human being (albeit human being as animal), he does not discuss the vegetative the soul, or the animal soul as they appear in animals in plants, but as they appear in the human being: the human being as animal and the human being as plant.²³ Hegel appreciates that, in Aristotle’s conception, the soul does not admit of ‘commonality.’ Just as we cannot speak of a figure or shape without speaking of a particular kind of figure or shape, we cannot speak of a soul without speaking of a particular kind of soul. In other words, the category, ‘soul,’ just like the category, ‘figure,’ is empty and hence nothing. That said, just as the triangle is the most universal figure, so too is the vegetative soul the most universal soul: the other variations of the soul (the sensitive and the rational) presupposes the vegetative, just as every other figure or shape presupposes the triangle. The various levels of the soul relate to each other as subject and predicate. In relation to the sensitive soul, the vegetative soul is ‘only *potential*, only an ideal [thing], inhering in it, as a predicate to a subject. And in

²²Although some, most notably Wolff (1992, pp. 33–34), argue that Hegel does not conceive of a nutritive or vegetable soul. I do not believe this to be the case. Although Hegel does not attribute ‘free movement’ to plants, as he does animals, he still attributes ‘self-movement,’ insofar as plants, like all organisms, evince a kind of self-movement which, however, is planted in the ground. Also, as already noted, Hegel admits that humans are both plants and animals with would seem to suggest that both plants and animals can be said to have a soul.

²³In his Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Hegel states approvingly that the human being has both an animal and a vegetative soul. Indeed, such an idea is in line with ‘more recent nature philosophy,’ which holds that ‘the human being is also animal and plant’ (W19, p. 203). See also, Griesheim’s transcription of the lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit (GW 25.1, pp. 221–222).

relation to the thinking soul, the sensing soul is likewise only the predicate of the former, the subject' (W 19, p. 204). With each further iteration of the soul, that which was subject becomes predicate, objective, which is also to say objective, bodily. The thinking soul sublates the sensitive, idealizing it, just as the sensitive sublates the vegetative, rendering it a mere 'possibility' for the soul or subject. Under the right circumstances (as in sleep or moments of insanity), the subject can realize this possibility, which is only the possibility of falling back into the 'in-itself,' back into those earlier, more rudimentary stages of the soul.

When we reach the level of the human soul, it becomes imperative to speak of spirit or mind. Thus, it becomes clear that the soul is not only the principle of life; it is also the principle or, more accurately, substance of the spirit: 'the absolute foundation of all sundering and particularization of spirit' (Enz §388). As such, the soul can be said to guarantee a certain continuity between life and mind; indeed, it could even be argued that, insofar the soul is itself a process or activity, it just is this continuity. Hegel, in apparent reference to Plato's *Timaeus* (30b) describes the soul as 'the middle between bodiliness and spirit or which is the tie between the two' (Enz §34 Z). In section §389 of the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel defines the soul thusly,

The soul is not only for itself immaterial, but the general immateriality of nature, its simple ideal life. It is the *substance*, [and] thus the absolute foundation of all particularization and singularization of spirit, so that it [spirit] has all the material of its determination in it [the soul] and it [the soul] remains the pervasive, identical ideality of it [spirit]. But in this still abstract determination it [the soul] is only the *sleep* of spirit; – the *passive nous* of Aristotle, which is the *possibility* of all things. (Enz §389)

Here, Hegel draws a connection from the soul as the entelechy of 'mere,' bodily life to the soul as the substance, the foundation of spirit, from the *psuchē* to the psychology, identifying it as the passive nous of Aristotle. In so doing, as Catherine Malabou suggests in her *Future of Hegel*, Hegel appears to begin where Aristotle ends, thus explicating the (arguably) implicit line which Aristotle draws from the soul, especially in his treatment of the senses, to the nous. As spirit develops, the soul, Hegel maintains, remains the ideality of spirit into which spirit as such dialectically retreats with every new advance. In this way, spirit remains tied to the soul, to the living body, even as it ascends to the heights of absolute knowledge. With every advance the soul (or else spirit) transforms that which came before. In the feeling soul, for example, the merely existing

or natural soul transforms into the immediate being, the substance of and for the feeling soul.²⁴ From the natural soul, the feeling soul receives all the stuff or material it needs to feel.

The natural soul, Hegel writes is the 'general soul.' Although this soul bears some similarities to Schelling's *Weltseele*, here the natural soul is only the 'general Substance, which has its actual truth as *singularity*, as subjectivity' (Enz §391). Like the geological organism, this 'soul' is not yet soul as such. The natural soul is conditioned by a variety of natural, planetary phenomena: climate, the change of seasons, time of day, etc. In the human being, such variations in the 'life' of the earth, can effect changes in attitude and mood. Animals, Hegel argues, and those supposedly lacking in proper education are especially susceptible to such environmental factors. In addition to determining itself according to its 'general planetary life,' the soul also determines itself with respect to geography. This is especially true in the case of plants, whose shape and distribution, are almost entirely dependent on geographical factors. In the case of human beings, variations in geography give rise to variations in racial differences.²⁵

In the final moment of the natural soul, the soul becomes an individual, albeit as 'particularization of the *natural determination*' (Enz §395), not yet in terms of the free, spiritual determination. Here, the alterations in climate, seasons, geography, etc., become the alterations which occur within a particular individual over a particular lifetime. Such alterations include the 'natural course of life' from childhood to adulthood, the sexual relation, and waking and sleeping. The difference between waking and sleeping, Hegel writes is the 'differentiation of the individuality as *being-for-itself* with respect to it as only *being*' (Enz §393). In differentiating itself from itself in sleeping and waking, the soul also becomes a subject. Hegel likens sleep to the 'return out of the world of the *determinations*, out of the *dispersion* and the *solidification* in the particularities into the general essence of subjectivity, which is the substance of those

²⁴Nicholas Mowad (2019) refers to the various aspects of the soul as so many various dimensions.

²⁵Here, we find Hegel, especially in his Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit, at this most racist, especially as he attempts to tie certain purported racial characteristics and attitudes to topography and climate. One possible way of trying to work around Hegel here (which seems deeply unsatisfactory) would be to say while we may be geographically determined, we are still free, since we are spirit. De Laurentis argues something like this, writing that, 'Hegel's recorded commentaries are [...] at loggerheads with the main argument' (2021, p. 4). That said, it is very much possible to square Hegel's commentary with his overall account, since spirit only comes to realization in European history. According to this view, all we would need to free ourselves from the determinations of geography is education, albeit a certain kind of European and, even more specifically, German education, which would be colonialist through and through.

determinations and their absolute power' (Enz §398). The distinction between waking and sleeping is crucial for Hegel, since this distinction implies that the soul has become, in an albeit extremely rudimentary sense, aware of itself or else *sentient*. For the soul to be able to distinguish between waking and sleeping, it must be able to *find* 'the content-determinations of its sleeping nature, which, as in its substance, are *in itself* in its sleeping nature, *in its self*, and indeed for itself' (Enz §399). The soul distinguishes such 'content-determinations' from the 'identity of its being-for-itself' and, at the same time, retains them in their simplicity in itself (Enz §399). The soul, in other words, *finds* the content-determinations of sleep in itself and thus has sensations or *Empfindung*.

The importance of the stage of sensation for the further development of soul and spirit cannot be overemphasized. As Hegel remarks, '*everything is in sensation*' (Enz §400). All further determinations of soul and spirit find their source or origin in sensation: 'sensation is the form of the dull weaving of spirit in its unconscious and mindless [*verstandlos*] individuality, in which *all* determination is still *immediate*' (Enz §400). We will return and expand on this claim shortly. For now, suffice it to say that it will be the task of the feeling soul to deepen this sense of being-for-itself so that it ultimately becomes 'the 'I of consciousness and free spirit' (Enz §401).²⁶ While at first the soul only has a general awareness of its sensations, that they are somehow 'being made its own' and belong to the being-for-itself of the soul, the soul eventually comes to identify these sensations, more specifically, with its 'natural *bodiliness*' (Enz §401). With this determination, the soul further divides into an external, bodily sphere of sensation and an inner one. The external bodily sensations are interiorized or else remembered [*erinnert*] by the being-for-itself of the soul and thereby *embodied*. Hegel here discusses the various ways in which external, bodily sensations become embodied

²⁶There is a lot more that we could say here about the relationship between sensation and the life of the spirit, but Hegel is here making good on the connection that Aristotle suggest in his *De Anima* between that kind of reflexivity we find in the senses and that kind we find in the intellect or nous. Feeling is that sense, if we can call it that, which feels itself. With feeling, we become aware that the sensations which 'I' feel are indeed in me or my own. Feeling, in short, is that stage in which my sensations come to belong to me, and it is this sense of ownership over my sensations which brings about this sense of self or self-awareness, *Selbstgefühl*. In contrast to sensations, feelings do not correspond to any particular organ (as Aristotle also points out), except, perhaps touch; indeed, when speaking of the five senses, Hegel uses the term *Gefühl* for touch, commenting that we only refer to feeling as touch, *Tastsinn*, because feeling has its seat, so to speak, in the fingers. Feeling unites, we could say, all of the other senses: the 'ideal' senses of sight and hearing and the 'real' senses of taste and smell; it is the sense of solid reality, of heavy matter, of warmth and of shape or form (Enz §401). We should keep this in mind as we consider the feeling-soul; what the soul feels is primarily its own weight, its own bodiliness.

in specific ways, by specific systems of the either the organs or the body. As the sentient soul continues to determine itself, it becomes vaguely aware of a 'total substantiality, which is *in itself, in itself,*' and with this basic awareness, the sentient soul transitions to the feeling soul and it is the feeling soul that we first encounter this kind-of-self which Hegel refers to as *Selbstischkeit*.

4. The feeling-soul, habit, and self-Feeling

Hegel remarks that, although we rarely draw too much of distinction between sensation and feeling,²⁷ *Empfindung* and *Gefühl*, in everyday speech, it is nonetheless possible to glean a difference: no one ever says, 'a sensation for justice, a sensation of self and the like, but rather a feeling of justice, a feeling of self'(Enz §402).²⁸ While Hegel's examples may work better in German than they do in English, it remains true that, even in everyday speech, we tend distinguish ever so slightly between sensation and feeling and these distinctions more or less correspond to the distinctions which Hegel tries to draw. In the first place, Hegel argues that, whereas sensations are '*singular and fleeting determinations*' (Enz §402), feelings appear to be rather universal and durable. Hegel furthermore suggests that while sensations are generally passive, having their source in some external (or internal) object, feelings are more or less active, having their source in the spontaneity of the soul. Feelings, as Hegel puts it, point towards a kind of self or *Selbstischkeit* that

²⁷We should note that Hegel was no means clear on what to call that stage of the soul between the natural and the actual. It was not until the final, 1830 edition of the *Encyclopaedia*, that Hegel appears to settle on the term 'feeling-soul.' In the 1817 edition, Hegel merely refers to this stage as the 'opposition between the subjective soul and its substantiality,' where the substantiality can be characterized as the soul's 'formal being for-itself, the presaging and dreaming of its general nature-life, the feeling of its nature-spirit, (GW 13, §320). Here, as in the subsequent editions of the *Encyclopaedia* the subjective soul opposes itself to the subjective soul insofar as the soul opposes itself to its body, if only to re-establish the mediated identity of soul and body through habit. In the 1827 edition, Hegel simply refers to the 'feeling-soul' as the 'dreaming soul,' that soul which, it would appear, we first encounter in certain way in dreams, but also in foetal, somnambulist, and magnetic states. Hegel comes to refer to this presaging, dreaming soul as the 'feeling-soul,' because he feels it better characterizes that which ultimately distinguishes this soul from the natural and the spiritual: namely, its particularity. Whereas the natural soul is defined, as it were, by the singularity and spirit by universality, the feeling soul is confined to particularity.

²⁸Although in German the distinction between feeling and sensation or *Gefühl* and *Empfindung* is, in general, less clear in everyday use than in English. In German, for example, it is possible to speak of sensations of joy (*Freude*), revenge (*Rache*), thankfulness (*Dankbarkeit*), etc. where, in English, we would certainly speak of feelings. In earlier versions of the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel seems to argue that, in everyday language, we do not make a distinction between sensation and feeling, but, by 1830, Hegel believes that even ordinary language hints at a conceptual difference. Indeed, in the 1825 lectures on the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit, Hegel maintains that the sensing or sentient soul is synonymous with the feeling soul, only then to elaborate some differences (GW 25.1, p. 304)

inheres in every feeling and, indeed, in every sensation (Enz §402).²⁹ In every sensation, the soul can be said to feel itself, at least potentially, since every sensation conveys a sense of 'natural oneness [*Eigenheit*]' (Enz §400), a sense of belonging to the soul. The goal of the feeling-soul, if we can speak of one, will be to elaborate on this sense of oneness, shaping it into a sense of or feeling of self or selfhood.

At the stage of sentience, the soul remains entirely immersed in its sensations and, though such sensations belong to the soul, the soul still fails to recognize them as its own. In his lectures, Hegel argues that non-human animals never progress from this stage, even if they nonetheless achieve a sense of self every time they satisfy their desires (GW 25.2, pp. 362-363). In the case of other animals, the feeling or awareness of self disappears as soon as it appears. While every sensation includes a sensation of itself and of self in general, it is only through habit or *Gewohnheit* that this self raises itself above 'mere' animal life, which remains sunk in this sensation. That said, as we will discuss shortly, the animal can still be said to produce a sense of itself, albeit only fleetingly. The self proper only comes into existence when the still animal organism begins to gather the totality of its sensations into itself, into a center, and that *for-itself*. However, to accomplish this gathering-together, the animal organism needs to develop habits, but it is precisely this ability that other, non-human animals lack (although Hegel is, at times, far from clear on this matter) (GW 25.1, p. 210).³⁰

Even for the *anthropos* or the human being considered in its natural state, selfhood does not merely appear; rather it is the result of a long and arduous process. The *anthropos* must *work* to wrestle the sense of oneness present in every sensation from said sensations and thereby develop a sense of its self as a self. Again, this is what occurs at the stage of the feeling soul. As Hegel puts it,

The feeling individual is [at the stage of the sentient soul] simple ideality, subjectivity of sensation. Consequently, the task here is for it to posit the simply implicit filling of its substantiality as subjectivity, to take possession of itself and assume the being-for-self of self-mastery. Insofar it feels, the soul is inwardly and no longer merely naturally individualized; this being-for-self of

²⁹For a helpful discussion of the differences between sensation and feeling, see Robert R. Williams' notes on the matter in his edition of the *Lectures of the Philosophy of Spirit, 1827–28* (Hegel 2007, p. 110). See also DeVries (1988), especially Chapter 5.

³⁰Hegel does not appear to arrive at this conclusion until rather late in his philosophical career with the 1825 lectures on the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit. See also, GW 25.2, pp. 735-736. There, Hegel appears to leave the possibility open that other animals may be able to develop habits, albeit not habits of skill.

the soul, which in the merely substantial totality is at first formal, must be made independent and liberated. (Enz §403)

Here, the soul breaks free from its purely natural individuality and develops an inner individuality, which can be characterized as subjective or spiritual. The being-for-self of the soul begins to liberate itself from the confines of the merely sentient soul when it learns to distinguish itself from 'the determinations of its sensed totality' (Enz §404). This distinction has the character of an original judgement or *Urteil*, wherein the soul becomes a kind-of subject. Since this incipient subject does not yet stand opposed to an object, we cannot yet speak of a subject as such. Strictly speaking, the distinction between subject and object only occurs in and for consciousness with the appearance of the I.

At the level of the feeling soul, the difference between subject and object appears as the incipient difference between the subjective soul and its substantiality; the soul's substantiality has not yet been fully elaborated. The feeling soul, as Griesheim notes in his notes on Hegel's 1825 lectures on the philosophy of subjective spirit, is 'as a cloudy world in its self, it is not yet the open world of the understanding, rather that world where the feeling of the subject is still posited as identical with the subject, which determines itself as externality' (GW 25.1 p. 304-306). Here, the soul remains susceptible to identifying itself entirely with its particular feelings, since it has not yet developed the necessary cognitive capacities, the understanding, to order its feelings properly. For this reason, it is here that the soul is especially in danger of falling ill or else of going insane.³¹ That which the soul feels is felt as external, but this externality is merely 'the determinations of its sensing totality' (Enz §404); they have not yet been understood in their proper context: namely, as the feelings of a particular subject vis-a-vis an objective world.

In the section on the feeling soul in the 'Anthropology,' Hegel identifies three moments: (1) the feeling-soul in its immediacy, (2) self-feeling, and (3) the actual soul. In the first moment, we have a passive totality, a totality which Hegel at times refers to an infinite pit or shaft, wherein experiences (often unbeknownst to us) are collected and preserved. In the context of a fully developed, self-conscious human being, this feeling-soul in its immediacy occasionally appears as that daemon or genius which appears to guide us in our actions, especially when our conscious

³¹Only being endowed with consciousness, it would seem, are able to go insane, since insanity would involve the collapse of the subject-object distinction – a distinction which, once again, only arises with consciousness. For a helpful discussion of insanity, madness, and other related psychosomatic illnesses in Hegel, see de Laurentiis (2019, 2021).

reasoning fails us. This genius is, as Hegel writes, 'instinctual, is active in an unconscious way' (GW 25.1, p. 360). Yet, it is still very much a self or, at the very least, a kind-of self. Indeed, Hegel understands that many regard this kind-of-self as the true self, the true soul, the truth of who we are. Yet even though this daemon or genius emanates from the inner core of who we 'really' are, its reasons remain both foreign and mysterious to us. With respect to this feeling-soul in its immediacy, we still distinguish ourselves in and through our 'conscious goals and resolutions' (GW 25.2 674). This immediate form of self-feeling is, according to Hegel, but the lowest form of spirit since it has not yet been mediated by consciousness and reason. Covered in a shroud of darkness, it waits for the light of reason to shed light upon its contents, so that it becomes possible for the subject to 'knows what is in it' (GW 25.2, p. 672). This is the goal of the feeling-soul: namely, to bring precisely these sunken contents to the surface, so that they can be evaluated rationally.

But in the life of a self-conscious human being such contents rarely rise to the surface except in exceptional, fleeting moments (for example, in dreams, in somnambulism or sleep-walking, hypnotism and/or animal magnetism etc.) or else in sickness. For the self-conscious human being, the life of feeling threatens the life of the understanding, whose sense of unity depends on the subordination of the feeling soul to the rational. When the feeling-soul does appear, it appears as an 'inner' self, a self of feeling which, in normal circumstances, underlies the self of consciousness. To be sure, the feeling-soul in its immediacy has, once again, not yet realized itself as a self, strictly speaking. Hegel writes that, 'the feeling individuality is initially a monadic individual, but as *immediate* it is not yet *its self*, not an in itself reflected subject and therefore *passive*' (Enz §405). Here, the soul finds its self or *Selbstischkeit*, not in itself, but in another (as in the case of the foetus, which, Hegel argues, finds its self-like identity in its mother). For the feeling-soul to become a self, it must first enter a state of opposition between itself as a subjective unity and itself as objectivity, since selfhood involves a reflexive dimension which is impossible for a soul caught in a state of immediacy. At the level of the feeling-soul in its immediacy, the feeling-soul remains but a formal, ideal space into which sensations, experiences, and other contents, simply flow. Only later, in consciousness, does the soul manage to differentiate between its subjective and objective contents. At this stage, the self relates to itself immediately; everything that happens happens to it without the slightest hint of self-determination; it remains wholly determined *as if* from the outside.

In the next stage or moment, that of self-feeling or *Selbstgefühl* the soul begins to differentiate between its inner and its outer self, thus setting the stage for the further elaboration of these categories into subject and object in consciousness. For us, it is important to keep in mind that, even at this stage of the feeling-soul in its immediacy, there exists a self or at least a kind-of self. Hegel likens the state of the feeling-soul in its immediacy to the foetus which, although it is a monadic individual, finds its self-like or *selbstische* identity in the mother, whose subjectivity and self-likeness (*Selbstisichkeit*) determines its very being. The foetus cannot resist its mother's affects and acts as but the substance, the 'dependent predicate,' of the subject (Enz §405).³² In such a passive state, the feeling-soul has not yet achieved the aesthetic distance from itself to recognize itself as self. For this to occur, the feeling-soul will have to learn how to differentiate itself from its contents, its sensations, feelings, representations, etc. Indeed, this is what happens in the second moment of the feeling-soul, in the moment which Hegel entitles *Selbstgefühl* or self-feeling. Hegel writes that,

the feeling totality is essentially this: to differentiate itself in its self and to awaken to the judgement in itself, according to which it has particular feelings and relates to these, its feelings, as a subject. The subject as such posits these feeling as its feelings in itself. It is sunk in this particularity of the sensations, and, at the same time, it joins itself in this therein with itself as a subjective unity through the ideality of the particular. In this way, it is self-feeling – and it is at the same time only in particular feeling. (§ 407)

The soul learns how to differentiate between itself as subject and its sensations and/or feelings, which themselves begin to appear as if emanating from 'outside,' even if this 'outside' be the inside the body. But how exactly does the feeling-soul awaken to this judgment within itself if the feeling-soul in its immediacy, as a subjective unity, is almost entirely passive?

Hegel asserts that what needs to happen is clear: the feeling subject as a totality must oppose itself to itself. An opposition must arise within the soul which, at this point, remains entirely subjective. Something like an objective world, in other words, must appear for the soul. In the previous moment, that of the feeling-soul in its immediacy, the soul was, in truth, a self, but it had not yet recognized itself as such, which is partly why it

³²In the remark to §405, Hegel writes that, in the relationship between mother and fetus, 'there are two individuals, but still in a still unseparated unity of soul; the one is not yet a self, not yet impenetrable, rather an unresistant one; the other is its subject, the singular self of both' (Enz §405).

could so easily lose itself in the selfhood of another. Hegel specifies the task at hand thusly: 'what is to be done is that, first, the feeling subject opposes itself to this, its totality, this feeling subjectivity, but in such a way that it remains as feeling subjectivity' (GW 25.1, p. 358). The soul must make an original judgement between itself as subject on the one hand and itself as a kind-of objectivity on the other. Hegel argues that this judgment arises, in the first place, through the life process itself and, more specifically, the life process as just the externalisation of certain drives and desires (GW 25.1. 360).

According to Hegel, the drives effect a division in the subject, since they appear as something negative within the subject, a contradiction which threatens the otherwise stable unity of the soul as a substantial totality and which, at the same time, calls out for fulfilment or satisfaction. This negativity appears to the subject in the form of an 'object' or *Gegenstand*, which stands opposed to it. At this stage, this 'object' is not yet an object of consciousness and hence, strictly speaking, no object at all; for the subject it is but a vague intimation of externality which appears as but a further determination of subjectivity. Speaking of drives generally, Hegel explains how drives open a cleft in the subject that then becomes the basis of the subject/object distinction in consciousness: 'For the drives, objectivity, the negative of them is necessary. The subjectivity on the contrary is one-sided; the drive contradicts the substantial totality, which the subject is, and is thus the sublation of this one-sidedness' (GW 25.1, p. 360). To achieve satisfaction, the subject must 'sublate the difference of subject and object' (GW 25.1, p. 360). Crucially, it is by sublating the difference between subject and object, by *satisfying* its drives and desires, that the subject manages to produce a feeling of its self or *self-feeling*. It is 'the sublation of the drive, the satisfaction [which] brings forth the self-feeling of the feeling individual' (GW 25.1 361). While self-feeling is not something exclusively human, for non-human animals satisfaction does not produce a lasting feeling of self, only a fleeting feeling. Regardless of how many times they experience satisfaction, they experience this satisfaction as if for the first time (GW 25.1 362). As Hegel puts it, 'this satisfaction, this enjoyment [*Genuß*] is singular, fleeting in time, the drives awaken again and again' (GW 25.1, p. 360). But, as Hegel notes, it is precisely here that spirit as such begins to take root in the living, feeling subject; it is here that 'the determination of the feeling subject as spiritual appears on the scene' (GW 25.1, p. 361).

Hegel details the process by which spirit begins to take root in the animal organism thusly: in the first place, in satisfaction, the living

subject becomes objective to itself. At first, this occurs in a fleeting, momentary way, but eventually the feeling of satisfaction and enjoyment, which comes with the extirpation of drives and desires, gives rise to a more general sense of satisfaction and hence a more general sense or feeling of self. Hegel remarks that, 'the living subject as merely spiritual in itself, becomes in self-feeling, which arises out of satisfaction, object [*Gegenstand*], it and its self; it is the certainty of itself, insofar as, here, in the procession of the feeling [self], we have the appearance of generality, thus self-feeling becomes the feeling of itself as something general, becomes objective [*gegenständlich*] to itself, becomes no longer satisfied as *this*, but in the way, the form of generality' (GW 25.1, p. 361). Other, non-human animals are not able to produce this lasting, general sense of self, because they lack the *mechanism* whereby this general sense of self is produced: namely, habit or *Gewohnheit*. In the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel describes habit as the 'mechanism of self-feeling' (Enz §409). Indeed, while self-feeling is first produced in and through the sublation of the difference between subject and object, through the satisfaction of drives and desires, it is only on account of habit that this feeling becomes that more general feeling of self, which then becomes the basis of self-consciousness. Through habit, self-feeling, which at first only arises with the particular feelings and sensations, becomes *generalized* just as the *particular* feelings and sensations become generalized. Self-feeling becomes the '*for-itself-existing generality*' (Enz §409), which has differentiated itself from the soul's particular feelings, sensations, drives, desires, etc. – in short, from its *bodiliness*. This generalized self-feeling, this 'abstract being-for-itself,' becomes 'the ideal, subjective substantiality of this bodiliness' (Enz §409).

Although we will not be able to explore Hegel's concept of habit thoroughly here, we should recall, that habit is a *hexis*, a way of having or possessing as much as it is a way of universalizing or generalizing. For Hegel, habit is not merely a universalizing and ultimately deadening force, it is the way that we come into possession of ourselves, of our own bodies. As we have seen, while every sensation or desire includes a shadow dimension of selfness or mineness, this dimension only comes to light in a durable way through the work of habit. In habit, otherwise fleeting moments of satisfaction, which generate self-feeling, become generalized, ultimately revealing a general self-separate but identical to the body and its sensations, feelings, desires, etc.

5. Final remarks

While there is a great deal more that we could say about self-feeling and the role that habit plays in its production, as well as the production of spirit more generally, such a discussion would take us beyond the confines of this paper. Our aim has been to demonstrate that, despite what the likes of Zahavi claim, (1) Hegel is not a social constructivist when it comes to matters of the self and, moreover, (2) Hegel's philosophy of the self is compatible with the likes of Zahavi. Hegel argues for a kind-of self or *Selbstischkeit* which, in a sense, precedes self-consciousness and which moreover bears some striking resemblances to Zahavi's experiential self insofar as it ultimately designates a pre-conscious way of having oneself, (re)produced through the work of habit. If we had more time, we would dwell further on how habit works to (re)produce self-feeling, focusing on how habit helps the soul to take possession of its contents, to have itself, and manufacture its own *Beisichselbersein* or being-together-with-itself (Enz §410).

Here, we have in the main been interested in laying out the ingredients of (Hegelian) selfhood and intimating how habit helps to (re)produce this kind-of self or *Selbstischkeit*. Indeed, it is this 'habitual' understanding of selfhood, which, in the end, makes Hegel (along with Merleau-Ponty), extremely helpful for thinking about how something like a pre-conscious, 'experiential' self, comes into being. Moreover, Hegel's philosophy of the self may be better suited than the likes of Husserl for developing an understanding of the relationship between that bodily, pre-reflective, pre-conscious self and the socially constructed self of self-consciousness. Hegel's emphasis on habit as the mechanism through which the self as such first comes into existence for the subject in a lasting way, offers us a way to bridge the gap between the initial kind-of-self, rooted in preconscious feelings of selfhood, and the self of self-consciousness, rooted in social acts of mutual recognition. For instance, even if Hegel denies that other, non-human animals lack the ability to develop such a substantial sense of self, it is easy to see how selfhood could be extended to other, sentient non-human animals replete with the ability to develop habits, allowing us to explore (often against Hegel) the continuity between the so-called physical and/or biological and mental or spiritual aspects of the self.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

References

- Bersier, G. 2005. "Visualizing Carl Friedrich Kiemeyer's Organic Forces: Goethe's Morphology on the Threshold of Evolution." *Monatshefte* XCVII (1): 18–32. <https://doi.org/10.3368/m.XCVII.1.18>.
- Ciavatta, D. 2017. "Embodied Meaning in Hegel and Merleau-Ponty." *Hegel Bulletin* 38 (1): 45–66. <https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2016.62>.
- Dahlstrom, Daniel. 2013. "The Self Before Self-Consciousness: Hegel's Developmental Account." *Hegel Bulletin* 34 (2): 135–158.
- de Laurentiis, A. 2019. "Derangements of the Soul." In *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, edited by M. F. Bykova. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- de Laurentiis, A. 2021. *Hegel's Anthropology: Life, Psyche, and Second Nature*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- DeVries, W. A. 1988. *Hegel's Theory of Mental Activity: An Introduction to Theoretical Spirit*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Engelhardt, D. 1986. "Die biologischen Wissenschaften in Hegels Naturphilosophie." In *Hegels Philosophie der Natur*, edited by R. P. Horstmann and M. J. Petry, 121–137. Stuttgart: Klett-Cota.
- Engelstein, S. 2021. "Kiemeyer, Röschlaub, Schelling, Novalis." *Symphilosophie* 3:70.
- Ferrarin, A. 2001. *Hegel and Aristotle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferrarin, A. 2017. "Hegel and Husserl on the Emergence of the I out of Subjectivity." *Hegel Bulletin* 38 (1): 7–23. <https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2016.63>.
- Franks, P. 2020. "From World-Soul to Universal Organism: Maimon's Hypothesis and Schelling's Physicalization of a Platonic-Kabbalistic Concept." In *Schelling's Philosophy*, edited by P. Franks, 71–92. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gallagher, S., and D. Zahavi. 2013. *The Phenomenological Mind*. New York: Routledge.
- Hegel, G. W. F. 2007. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit (1827-8)*. (R. R. Williams, Trans.). Oxford University Press.
- Ikäheimo, H. 2010. "Animal Consciousness in Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit." *Hegel-Jahrbuch* 12:180–185.
- Kant, I. 2014. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Kiemeyer, C. F. 1793. *Über die Verhältnisse der organischen Kräfte unter einander in der Reihe der verschiedenen Organisationen*.
- Lerner, R. R. P. 2023. "Hegel and Husserl on Phenomenology, Logic, and the System of Sciences: A Reappraisal." *Husserl Studies* 39 (3): 301–330. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10743-023-09335-7>.
- Lewis, T. A. 1999. *Habit, Reflection, and Freedom: From Anthropology to Ethics in Hegel* [Doctoral Dissertation. Stanford University]. ProQuest for Dissertation and Theses.
- Lewis, T. A. 2007. "Speaking of Habits." *The Owl of Minerva* 39 (1–2): 25–54.
- Lindquist, D. 2020. "On Origins and Species: Hegel on the Genus-Process." *Hegel Bulletin* 41 (3): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2020.2>.
- Lumsden, S. 2012. "Habit, Sittlichkeit and Second Nature." *Critical Horizons* 13 (2): 220–243.
- Lumsden, S. 2013a. "Between Nature and Spirit: Hegel's Account of Habit." In *Essays on Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, edited by D. S. Stern, 121–137. Albany: SUNY Press.

- Lumsden, S. 2013b. "Habit and the Limits of the Autonomous Subject." *Body & Society* 19 (2–3): 58–82.
- Lumsden, S. 2016. "Second Nature and Historical Change in Hegel's Philosophy of History." *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 24 (1): 74–94.
- Magrì, E. 2017. "The Problem of Habitual Body and Memory in Hegel and Merleau-Ponty." *Hegel Bulletin* 38 (1): 24–44. <https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2016.65>.
- Maiese, M. 2015. *Embodied Selves and Divided Minds*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/med/9780199689231.001.0001>
- Malabou, C. 2005. *The Future of Hegel*. New York: Routledge.
- Marchetti, I., and E. H. W. Koster. 2014. "Brain and Intersubjectivity: A Hegelian Hypothesis on the Self-other Neurodynamics." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 8:1–4.
- Menke, C. 2018. *Autonomie und Befreiung*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Moran, Dermot. 2016. "The Ego as Substrate of Habitualities: Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology of the Habitual Self." *Phenomenology and Mind* 6: 27–47. https://doi.org/10.13128/Phe_Mi-19549.
- Moran, D., and E. Magrì. 2017. "Hegel and Phenomenology: Introduction." *Hegel Bulletin* 38 (1): 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2016.72>.
- Mowad, N. 2019. *Meaning and Embodiment: Human Corporeity in Hegel's Anthropology*. Albany: State University of New York.
- Novakovic, A. 2017. *Hegel on Second Nature in Ethical Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Novakovic, A. 2019. "Hegel's Real Habits." *European Journal of Philosophy* 27 (4): 882–897.
- Pippin, R. B. 2011. *Hegel on Self-Consciousness: Desire and Death in the Phenomenology of Spirit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Sartre, J.-P. 1943. *L'être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Stekeler-Weithofer, P. 2010. "Subjective Seele und Intersubjektiver Geist bei Hegel." *Hegel Jahrbuch* 1: 221–239. <https://doi.org/10.1524/hgjb.2010.12.jg.221>.
- Testa, I. 2012. "How does Recognition Emerge from Nature? The Genesis of Consciousness in Hegel's Jena Writings." *Critical Horizons* 13 (2): 176–196.
- Thompson, E. 2007. *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of mind*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Varela, F. J. 1997. "Patterns of Life: Intertwining Identity and Cognition." *Brain and Cognition* 34 (1): 72–87. <https://doi.org/10.1006/brcg.1997.0907>.
- Wolff, M. (1992). *Das Körper-Seele-Problem: Kommentar zu Hegel, Enzyklopädie* (1830), §389. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann.
- Zahavi, D. 2005. *Subjectivity and Selfhood*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Zahavi, D. 2009. "Is the Self a Social Construct?" *Inquiry (Oslo)* 52 (6): 551–573.
- Zahavi, D. 2014. *Self and Other*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.