



Intelligent Will, Causality, and Action in Hegel's Jenaer Realphilosophie 1805/06



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Abstract: This paper introduces foundational claims originating from Hegel's *Jenaer Realphilosophie 1805/6* to Hegel's action studies. It focuses on the concept of the minded subject whose intelligent will [*als Wille, der Intelligenz ist*] is essential for approaching the effective agency capable of action [*das Tun; die Tätigkeit*] and labor [*Arbeiten*]. In this work, agency is initially conceptualized in terms of its self-actualization and self-objectification in external achievements. It shows that, unlike in certain neo-Hegelian considerations, the emergence of agency and the ability to act [*Handlung*] freely, deliberately, purposefully, and intentionally is determined by the development of the individual human mind and its explanation does not need the entire complex socio-economic apparatus related to labor [*Arbeit*].

Keywords: Hegel; Jenaer Reaphilosophie 1805/06; action; agency; intelligent and practical will; individualism; labor as a socio-economic endeavor; philosophy of mind.

I. Introduction

In this paper, I defend the following claim: Hegel's conception of intelligent will described in *Jenaer Realphilosophie 1805/6* constitutes a sufficient theoretical foundation for understanding the foundations of his early approach to action. In the light of certain present-day neo-Hegelian interpretations of Hegel's philosophy of action as 'impossible' (whereas communal practice, and in particular ontologically and institutionally mediated labor as a socio-economic endeavor, is considered possible), understanding a subject's individual ability to act freely, purposefully, and deliberately in Hegel's early philosophy (Hegel 1983) deserves re-examination. It is about a subject equipped with an individual mind. The latter develops, among other things, an internal causality and learns – firstly through a kind of intelligence called “cunning” [*die List; das offenste Handeln ist die größte List*] (Hegel 1969, 199) to master and also use nature's causality, external things [*die äußere Dingheit*], tools, and techniques to realize the content of the subjective will in the external – thus objective and material – world. Not yet explicitly named by Hegel in this work, but implicitly already referred to, an elemental intention to act is generated by the mind's cognitive abilities.

Aims, actions – and above all the tools and products – can be shared with fellow subjects; Hegel describes cooperation [*die gemeinschaftliche Arbeit*], exchange, contract, and becoming “general” or “universal” [*die allgemeine Wirklichkeit; die allgemeine Möglichkeit*] (Hegel 1969, 203) for a community of embodied, minded subjects who recognize each other. Nevertheless, as a being endowed with a practical mind and intelligent will, each human subject is already individually capable of undertaking action, and thus also of having an impact on the external world. In this individual activity there is, of course, a certain as yet pre-social – or still un(under)socialized – immediacy [*die Unmittelbarkeit*]; but, even under complex societal conditions, an individual is able to act independently and even against the common rules; in this way, moral action is always possible – and the subjective right to it remains inalienable, even if ethical and statutory laws prescribe otherwise. The subjective, individual component is present even in the most objective and socialized products of human action. Hence, it would be more accurate to speak of human-social action (especially labor) rather than of social action. This kind of individualism seems to be related to the “state of nature,” but it is noteworthy that in Hegel individualism is also made one of the foundations of modern society. Approaching *labor* in his philosophy presupposes its complex ontology and normativity as a socio-economic endeavor; but to grasp the prerequisites (both subjective and naturally-objective conditions of possibility) for action, it seems unnecessary to recall that entire “multifaceted system” [*vielseitiges System*] (Hegel 1969, 233) of industry, the market, and public institutions.

The main goal of this paper is to argue for the self-sufficiency of individual subjectivity in becoming able to undertake actions – including rules creation, initially in terms of (1) practical-technical rationality and (2) moral normativity. The validity of both the former and the latter remains clearly limited and must be mediated by intersubjective relations and ‘ethical life’ [*sittliches Leben; Sittlichkeit*] as well as the laws of right [*Rechtsgesetze*] of civil society which gradually make up what Hegel called the objective spirit incorporated in the *Rechtsstaat*. The autonomous development of the theoretical and practical faculties of the human mind ensures subjective self-sufficiency. The subjective ability to act and interact freely, deliberately, and intentionally, in turn, constitutes the foundation for the existence of the modern community.

In particular, the paper considers a specific definition of practical will that Hegel provides in his *Jenaer Realphilosophie 1805/6*. Hegel’s analysis of thought involves the socio-normative philosophical conception of will that he presents in his later works. However, in the *Jenaer Realphilosophie*, we find the conceptualization of will as a cognitive, volitional and practical faculty of the mind that ensures effective doings and actions not only inside the mind in the form of setting goals and forming intentions, but also in external reality. Many interacting parts make up Hegel’s idea of intersubjectively and societally consolidated ontology and logic, but the importance of the role of the individual being, with their initiative and action-taking, is undeniable. For it is certainly

not the case in Hegel that the objectified – especially normatively – ‘we’/‘us’ dominates and predetermines all the relevant activity of the individual, and that this activity has no other worth or sense than that of the extra- and supra-individual. For instance, Pirmin Stekeler-Weithofer stresses a less predeterminative and more cooperative and cultural aspect of action in Hegel’s philosophy, including the representations of “intentions and contentions” (Stekeler-Weithofer 2019, 7) (contentions represent the content) to guide actions. In contrast, Michael Quante (2004) exposes the subjective-volitional aspects of action as more primary (see below).

In the following sections, I first outline the neo-Hegelian account of action that focuses on the external societal regulatory aspects of agency and action. Unlike the former, this paper deals with developing the generative and autoregulatory aspects of the human ability to act, claiming that an individual is a source of invention, intention, creation, and transformation of the surrounding world and contributes to societal enterprises and institutions as both an individual, and a *socius* (interconnected with fellow individuals).

II. The Neo-Hegelian Account of Hegel’s Action

Some contemporary neo-Hegelians, including Robert B. Pippin and Katerina Deligiorgi, claim that the possibility of free action and action evaluation is *generally* determined and conditioned in Hegel by the subject’s involvement in ‘ethical totality’, i.e., a societal network of cooperative practices, norms, and institutions in which actual – and reciprocal – recognition [*wirkliche Anerkennung*] relations are implemented (Pippin 2006; Pippin 2008; Pippin 2010; Deligiorgi 2010) or guaranteed with supra-subjective (e.g., legal) power. In their account, action is undertaken by subjects who do not know for sure what they are going to do and what they have done before other subjects identify (1) their action as an *action*, (2) attribute the performed action to them, and (3) inform the subject in certain way about the content of their intention. In other words, they identify the subjective intention with the intersubjectively and objectively available results or consequences of the action in question, attributing this result to the content of the subjective intention. According to these authors, the subject in Hegel does not have access to any comprehension of the reasons in accordance with which they act, not because of their cognitive dysfunction but because action appears in the social evaluation of something that was done, not at the moment when somebody feels a need or has a wish to do something, nor at the moment when they do something. So, before the social (respectively, intersubjectively and normatively mediated) relation/reaction to action, any purposeful and meaningful activity or action does seem impossible. Theodore R. Schatzki calls it “the indeterminacy of action” – he shows that in Pippin’s works Hegel’s action “is not fixed, settled, or determined prior to acting, either what a person does or what determines this” (Schatzki 2010). In a nutshell, according to this approach, subjects in Hegel do not know what they are doing until they become an integral part of socialized

consciousness and self-consciousness, also in its practical sense.

This perspective of Hegel's action comprehension entails significant transformations in the way we understand (1) subjectivity and individuality, (2) subjective self-determination and self-sufficiency, (3) agency, and (4) the very sense of Hegel's philosophical project. I will start with the latter since the neo-Hegelian interpretation of Hegel's philosophical aspirations is a crucial prerequisite for the proper apprehension of the claims Pippin and Deligiorgi made about the subjective capacity of thinking and acting.

This paper does not aim to criticize the bright and inspiring interpretation of Hegel's action offered within the neo-Hegelian approach. It does not consider this approach in detail, not least because many scholars have already engaged in a huge discussion about it (Knowles 2010; McDowell 1996; McDowell 2009; McDowell 2010; McDowell 2018; Schatzki 2010; Tereshchenko 2022). Instead, its modest contribution is to draw the attention of those interested in Hegel's action theory to intelligent, practical, and actual will as essential for the human ability to act in the world (not just to constitute one's "I" as during Hegel's Fichtean period in Bern) (see Bondeli 1997).

In the following section, I briefly present John H. McDowell's response to the neo-Hegelian understanding of Hegel's action to show the direction the discussion on Hegel's action took. Then I develop the central thesis of this paper concerning the analysis of the subject's internal reality as a necessary condition for a complete reconstruction of Hegel's ideas.

III. Pippin's Hegel. McDowell and Reheating the Debate

In Pippin's reading, the main task of Hegel's philosophical project is to formulate and radicalize ideas on phenomena, objects, and relations that do not exist in objective reality or the inner reality of the self. Philosophy reflects changes in thinking about ideas and concepts, and a quest for objective truth does not belong to philosophers' obligations (Pippin 2006, 129). Hegel introduces all the abovementioned concepts (individuality, subjective self-determination, self-sufficiency, and agency) within philosophical discourse in order to emphasize the danger of individualistic thinking. Besides, he tries to defend the idea of the inevitable and total dependence of subjects on the social context in which they find themselves: "by ignoring or denying such original relations in a fantasy of self-reliance that we end up in those distorted or even pathological relations to others, even to ourselves" (Pippin 2006, 127–128).

Pippin describes the nature of the subject's internal reality as entirely *externally* constructed; it contains nothing that can be attributed to the subjective ability to formulate intentions or goals and realize them. The only meaningful human activity is directed toward following the rules of the established social order:

We are being educated to see that thinking, reasoning, believing, deciding, resolving and so on should not be understood as primarily or essentially mere mental events occurring at a time. They are, but that is the wrong category with which to understand them *as practices*. As practices, activities aimed at getting something right, at finding the right course of action, their intelligibility requires attention to the rules and purpose of this practice, and the subjects of these activities should be understood as purposive rule-followers (Pippin 2006, 135).

Thus, agency is not an auto-creative – and isolated phenomenon – but a product of a collective effort to attribute the status of an agent to a particular subject. Self-determination and self-sufficiency, in turn, are products of the development of the history of ideas, not characteristics of the subject and their ability to act. This conclusion may be right, but it is not the only one we can draw from engaging with Hegel's Jena writings such as the *Jenaer Realphilosophie 1805/6* and the *Jenaer Systementwürfe*, as I will try to demonstrate in the subsequent sections.

As for Pippin's further contributions, the idea that subjects and their actions (in terms of *Handlung*) and deeds (in terms of *Tat*) acquire a certain social status exclusively as a bestowal from others (a "product or result of mutually recognitive attitudes,") leads to the conclusion that any independent individual action and its impact on the world should be regarded as accidental (Pippin 2010, 65). Yes, subjective normativity – e.g., moral normativity – depends on the subject and can be burdened with a certain degree of arbitrariness compared to legal institutions that apply with 'objective' necessity (respectively, validity) and interpersonal commitments. Nonetheless, "the freedom of the will, according to this [subjective, yet not socially mediated – Y.T.] determination, is arbitrariness, in which the following two factors are contained: free reflection, which abstracts from everything, and dependence on an inwardly or externally given content and material" (Hegel 1991, § 15). The limitations of the subjective will come to light in the context of the societal and institutional regulation of human practices (which – however – always include all subjects' self-regulations as a necessary stage of an inclusive civil society). Hegel addresses these regulations already in the final section of the *Jenaer Realphilosophie 1805/06*. It should be added that in the *Jenaer Realphilosophie* not only this system, but also individuals are ruled by the state and law [*die Staatsgewalt; die Macht des Rechts*] (Hegel 1969, 234–235). "Here work and doing something" [*hier ist Arbeiten und Etwas-vor-sich-Bringen*] are plugged into the power of the government [*die Kraft der Regierung*] (Hegel 1969, 262). In the later *Philosophy of Right* (after 1817), their labor will firstly be re-privatized and liberalized (however, not without serious repercussions for society), and secondly regulated by the grassroots rise of 'Sittlichkeit' in terms of labor solidarism, cooperativism, and corporativism [*Solidarität, Genossenschaft, Korporation*] (Hegel 1983a, 202) aiming to safeguard workers' rights and justice in a predatory modern capitalist system. But it is not labor [*Arbeit*] – its political and normative empowerment, and its societal value and complexity, but a quite elementary type of human activity – namely action [*Handlung*] – that is of interest in the following article. However, these

bottom-up (ethical) and top-down (legal) regulations do not explain the very subjective foundations and conditions of humans' proactive ability as such.

Furthermore, Pippin's statement that "we cannot determine what actually *was* a subject's intention or motivating reason by relying on some sort of introspection, by somehow looking more deeply *into* the agent's soul, or by some sincerity test" (Pippin 2006, 136) seems to be incompatible with Hegel's account of the nature of human self-consciousness already outlined in the *Jenaer Realphilosophie*.

John H. McDowell is one of the philosophers who started a dialog with Pippin (McDowell 1996; McDowell 2009; McDowell 2010; McDowell 2018). Regarding the core of this dialog, McDowell's line of argumentation is built on critics of Pippin's understanding of (1) the correlation between the freedom of individual beings and society, (2) recognition, and (3) some aspects of the inner reality constitution.

According to McDowell, even though human beings are formed in established social practices, they do not permanently depend on them: "When light has dawned, one is no longer dependent on one's teachers for knowing what to do in the practice they have been initiating one into" (McDowell 2009). Agency is not a result of relations of mutual recognition, although its actualization depends on the latter to a certain extent. Unlike Pippin, McDowell develops the idea of an agent's ability to comprehend his/her intention without outer retrospective attribution. McDowell thus understands free action as containing an autonomously formulated reason, whereas freedom is an opportunity to formulate reasons and "ask for reasons" when it comes to intersubjective interactions (McDowell 2010). The institutions and practices that Hegel describes serve this purpose. They 'teach' human beings how to act efficiently and independently. For McDowell, 'sociality' is not an attributed status, but the ability to use language and articulate reasons.

As I mentioned above, to implement the objectives of this paper, there is no need to cover the existing discussion in detail since this has been thoroughly discussed in the secondary research literature devoted to its analysis (e.g., Smith 2002; Redding 2007; Sanguinetti & Abath 2018). This paper, among other things, aims to advance the debate on Hegel's action comprehension, involving Hegel's early texts and ideas that remain underrepresented in contemporary scholarship focused on action in Hegel. It focuses on the development of individual, intelligent, and practical will that Hegel delivered in his *Jenaer Realphilosophie 1805/6*, and on its relevance for action studies.

IV. Closer to Activism and Action in Hegel: Moyar and Winfield

Referring to *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Dean Moyar conceptualizes conscience as "a form of rational authority" that, on the one hand, ensures the subjective ability to identify with undertaken actions, and to take responsibility for them and the beliefs behind them, while, on the other hand, allowing the subject to use "interpretive authority" in their autonomous action. This interpretive authority enables them to understand the

meaning of existing social norms, rules, and laws, while considering the interests and freedom of other people in the act of doing (Moyar 2011).

Another scholar of Hegel's philosophy, Richard Dien Winfield, turning to the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, shows that the subjective will is "practical intelligence" and simultaneously a basis for the formation of the objective "reality of free will" described in the *Philosophy of Right* (Winfield 2013). Winfield's study is important for discussions about Hegel's action, because it emphasizes the character of subjective volition as essentially conscious, and determines the establishment of the will in its objective dimension as nothing else but its concept.

The abovementioned studies famously clarify certain aspects of Hegel's action. At the same time, this paper claims that consideration of the prerequisites for free action should be complemented by the concepts of intelligence and will introduced in the *Jenaer Realphilosophie 1805/06* (Hegel 1983). This addition shows that the constitution and development of the human mind *guarantee* the human being the ability to intend and initiate action freely, and to engage in intersubjective relations (and cooperation) with others.

Intelligence and will are the constitutive abilities of the mind, ensuring its effective development through the cognitive and practical mastery of inner and outer reality. The common distinctive features of these abilities are autonomous development through self-differentiation and self-comprehension through objects emerging in self-differentiation.

V. Intelligence

Intuition and the power of the imagination are initial stages of intelligence development, within which the Self interacts with the material of "perception as its own" and creates images of independent objects inside itself (Hegel 1983, 86). Through another ability, a name-giving power, the mind gives names to images created in inner self-differentiation. The unity of created image and name, form and content, creates a concept, the foundation of conceptual thinking: "Language, on the other hand, posits the internal as being [*seyendes*]. This, then, is the true being of spirit as that of spirit as such. It is there as the unity of two free Selves [i.e., imagination and language] and [as] an entity [*Daseyn*] that is adequate to its concept. At the same time, it immediately negates itself – fading, yet perceived. Above all, language speaks only with this Self, with the meaning of the thing; it gives it a name and expresses this as the being of the object" (Hegel 1983, 89).

Mind as memory, "the first work of the awakened spirit qua spirit", arranges the "possession of names" under a "fixing and fixed order" (Hegel 1983, 92). Objects ordered by memory lose their connection with the intuition and perception through which they appeared inside the inner reality of the Self. By holding this order, the mind begins the comprehension of itself by recognizing its activity in the mentioned processes.

To Hegel, the mind's authentic ("spiritual") activity is always connected with the

ability to step back from the being given immediately, immediacy as such, and to see its constitutive role in the reality of the internal. At the same time, without undertaking actions, or when beyond the experience of the self-establishing will, the mind remains, in a certain sense, empty.

VI. Will

The will is the faculty of the mind that ensures the effective mastery of external reality, initially for the satisfaction of natural needs and subsequently for the establishment of intersubjective freedom. Hegel starts the consideration of the will with the concept of drive analysis, claiming that the drive is a “middle term” of a purpose (inherent in the very nature of the will) and the active Self (Hegel 1983, 100). Hegel emphasizes that initially the drive’s content belongs to external reality, since the drive exists as formal and empty at the basic stage of the will’s self-establishing.

To start its movement, the will turns itself into a force that expels all content from itself. The development of the will begins in self-isolation, the exclusion of otherness, and the experience of a feeling of lack and incompleteness.

At this point, Hegel identifies the I with the drive [*der Trieb*] and says that the will overcomes the feeling of lack through the ability of the I to separate itself from its object. The annihilation of this initial differentiation between the I and object leads to drive satisfaction and the Self finding itself fulfilled. The I becomes conscious of the mechanism of this process since it knows the difference between itself and the object, as well as the fact that the object of the drive appears within its self-differentiation. Finding itself satisfied, “[t]he drive comes to look at itself – it returns to itself in that satisfaction. In the same manner, *it has become knowledge of what it is*” (Hegel 1983, 106). Satisfaction in Hegel’s consideration is always connected with the will’s mastery of the objects differentiated within the totality of the will, as well as its control over natural laws to manipulate these differentiated objects and thus satisfy the drive:

Here the drive withdraws entirely from labor. The drive lets nature consume itself, watches quietly and guides it all with only the slightest effort. [This is] cunning. [Consider] the honor of cunning against power – to grasp blind power from one side so that it turns against itself; to comprehend it, to grasp it as something determinate, to be active against it – to make it return into itself as movement, so that it negates itself (Hegel 1983, 104).

In the development of the will through self-positioning and self-differentiation within the I or the drive, the will acquires not only an object for self-satisfaction but also creates an opportunity for stable self-satisfaction. It creates a *tool* as “self-acting.” The active I, placing the tool between itself and reality or thinghood, alters the purpose-blind, often mechanical course of the processes of nature in a manner consistent with the intentions and aims of the subject (the intelligent originator and initiator of action) to

finally produce, shape [*bilden*], and achieve something that contributes to the satisfaction of 'the drive'. However, the explanation of the will and its activity in terms of drive is by no means the only one nor the leading one, neither on the basis of the *Jenaer Realphilosophie* nor in contemporary interpretations of Hegel's concept of action (Quante 2004).

VII. Cognitive and Causative Origins of Activism in Hegel

Let us begin this Section with the fact that in Hegel's view, at the very beginning of the development of consciousness and subjectivity, there is a genuine, initially unconscious activity immediately present in the "I" [*das erste unmittelbare Ich*] which has not yet taken on any articulated and specialised modes, such as for example thinking (reflection). It is probably to this phase that Pippin refers with his argument about the unconscious of the subjective inner life and the primordial drive originating in the intelligent human mind.

In the *Jenaer Realphilosophie 1805/6*, these origins are also non-conscious in Hegel's eyes [*es ist bewußtlos*] (Hegel 1969, 180). But not everything that is initially "bewußtlos", unknowing, unaware, beyond the control of consciousness – and therefore accidental, unguided, beyond the control of the subject – must remain so to the very end. Step by step, as a process, imagination, language, articulated reflection, etc. develop, as consciousness' *specified and various modes and forms*. Incidentally, perhaps the univocal English term 'unconscious' fails to capture the difference between, on the one hand, the complete absence of consciousness as a distinct activity of mind [*die Unwissenheit; das Nichtwissen; unmittelbares Wissen*] – as in vegetative processes occurring spontaneously in a living organism, plant and animal processes; and, on the other hand, a state in which cognitive activities responsible for being conscious are only in development [*unbewußt; das Unbewußtsein*]. In the latter case, there is a potential consciousness (and self-consciousness) and potential knowledge that can develop in the course of personal growth, interpersonally mediated education [*Bildung*], and socialization – thus, in a process that Hegel himself repeatedly described as the progression of and within consciousness (a subject's becoming conscious [*die Selbstbewußtwerdung*]) in its full spectrum, from the initial, dormant state to 'absolute' consciousness in, for example, science and philosophy (such a stepwise description is provided and exemplified by the *Phenomenology of Spirit*).

Thus, across this spectrum of consciousness development there are many forms and degrees, not just a zero-one scheme (either full unconsciousness or full consciousness). Some of the early developmental forms, such as moral consciousness, remain within particular thinking forms [*das endliche Denken*] and beliefs, and the 'truth' of their contents is limited, or contingent [*die Beschränktheit und Zufälligkeit*] (Hegel 1990, 130 and 236). On a rudimentary but nevertheless explicit level, Hegel addresses in the *Jenaer Realphilosophie* the way in which the mind produces representations of things and gives names to things. "This is the first creative power of the mind" [*dies ist die erste Schöpferkraft, die der Geist ausübt*] (Hegel 1969, 183), because the mind will

then apply and operationalise the memorised representations in formulating purposes, ideas and intentions for new actions. As Michael Quante (2004, 57) points out when analysing the subjective will and its ability to act in the context of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, representations are an inalienable cognitive aspect of the will as a practical faculty. In contrast, instincts, needs, drives – despite the position they hold in Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* and speculative philosophy as well – do not work with representations, and thus cannot be guided and structured as *vehiculi* of conscious, intentional, free and ultimately intentional action. “While a need ‘mechanically’ (...) provokes the activity of an animal, the subjective will decides to posit a content as its end. His freedom for himself is manifested therein” (Quante 2004, 58). In fact, all the preliminaries of the subjective will – not in its moral, but in the primarily practical-technical dimension of the ability to act in general – are legible (not just anticipated!) in the *Jenaer Realphilosophie*. Intelligence here “is actual” [*sie ist wirklich*], which for Hegel means the “possibility to act” [*Möglichkeit des Wirkens*]. “This intelligence is free” [*diese Intelligenz ist frei*] through “the creation of content” [*durch Erzeugung des Inhalts*] – namely “one in which the intelligence will be conscious of her own action, i.e., of herself as making the content or making herself the content” [*und zwar eines solchen, worin sie das Bewußtsein ihres Tuns hat, d.h. ihrer als des Setzens des Inhalt[s] oder [des] Sich-zum-I n h a l t e-machens*] (Hegel 1969, 193–194). This is how practical intelligence or intelligent will work; the will is willing only when it previously determined what to will.

Also, ethical consciousness [*sittlich*] goes beyond the subjective circle of the beliefs, interests, rightness claimed by the subject, because it is oriented towards fellow human beings and mediated by reciprocal relations with them. But this mediation does not mean that moral subjective consciousness has completely disappeared; that the subject has lost the right to morality; or that subjective and ethical consciousness are strictly isolated ‘chambers’ in the mind. After all, the human mind constitutes *one* realm and one circuit. Nevertheless, the individual human consciousness may, until the end of its unfolding (except perhaps for absolute consciousness, which is science or philosophy), fail to know something [*ungewußt*] or stay skeptical [*skeptisch*], hence the need for these higher, objective and absolute, instances from which the individual can draw [*einen objektiven Inhalt*].

It is necessary to add that during the performance of any action with the active participation of consciousness, as Hegel emphasises, the functioning of consciousness engaged in this action [*Tun*] is itself invisible (unconscious) for the subject. What the conscious mind needs to ‘view’ or ‘track’ [*anschauen*], are the objective results of actions – *forms, shapes, qualities* [*als Form gesetzt*] and other products, processed by thinking (including thoughts, ideas, concepts of purpose, etc.), as well as the results manufactured [*verarbeitet; Fabrikation; Manufaktur-Arbeiten*] (Hegel 1969, 232) through actions executed in the external world (considered to be work) by using the causality of nature (tools, materials, physical laws, etc.). Here Hegel means the unity of the subjective-and-

objective components of activism, be it *for* an individual conscious mind or in the external worldly horizon. There is an indissoluble – but not transparent – *continuity* between the subjectively-real inside and the objectively-real outside. In addition, according to another of Hegel's works from the Jena period, "the immediate movement of activity can never be aware or self-aware" [*unmittelbare Bewegung des Thuns, das nicht ins Wissen aufgenommen ist*]; "but the I is working" [*es ist aber arbeitend*] (Hegel 1976, 224). Once disconnected (or *analytically* regarded as disconnected), the subjective source generating intelligent, purposeful, and productive human actions and their *objectivations* (products) appear "abstract" – because one-sided, when disconnected one from another, according to Hegel in his Jena writings. One can assume that the *Jenaer Realphilosophie* is the most distant from dualism from among Hegel's works, and Hegel appears here as a realist monist.

The above-mentioned disconnection may generate "the problem of inner-outer" as that of discontinuity and abstractedness (e.g., Pippin 2010), and also, as Quante points out, a body-mind problem especially, because causality – according to Hegel in his *Science of Logic* – cannot be applied "to *relations of physico-organic and spiritual life*" (after Quante 2004, 179). Confronted with this issue, what does Hegel apply in these dualistic circumstances? Due to this controversy some scholars have ruled out the possibility of intentionality and action in Hegel at all, yet Hegel is clearly not a philosopher of passive and unproductive human existence. Alternatively, other scholars tended to replace the causal argument by "a logical-connection argument" (Quante 2004, 180), "embodied spirit argument" (Hoffman 1982, 184), etc. From the perspective of Hegel's naturalistic anthropology,

mental experience allows one to bring together its disparate elements; it for their 'synthesis' in the unity of representation or appetite. Beginning with the lowest stages of our mental life – indeed even the very 'urge' (*Trieb*) of a plant or with the 'feeling' of the animal – we can witness such 'inwardization' of nature. It is in this way living being gains a grip upon its environment. The ability to gain a grip is essential to the notion of life, which is the illustration of logical category of Being-for-self (Hoffman 1982, 190).

From the perspective of the *Phenomenology of Mind*,

When, for example, Hegel analyzes the concept of 'intention' while discussing the 'sciences' of physiognomy and phrenology in the *Phenomenology of Mind*, the main argument he employs is clearly applicable to the traditional view of volitions. The argument anticipates much of what can be found in contemporary philosophy of mind. Since we cannot identify and describe intention independently of the action which manifests it, intention cannot be construed as a distinct mental event occurring independently of the action. Intention is in the action; both the occurrence and the meaning of the intention are to be found only in the performance of the agent (Hoffman 1982, 193).

The non-causal nature of the synthesis of subjective actions and objective deeds is also presented in the *Jenaer Realphilosophie*, where the juxtaposition – and boundary – between the 'inward' and the 'outward' (due to the externalization of the 'subjective' in

the 'objective') does not exist: *das wirksame Subjekt bewirkt die Gegenständlichkeit und diese wird zur einheitlichen, subjektiv-objektiven Wirklichkeit* (only the original terms can capture the connection between the subject's active action on objectivity and the new, synthetic, subjective-objective identity of reality). The hypothesis of merging teleologies was discussed by Tereshchenko (2022). For Quante,

The solution I am suggesting – of making Hegel's theory of action compatible with the project of causal explanation – succeeds if one attributes a Davidsonian position to him: There is a token-identity, but no nomological correlations between the various languages of description. This fits Hegel's procedure with regard to the mind-body problem, and can also be reconciled with most of the statements of the *Science of Logic*. For *qua* monism, Hegel's logic holds that all entities are in the onto-theological sense reducible to the Absolute (Quante 2004, 183–184).

However, Quante suggested some modifications to naturalize Hegel's position, including, e.g., "organic purposive activity to be itself a causal power" (Quante 2004, 184) in the world where similar natural causality works. This seems much more acceptable for Hegel than making the human body a tool of machinic, 'dull/mindless work' [*stumpfes Arbeiten*] (Hegel 1969, 232).

VIII. The Autonomously Self-Developed, Individual Mind as the Prerequisite for Free Action

The mind develops itself beyond the influence of external forces, though it needs a favorable learning environment to develop its faculties properly [*Bildung*]. Through intelligence and will as human cognitive power and the ability to act, the human being holds control over inner and outer reality. The subject acquires knowledge of the objective world and comprehends the nature of this acquisition: "to fill itself – not through passive absorption, but through the creation of a content wherein the intelligence has the consciousness of its own activity, i.e., as its own positing of content or making itself its own content" (Hegel 1983, 99). At the same time, autonomous will, driven by inner purposefulness, forces humans to act, to take "rational control of natural laws in their external existence" (Hegel 1983, 104). To Hegel, the subject moves from a consumer attitude to reality to a constructive one when elementary labor, driven by basic needs, appears.

The further development of a subject as a genuinely moral and ethical being implies the *reciprocally recognized* existence of the Other, and the unity of these faculties of the mind, intelligence and will, ensures a foundation for the effective action towards (and interaction with) the Other. Certain advanced social doings, for instance, do not exist or could not exist without their articulation in language, not to mention cases in which the action appears in the act of speaking (oath of office, verbal commitment) in terms of Austin's pragmatism, although its consequences are real outside the act of speech: "Certainly

linguistic intelligence is necessary for any acting upon rational principle, since without language and thought, volition could not pursue an end requiring conceptualization. If volition constitutively entailed acting upon the conception of some good or principle of volition, will would be unique to thinking, speaking individuals” (Winfield 2013, 203).

I have to emphasize that action in Hegel’s thought is not presented as a single concept, so it cannot be understood beyond a systematic reading or, at least, in connection with other “related” concepts. As presented here, intelligence and will should transform the way we think about the prerequisites of the subjective ability to act. The reconstruction of the theory of action should be based not on the characteristics, intentions, and actions people attribute to each other in social interactions, but on the objective ontological capacities of the human being. Changes in the subject’s social status, connected with social interactions, should be seen as a consequence of social interaction, not as the essence of action.

IX. Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that identifying and explaining the foundations of the human ability to act, as well as practical invention, intention and agency – is possible in Hegel with the focus on an individual, minded and willed subject, before action differentiates into more specific, socially mediated, and institutionalized forms (e.g., as labor, which is a societal and systemic social endeavor). I have tried to show this with the example of the *Jenaer Realphilosophie 1805/06*, where the inward subject’s causality is seamlessly intertwined with outward causality, and the resulting ontology has a unitary subject-object nature (it is one reality, in which the effectively acting subject realises itself). I have shown that the transformation of the way we think about the subjective ability to act could change our capacity to understand in a distinctive way the foundations of the concept of action in a more individualistic way than is done by some contemporary interpretations that make all human action dependent on collective mediations and regulations. Rather than questioning the importance of these mediations and regulations, I assumed that they were not necessary to explain how the human practical self in Hegel mobilises, actualises and manifests (as well as objectifies in deeds) its genuinely inward ability to act in terms of intelligent will.

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