

The universal will as final end. On Hegel's moral conception of the human mind between Aristotelian naturalism and Kantianism

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Abstract: Neo-Aristotelian metaethics is conceived as a suitable alternative to a Kantian-style ethics. Instead of grounding moral duties in practical reason and an abstract and categorical imperative, the appeal to the concept of human nature promises a rich and detailed picture of virtues and vices. As an objection by John McDowell indicates, practical reason turns out to be crucial for the concept of human nature as well. In Hegel's philosophy of the subjective spirit, we can find an early attempt to combine the Kantian and the Aristotelian approaches. The attempt is still interesting because of the interpretation of human faculties as directed towards the capacity for practical reasoning. This paper presents Hegel's argument as the attempt to transcendentalize the concept of human nature and as offering a synthetic metaethical stance.

Keywords: human nature; categorical imperative; teleology of the mind; Hegel.

1. Introduction

In recent years, Aristotelian philosophy has been referred to as the “next big idea”¹ in academic philosophy. In fact, Aristotelianism is already being debated as an alternative to naturalism (Hähnel 2017), an approach to metaphysics (Novotny and Novák 2014), and, perhaps most astonishingly, as a perspective in philosophy of science (Simpson *et al.* 2018). But the domain in which Aristotelian thought has shown the most profound impact still is *metaethics*.² The

¹ Cf. Evans 2012 (last retrieved on 25th March 2019) and recently on Crane 2018 (last retrieved on 3rd April 2019).

² Of course, the philosophy of action has also been strongly influenced by Aristotelian thought, most conspicuously through Elisabeth Anscombe's essay *Intentions* (Anscombe 1963). I do not want to subsume the theory of action under the concept of metaethics, but there is a connection between the attraction of Aristotelianism in both fields. This connection is emphasized in Michael Thompson's three essays on the theory of human life-form, human action and of practical reasoning: “[...] the particular program in the light of which I originally contemplated these studies was a reconstitution of something like a specifically Aristotelian ethical theory.” (Thompson 2012: 6f.).

thrust of Aristotelianism consists in its continuity with naturalism, which is why it is often called an *ethical naturalism*. According to John McDowell, it has the advantage “to reject various sorts of subjectivism and supernaturalist rationalism” (1998: 167). In contrast to a Humean reduction of ethics to desires³ and any sort of vulgar Platonism about values, the Aristotelian ethics places goodness in nature, for instance by identifying virtues of the human character. This Aristotelian alternative has been condensed by Rosalind Hursthouse into the following formulation:

Virtue ethics, or at least any form of it that takes its inspiration from Aristotle, is usually taken to be a form of ethical naturalism – broadly, the enterprise of basing ethics in some way on considerations of human nature, on what is involved in being good *qua* human being [...] (1999: 192)

The basic idea of this Aristotelian version of ethical naturalism states that goodness refers to characteristics which are contained in a species concept, thus, in the case of humans, into the concept of human nature. The underlying thought is that the attributive use of goodness (Geach 1956) – goodness *qua* being human – dispenses with the appeal to a supernatural or, to put it in Mackie’s term, to a “queer” property (1977: 38-42). Instead the predicate of goodness receives an objective, non-arbitrary meaning because human nature, which is part of nature as a whole, provides the standards of goodness for humans, just as the nature of a bee establishes the standards of goodness for a bee. For instance, this enables me to judge that it is good for me to engage in the practice of communication because communication is part of human nature, just as it is good for bees to engage in the production of honey, since this activity is part of the nature of bees.

But the goodness according to the standards of human nature is not just a matter of empirical descriptions or statistical induction from observations of humans. Instead, human nature is a concept which forms a totality of *Aristotelian categoricals* (Foot 2001: 29; Thompson 2012: 64f.). Aristotelian categoricals single out the traits which the individuals falling under a certain species concept are supposed to exhibit. Thus, they ground the irreducible normativity which provides the standard for judgements of goodness referring to the individuals of that species concept.⁴

³ Cf. Hume 1992: 293f.

⁴ M. Thompson calls the judgments which make use of the Aristotelian categoricals *natural history judgments*. These judgments have a specific logical form, insofar as they contain neither universal nor existential quantifications. A judgment like “humans have two ears” is true, even if there are some humans that do not have two ears and even if there were accidentally no human with two ears at some point in time, the natural history judgment could still be interpreted as true (cf. Thompson 2012: 63-67).

Aristotelian naturalism is not only employed as an antidote against forms of supernaturalism, but has recently also been turned against Kant's deontological ethics. This addresses two alleged consequences of Kant's basic idea that the law of practical reason, the categorical imperative, is the sole standard of ethical goodness. The first is the question of how practical reason can be part of nature; the second is the problem of Kant's formalism. The Aristotelian approach promises to address the former with its reconnection of ethics to human nature and the latter with a material conception of duties and virtues.

Of course, Kant had already conceived that his metaethical position has consequences for his anthropology. He interprets human nature *as if* it were directed towards the integration of practical reason. Analogous to the second part of the *Critique of Judgment*, the fact of practical reason thus requires not only a teleological interpretation of nature, but also of human nature, for this is where practical reason is realized. However, Kant introduces a reservation against this interpretation: Although we must interpret human nature as if it were realizing⁵ practical reason, we can only postulate its reality.

One philosopher who is of particular interest against this backdrop is Hegel, for Hegel places himself in the Aristotelian tradition but tries to synthesize it with the Kantian tradition. In this paper, I provide an outline of a Hegelian approach to the problem of the relation between goodness and human nature. *Prima facie*, Hegel concentrates on the goodness of the human will. But his conception of the will relates to a concrete picture of human nature which conceives of the realization of a specific form of the will as an *entelechy* of human nature. And it is this specific form of the will which Hegel regards as our capacity for realizing practical rationality. My claim is that Hegel's approach tries to solve difficulties which Aristotelian naturalism faces. More precisely, I claim that Hegel inverts the approach of Aristotelian naturalism by grounding human nature in an inferential pattern which provides the standard of goodness and thereby practical rationality. This inferential pattern has its own justification apart from the concept of human nature. But by corresponding to this inferential pattern, the human will is able to turn into a rational will. This can be understood as an expression of Hegel's idea of "how the world comes to expression in logos" (McDowell 1998: § 9, 185).

As I will show, Hegel adds two characteristics to Aristotelian naturalism. First, he provides a concrete proposal for what kind of inferences make the will rational and why this inferential pattern is justified. Hegel takes up this search for an inferential rule of practical rationality from Kantian ethics. Second, he

⁵ Please note, that I use the verb "realizing" in this article in the sense of "gaining reality" and not of "becoming aware".

tries to overcome the alleged incompatibility of Aristotelian and Kantian ethics by showing that the inferential pattern of practical rationality amounts to the categorical imperative which is in turn interpreted as an entelechy of human nature. To answer the question of how Hegel can justify his version of the categorical imperative apart from an appeal to human nature would ultimately require an interpretation of Hegel's *Logic*, but this exceeds the scope of this paper. Instead, I want to clarify which difficulty in Aristotelian naturalism can be addressed by following Hegel's approach (1). This brings me to the question of how Hegel thinks that human nature actualizes practical rationality. Here, I will first outline the basic premises of what Hegel calls the Subjective Mind (2). These premises help clarify the role and setting of the practical mind in human nature. I will then give an interpretative account of the practical mind as an entelechy of human nature (3). Finally, I will emphasize the impact of Hegel's approach on moral philosophy (4).

2. *A difficulty for Aristotelian naturalism*

Aristotelian naturalism thus represents an attractive, metaethical position. Nevertheless, criticisms and doubts have been raised,⁶ two of which I would like to present here, since the Hegelian approach outlined here promises to provide answers to them.

John McDowell has formulated the first objection in his astute article "Two sorts of naturalism". There McDowell argues that the characteristics contained in the species concept do not readily apply to beings who have the ability to make rational considerations and act on them. Aristotelian naturalism assumes that human nature determines those qualities which a good specimen of the human species must realize. Reason is one of these abilities that constitute human nature. But this ability implies that human beings can distance themselves from the hold of nature through reflection and deliberation. McDowell illustrates this with the example of a reasonable wolf. If we imagine a wolf, we imagine it as standing under the spell of the natural traits belonging to the species of wolves. But, as McDowell argues, the picture changes, if we attribute reason to the wolf. For our concept of reason implies a certain freedom, i.e. the capacity to suspend necessities. It is thus up to the considerations of rational wolves whether to instantiate certain species features or not.⁷ This means

⁶ For an overview over crucial objections, cf. Halbig 2015.

⁷ Cf. McDowell 1998, § 3, 172: "But what converts what animals of one's species need into potential rational considerations is precisely what enables a rational animal to step back and view those considerations from a critical standpoint. So when they become potential reasons, their status as reasons

that, in the case of rational beings, the Aristotelian categoricals have no direct deductive power, e.g. from the insight that communication belongs to human nature, it cannot be concluded that a human being is defective if she seeks out the life of a hermit. Thus, the first difficulty of Aristotelian naturalism is to interpret the species concept “human being” as normative, without thereby falling into a supernaturalism or failing to account for the ability of reason to override species characteristics.⁸

The claims that reason is essential for human nature and that reason trumps the other normative species characteristics are, however, widely recognized in Aristotelian naturalism (cf. Foot 2001: 66; Hursthouse 1999: 222). But if it is the conclusions of practical reason that decide on the goodness of actions – and no longer the species characteristics on their own –, then a *rule* is needed to pick out those inferences which make a good (as opposed to a bad) use of practical reason. One way to determine the good use of practical reason is to introduce *human flourishing* as its guiding standard, as is done in this issue in the article by Nieswald and Hlobil. As they argue, human flourishing does not have to be the direct goal of an individual’s intentions, but it can still function as a yardstick by which individually pursued purposes can be evaluated. Yet flourishing cannot simply be understood as individual well-being, as the authors argue. Because the concept of human flourishing is difficult to define in detail, it is tempting to reply to Nieswald and Hlobil in a Kantian vein: There is a law of reason that can be *justified transcendentally*.⁹ However, this Kantian alternative faces the problem of associating the moral law with human nature, since the moral law is valid independently of facts about nature. The Hegelian line of thought that I sketch here combines both approaches by interpreting human nature and specifically the human mind as being teleologically directed towards the realization of the moral law, human nature thus realizing the capacity of practical reason for transcendental reasons.

is, by the same token, opened to question. And now it matters that the predicate of an ‘Aristotelian categorical’ about the species cannot be deductively transferred to its individual members.”

⁸ This is not the place to discuss McDowell’s solution of assuming a second nature. But his defense of an interpretation of nature that can be grasped within conceptual structures corresponds to the starting point from which Hegel’s conception of human nature proceeds. However, while McDowell’s reference to Kant makes one think above all of the understanding of nature within the framework of theoretical concepts, Hegel simultaneously takes practical and theoretical concepts as the *logos* in which the concept of nature develops. And in relation to human nature, this means that it can only be understood against the background of practical concepts.

⁹ Cf. Kant 2003: 111 [63]. Cf. Illies 2006: 30-63.

3. *Hegel's approach to the human mind*

Hegel's philosophy addresses problems of Aristotelian naturalism *avant la lettre*. Following the attributive interpretation of goodness, Aristotelian naturalism views goodness as related to a species concept. Human nature determines what is good for humans and what is *morally* good as such. Hegel agrees that human nature is of great importance for the determination of both goodness and moral goodness.¹⁰ Therefore, it is often hard to distinguish whether Hegel is referring to human nature, the social practices of humans, or whether he tries to provide a normative approach to human nature and social practices. Yet, Hegel conceives of the relation of goodness and human nature in a manner different from current Aristotelian approaches. The perspective of Hegel's philosophy of subjective mind is characterized by the following assumptions:

- 1) A transcendental reflection in the *Science of Logic* (=SoL) grounds the validity and necessity of any inference.¹¹
- 2) The empirical process of thinking along those inferences does not provide the grounds for the inferences.
- 3) Yet, because logical inferences are transcendently necessary, the logical inferences have to be actualized retaining their validity and necessity.
- 4) Thus, the empirical process of thinking must be interpreted as grounded and guided by the inferences, because these patterns are transcendently necessary.

Hegel, now, sees the same problem with deontic principles and their relation to human nature, best visible in the Kantian approach. The laws for moral thinking are grounded in a transcendental reflection, similarly to the logical inferences, and actualized in human thought. Thus, it seems to be worthwhile to consider whether Hegel adopts the same strategy in the realm of practical reason. Here I develop the thesis that Hegel does not ground goodness in human nature, but conceptualizes human nature as being shaped by the possibility of actualizing goodness. Goodness, as derived in the *SoL*, consists thereby in the realization of a subjective intention, which is formed according to universality.¹² This universal form of intentions can be understood as a reference to Kant's *categorical imperative*. This elucidates Hegel's conception how human nature in

¹⁰ For Hegel, being and ought part in spirit, because we do not find in nature morally relevant normativity. Cf. Höhle 1998: 96-99; 254.

¹¹ Cf. Winfield 2010: 4. Winfield claims that this is an advantage over approaches to the philosophy of mind from pragmatism.

¹² Cf. Hegel 2002: The Idea of Goodness, § 1, 1202: "The subject has here vindicated *objectivity* for itself; its immanent determinateness is the objective, for it is the universality that is just as much absolutely determined".

general and the human will in particular are directed towards universality, in theoretical as well as in practical intentions. Thus, it will become explicit that Hegel integrates universality as an aim into human nature. And the reason is that Hegel ascribes some form of metaphysical truth to universality, grounded in the transcendental reflections of the *SoL*. For the rest of this paper, I will attempt to show that Hegel gives an idea how this strategy can be applied in the realm of practical reason. Thereby, I will presuppose the first two steps (1.) and (2.). That Hegel presupposes these assumptions as sound, too, will become clear from the following. But the justification of (1.) and (2.) exceeds the scope of this paper.¹³

3.1. The subjective mind

To talk of *human nature* in the context of Hegel's philosophy is ambivalent. On the one hand, human nature is prefigured in the organic and animal nature. On the other hand, Hegel seems to draw a sharp line between nature and human mind, as he, for instance, does not use the term "human nature"¹⁴ but prefers to speak of *subjective mind* or *soul*. Thus, although the mind is *performed* in animal nature, he writes in § 381 of the *Encyclopedia*, that nature has vanished in the mind that is the truth of nature.¹⁵ Though, the disappearance of a nature in the mind does not mean that the human mind does not have properties shared with, for instance, animals, like drives, physical determinations and many more.¹⁶ In fact, Hegel's attempt in his *Anthropology* is to gather all the natural conditions from which the human mind develops. And for this purpose, he considers a multitude of natural determinations, beginning from the (possible) cosmological conditions (§ 392), the influences of the geographical situatedness of humans (§ 394), and ending in bodily expressions (§ 411).¹⁷ Nevertheless, human mindedness is separated from its natural conditions, according to Hegel. The following section briefly presents the main characteristics of Hegel's approach to the human mind, and then shows how they contribute to the strategy

¹³ The objectivity of norms and values is additionally a crucial assumption of Aristotelian naturalism. Cf. Foot 2001: 53.

¹⁴ Hegel uses the term "human nature" only in his lectures but not in the text of the *Encyclopedia*. In the addition to § 392 he discusses the influences of the day and night rhythm on the life of individuals and societies (§ 392, Z., 55). Another example would be § 402, Z., 120.

¹⁵ Cf. Hegel 2010: § 381, 9: "For us mind has *nature* as its *presupposition*, though mind is the *truth* of nature, and is thus *absolutely first* with respect to it. In this truth nature has vanished, and mind has emerged as the Idea that has reached its being-for-self. The *object* of the Idea as well as the *subject* is the concept."

¹⁶ Cf. Hegel 2010: § 388, 29: "Mind has *come into being* as the truth of nature."

¹⁷ Cf. Hegel 2010: § 387, R., 27: "We must begin, therefore, with the mind still in the grip of nature, related to its bodiliness, mind that is not as yet together with itself, not yet free. This foundation of man (if we may so express it) is the theme of anthropology".

to locate the faculty of moral thinking within the nature of the human mind.

3.1.1. The unity of reason

The break from nature consists in the special relation which the mind maintains with the *Idea*. The Idea can be taken as the name for the totality of categories and inference patterns, which are grounded in the transcendental reflection in the *SoL*. According to Hegel, this totality is the content of pure thought – Hegel’s reference to the *noeseos noesis* of Aristotle. And this totality is ontologically sound, as Hegel thinks of the categories and inference patterns as metaphysical truths. Both nature and the human mind are actualizations of these metaphysical truths. Yet, while nature spreads out in manifold directions and does not directly aim at metaphysical truth, the human mind entertains an explicit and direct relation to the Idea. Hence, human subjectivity appears as a medium for the recognition of metaphysical truth.

Reason forms the substantial nature of mind; it is only another expression for truth or the Idea, which constitutes the essence of mind; but it is only mind as such that knows that its nature is reason and truth. (Hegel 2010: § 387, Z., 28)

From this directedness towards metaphysical truth, the human mind builds with all its natural determinations a *holistic association, a totality of the mind*. Therefore, the natural traits like geographic influences are integrated into the conception of mind, because all determinations form a unity or a holistic whole. Hegel states:

The *concrete* nature of mind involves for the observer the peculiar difficulty that the particular stages and determinations of the development of its concept do not also remain behind as particular existences in contrast to its deeper formations. It is otherwise in external nature. There, matter and movement have a free existence of their own [...] The determinations and stages of the mind, by contrast, are essentially only moments, states, determinations in the higher stages of development. As a consequence of this, a lower and more abstract determination of the mind reveals the presence in it, even empirically, of a higher phase. In sensation, for example, we can find all the higher phases of the mind as its content or determinacy. (Hegel 2010: § 380, 8f.)

Thus, Hegel shares the holistic interpretation of human nature with many approaches in Aristotelian naturalism. This idea has been expressed by different Neo-Aristotelians. For instance, M. Thompson’s concept of *natural history* depicts a totality as well.¹⁸ Or, as D. Oderberg argues, holism is what

¹⁸ Cf. Thompson 2004: 50: “We may call the complete class or true such general judgements the *natural history* [...]. But in the ideal with which you are operating, your propositions belong to a totality, a connected whole, a system”.

characterizes persons essentially.¹⁹ Or, as W. Jaworski puts it, *hylomorphism* as an approach to human mind implies, that the hylomorphic structure is an irreducible ontological principle, an explanatory principle, and what constitutes the *unity* of a composite thing.²⁰ Thus, important parts of the Aristotelian tradition conceives of human nature as a holistic association or totality, as Hegel does. The convergence of the conceptions is, of course, not an accident, since Hegel locates himself in the tradition of Aristotle *De Anima*.²¹

3.1.2. The entelechy of reason

But Hegel shares another element of the Aristotelian conception which M. Thompson puts forward, when he introduces the *natural histories* of species which enables descriptions of living beings:

In it [i.e. the natural history] each general atemporal proposition will explain others and will be explained by others. Relations of dependence among the propositions would be marked by what are called teleological or functional connections. (Thompson 2004: 50.)

Hegel stresses these *teleological* connections in the above-quoted passage from § 380: the determinations of mind are moments which are attached to the higher developmental stages. The example for this attachment is that content of thoughts are already present in perceptions or feelings. Being attached implies, in this context, that they result in or aim at the realization of the higher intellectual capacities. Therefore, the considerations of the feelings must, as Hegel notes, take the intellectual capacities into account. In this sense he compares the mind with organic systems:

The entire development of mind is nothing but its self-elevation to its truth, and the so-called soul-forces have no other meaning than to be the stages of this elevation. By this self-differentiation, by this self-transformation, and by the restoration of its differences to the unity of its concept, mind, as it is something true, is also something living, organic, systematic [...] (Hegel 2010: § 379, Z., 7)

The description and derivation of the characteristics of mind in Hegel's philosophy follow the internal teleology of the mind. This has an internal purpose, an entelechy, in the development of the trait that defines the mind, namely the relation of mind to the metaphysical truths. This is what constitutes the concept of the mind and, therefore, guides the unfolding of the determinations of the mind.

¹⁹ Cf. Oderberg 2007: 249: "By nature, a person is a thing with a body, and that body is animated by rationality, down to its fingers and toes [...]".

²⁰ Cf. Jaworski 2018: 267.

²¹ Cf. Hegel 2010: § 378, 4f.

In the concept in general the *determinacy* occurring in it is an *advance of development*; and so in mind too every *determinacy* in which it presents itself is a moment of the development and, in its continuing determination, a step forward towards its *goal*, namely, to make itself into, and to become *for itself*, what it is *in itself*. The same process takes place within each stage, and its product is that what the mind was *in itself*, or consequently only *for us*, at the beginning of the stage, is now *for the mind itself* [...] (Hegel 2010: § 387, R., 25)

Thus, the *Subjective Mind* is directed towards an end, the higher faculties which are realized in the mind.²² And the highest faculties of the mind are described in Hegel's *psychology*.²³

4. Hegel's Psychology: The theoretical and the practical mind

The highest faculties of the mind are named the *theoretical*, the *practical* and the *free mind*. Why does Hegel think that we are supposed to understand these faculties as the *entelechy* of our subjectivity and mental constitution? The abstract answer to this question would be that these faculties are a realization of the *Logic of the Concept* (=LoC), which is the most advanced part in Hegel's *SoL*.²⁴ To put this in more concrete terms, Hegel's thought is that the metaphysical truth, which consists of the logical determinations that he developed in the *LoC*, are realized in and by the mind.²⁵ This is evident from how Hegel

²² Hegel's conception of Mind doesn't terminate in the subjective mind. Therefore, the analysis of the purposeful development of moments of the mind could progress to the *Objective Mind*, where Hegel unfolds the categories for social practices, societies and the state, and finally to the *Absolute Mind*. The latter would prove to be the ultimate end of the subjective mind. But these topics exceed the quest for human nature, why this paper restricts itself to the *Subjective Mind*.

²³ *Psychology* is the third part of the *Subjective Mind*, preceded by *Anthropology* and the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The development seems to be a linear development. Abstractly speaking, *anthropology* depicts the rise of subjectivity and mind from nature. *Phenomenology* deals with the search for subjectivity in observations and the conceptualization of nature but is characterized by the division of subject and object as two heteronomous spheres. *Psychology* surmounts the division of subject and object and enters a self-relation, which spells out the implications of self-consciousness and reason.

²⁴ One indication that Hegel relates the *psychology* to the *LoC* is that he we can *develop* the determinations of *psychology*. Development is, though, the methodology of the *LoC*. I have said more about the method of the *Science of Logic* in Melichar (forthcoming 2019), *Die Objektivität des Absoluten. Der ontologische Gottesbeweis in Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik im Spiegel der Kantischen Kritik*, Collegium Metaphysicum, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen..

²⁵ Cf. Hegel 2010: "Similarly, if the activities of mind are regarded only as *expressions*, as forces in general, perhaps with a specification of their *utility*, i.e. as serving some other interest of the intelligence or the heart, then no ultimate purpose is available. The *ultimate purpose* can only be the concept itself, and the activity of the concept can only have the concept itself as its purpose, viz. to sub late the form of immediacy or of subjectivity, to reach and to grasp itself, to liberate itself *to its own self*" (§ 442, R. 169).

justifies the truth and necessity of the forms of judgments and inferences in the first part of the *LoC*. In *psychology* in turn, Hegel examines forms of judgments and inferences again, but not because their truth depends on the subjective acts, but because their truth *informs* the subjective acts of thinking.²⁶ Thus, from the fact that there are metaphysical truths, Hegel derives that the human mind must be shaped according to these metaphysical truths, so that it is possible to realize these metaphysical truths. And in the *theoretical mind*, the first part of *psychology*, Hegel provides an interpretation of how the human mind is directed at the possibility of recognizing the truth.

Pure thinking knows that it *alone*, and not *sensation* or *representation*, is in a position to grasp the truth of things, and that *Epicurus's* claim that the genuine is what is *sensed*, must therefore be pronounced a complete perversion of the nature of mind. But of course, thinking must not remain *abstract, formal* thinking, for this dismembers the content of truth; it must develop into *concrete* thinking, into *conceptual* cognition. (2010: § 465, Z., 203)

The theoretical mind needs further examination, in as much as it has something formal, since it is just the possibility of grasping truth. As such, it is not yet the full-blown determination, or recognition of metaphysical truth which, for Hegel, comes to be realized only in the *Absolute Mind*.

More pertinent aspects of the relation between goodness and human nature are elaborated in the *practical mind*. This is “[t]he mind as will”,²⁷ as it is “resolving” and “coming true” by itself. Thus, the will is the formation of practical intentions and these are realized in actions. Therefore, Hegel claims that the will overcomes the strict dualism between subject and object, because intentions, actions and objects are parts of the process of the will. This process consists of the formation of objects according to subjective intentions. Here, Hegel’s account appeals to our intuition, that the understanding of artifacts, gestures, language and bodily actions needs to take into account both, the physical object and the intentions, which are expressed and realized in the object.

Hegel does not treat the will as one faculty among others. Rather, according to the holism or totality of the mind, his treatment of the will is extended across the whole conscious experiences. Thus, he starts with the *practical feeling* (§ 471).²⁸ This is the first form of autonomy, *Selbst-bestimmung* (§ 471: 290), because of two aspects: (1) The subject does not distance herself from her

²⁶ Cf. Hegel 2010: § 467, 203f. Cf. Höhle 1998: 70f.

²⁷ Cf. Hegel 2010: § 469, 206.

²⁸ This is remarkable since Kant excludes feelings which are not caused by reason itself from morality in a strict sense. Cf. Kant 2003: 133 [75].

feelings.²⁹ (2) The practical feeling has a content and the content is *possibly* reasonable. This means, that the feeling *may* have something true and justified as its intentional object. But the feeling is, as Hegel strongly emphasizes, not itself a justification. Rather, as felt, the reasonable content lacks the justification which constitutes its imperfection.³⁰ But the feeling and reason do not exclude but rather complement each other.

The content of the practical feeling is not *necessarily* compatible with reason. Contents originate in particular experiences, inclinations or something else. But they are not consciously formed maxims or intentions, which is why Hegel calls them *immediate*. These feelings are practical in the sense that they engender a *rudimentary* kind of *ought* which evaluates if something is *pleasant* or unpleasant. This kind of *ought* is already present in animal lives. In the human mind, though, the *ought* constituted by feelings is not a unified or a reasonable evaluation. Instead, it is a mere subjective manifold of pleasurable feelings, which is why Hegel finds rather harsh words for them.³¹

The will is not exhausted in the practical feeling. The autonomy or *Selbstbestimmung* of the will – the aim of a full realization of the will in human nature – must exceed the given and immediate content of the practical feeling. More constant and unified, according to Hegel, are the *passions* (§ 473). Passions are subjective and individual, since they can be accidental and, thus, immediately given. But they are not a mere manifold of different feelings. The emotional process is unified towards one (complex) object and the subject is in her entirety immersed in the passion (§ 474). Passions are also a form of activity. And the *ought* of the practical feeling constitutes an *interest*, which reflects their unity and, thereby, their affinity to cognitive capacities (§ 475).

The concept of the will is still not unfolded completely, as it is the purpose of the realization of the will to become a reasonable and reflected will, shaped by universality. The reflected will is the will which wants according to thinking (§ 476). Reflection and, thus, thinking enter the stage, because the passions are induced accidentally. And although they are more unified than the practical feeling, they nevertheless emerge without being *intentionally* formed. Once the accidental character of the passions comes to mind, the subject starts to reflect

²⁹ Cf. Hegel 2010: “In this, since the mind is *in itself* a subjectivity simply identical with reason, it [i.e. *the practical mind*; G. M.] does have the content of reason, but as an *immediately individual*, and therefore also *natural*, *contingent* and *subjective* content which determines itself from the particularity of need, of opinion, etc., and from the subjectivity that posits itself for itself against the universal, just as much as it can be, in itself, in conformity with reason” (§ 471, 207).

³⁰ Cf. Hegel 1988: 138-143.

³¹ Cf. Hegel 2010: “In regard to contingent purposes, evil is only the justice that is imposed on the vanity and nullity of their devising. They themselves are already what is evil” (§ 472, 209.)

and to compare. Thereby she comes to grasp the possibility of choosing among the incentives which are caused by the passions (§ 477). This standpoint of *choice*, however, is *arbitrary*, as it is not determined, not what guides the choice. Therefore, Hegel thinks that the *telos* of the will's realization does not stop at the arbitrariness of choice. If this were the case, the highest form of the will would still be the *ought* of satisfaction, which might well be completely subjective. A choice that aims at satisfaction can be a very particular choice (§ 478). Yet the end of the will is not the particularized will:

But the truth of particular satisfactions is the universal satisfaction, which the thinking will makes its purpose as happiness. (Hegel 2010: § 478, 213)

Thus, the practical mind reaches its highest point when the will is *universal and thoughtful*. The particularized practical feelings and passions are set aside, negated or transformed. But, the universality of the will, which Hegel calls *happiness*, is twofold. On the one hand, the particularized feelings and passions are not in conflict but are integrated into one will.³² Happiness, as Hegel presents it, does not consist of the satisfaction of particular desires or interests. Instead, a subject's desires and interests of a subject form a systematic unity, in which they are hierarchically ordered and balanced. This system of desires and interests constitute purposes, and the fulfillment of such purposes is what constitutes happiness. On the other hand, the content of the will is still subjective, because the desires, interests, and finally, the choices are arbitrary and therefore happiness is arbitrary, too. And this form of happiness entails that the actions and the realization of the will could merely thought to be achieved or achievable. Here, Hegel sees a limitation of the practical mind that is to be overcome by the *free mind*. The problem seems to be that the content of the will is only *taken to be* universal but does not have to be universal. This is why Hegel calls the happiness the "represented, abstract *universality* of the content, a universality which only ought to be." (2010: § 480, 214).

The aim, the "truth", of the happiness and of the whole practical mind is to realize the universality of the will. This aim can be implicit and unaware, as it is present in feelings. And it can be explicit in reflected intentions. In both cases, a motivating force is relevant in the formation of impulses and intentions, though not necessarily effective. The aim of universalized intentions is indicated by the italicization in the following:

³² Cf. Hegel 2010: "Their limitation by each other is, on the one hand, a mixture of qualitative and quantitative determination[.]" (§ 479, 214).

But the truth of the *particular* determinacy [...] and of the *abstract individuality* [...] is the *universal* determinacy of the will in the will itself, i.e. its very self-determination, *freedom*. (Hegel 2010: § 480, 214)

This universality of the will is what Hegel calls the *free mind*. As such it is supposed to be a synthesis of the theoretical mind and the practical mind (§ 481). My point here is that the *universality* of the will is crucial for this conception of the will, as becomes evident in § 481. The free mind surpasses the arbitrary content of the will which was given to it by feelings or passions. Instead, conception takes now the following shape:

By the sublation of the mediation that was involved in all this, the will is the *immediate individuality* posited by itself, but an individuality that is also purified to *universal* determination, to freedom itself. The will has this universal determination as its object and purpose, in that it *thinks* itself, is aware of this concept of itself, is *will* as free *intelligence*. (Hegel 2010: § 481, 214)

The coalition of thinking and willing purifies the content of feelings and passions. This purification could be conceived of as a merely negative enterprise: In this sense, thinking would merely remove the contingencies, the subjectivity and arbitrariness of these contents.³³ But Hegel suggests more than such an abstract will would be. Purification leads to *universal determination*, and this universal determination is freedom itself. This equation of freedom and universality of the will is well known from Kant's *categorical imperative*.³⁴ Thus, the universality of the will is his *freedom*, insofar as he forms autonomously a purpose, which has a general determination. The will as the aim of the whole organization of the human mind, finds its *telos* in universality of its purposes. And those universal purposes are a result of the *thinking itself* of the mind.³⁵ That is to say, the will is fully realized, if the content of the will is universal. And the will is the entelechy of the human mind insofar as it is the faculty of forming universal intentions.

³³ This is an element, Hegel stresses in the Introduction to Hegel 2008: § 5, 28ff. The strong emphasis on the emptiness of the will in the state of universality here seems to me rather confusing, since Hegel develops in the *SoL* an argument for the impossibility of an abstract universal – the concept of universality for Hegel is concrete and rich in content. In this passage of the subjective mind, I would suggest reading the universality that Hegel conceives as a concrete universality.

³⁴ Cf. Kant 2003: §7, 54 [31].

³⁵ The theoretical mind enters here again. But Hegel has emphasized that theoretical and practical acts are not completely separable. Cf. Hegel 2010: § 444, 171f.

5. *The moral will*

Now, according to Hegel, the human mind is teleologically directed towards the realization of the will with a universal determination – Hegel calls this form of the will *free intelligence*. But what does this all have to do with our question about the relation of goodness and human nature? Hegel answers that the universality of the will contains moral implications. As our theoretical faculties are shaped by the possibility of recognizing metaphysical truth, the will is shaped by the possibility of recognizing and realizing the practical truth through action. This is Hegel's guiding idea in his account of the human mind. In fact, it may appear as if the purpose of the will is only that of overcoming the subject-object division by realizing subjective intentions through actions. This were an overcoming that would be nothing but as a mere function of epistemology. With this, Hegel would not be after moral principles for actions, but only after resolving a problem of epistemology.

But the conception of the will is not just a realization of subjective intentions through actions. Mediation by *universality* is crucial in Hegel's overall conception. And it is where the moral impact sought for enters the picture. In § 444 Hegel overtly determines the purpose of the will. He describes the purpose in the following way:

Practical mind deals, it is true, only with self-determinations, with its own material, but a material that is likewise still formal, and thus with a restricted content, for which it gains the form of universality. (2010: § 444, 171)

It is important that there are two ways of understanding the “formality” and “limitedness” of the content of the will. The first holds the limit to be the following one: The intention of the will is not realized, insofar as it is a subjective intention aiming at, but stand at the same time being opposed to, a world of objects. According to the second, the intention itself has no universal form, insofar it is bound by emotions, passions and drives. Hegel calls these two ways the *double ought* of the will. It consists in the fact that the will is not “elevated into the universality of thinking; this universality therefore constitutes in itself the ought addressed to that self-determination in regard to form, as it can also constitute it in regard to the content[.]” (Hegel 2010: § 470, 207) A will that is not as universal as possible is not what it ought to be, as a willful intention that is not realized in action.

When the will is combined with knowledge, as is his purpose in the form of *free will*, it is on the ground of universality of the *Idea*.³⁶ In *psychology*,

³⁶ Hegel 2010: § 482, 214f.

Hegel constantly refers to his *LoC*, as he does here, pointing at the universality grounding the thoughtful and knowing will. Thus, the will is a mode of realizing the *Idea of the Good*, while the theoretical mind is a mode of realizing the *Idea of truth*. In the Ideal of the Good, Hegel emphasizes the universality as well, which is precisely not an empty abstraction.³⁷ Here, he writes concerning the *practical idea*:

The subject has here vindicated objectivity for itself; its immanent determinateness is the objective, for it is the universality that is just as much absolutely determined[.] (2002: The Idea of Goodness, § 1, 1202)

Thus, goodness in the *LoC* is not just the transgression from subjectivity to objectivity, but the (self-)realization of the universality itself.³⁸ And this universality is the ground for the will as it is his purpose. Now, the goodness, although not mentioned as such, builds a strand of the explanations of the will. This is obvious in the discussion of *practical feelings* and *passions*.

In § 471 Hegel argues that the ideas of God, right, and ethics can be contents of feelings, although they cannot be justified by feelings alone. And in § 472, Hegel comments on the question for the *origin of evil*. As we have seen, the practical feeling implies a form of natural ought without moral implications. But Hegel gives particularized and individual feelings a moral significance when he calls them the “vanity” and “idleness” which are themselves the evil. Why is Hegel calling the manifold of subjective feelings, which derive from personal interests, evil? Because they lack the universality – evil is manifest where a subject suppresses her natural disposition of *universalizability* of her impulses and felt contents.³⁹

The same topics accompany reflections on the passions, which are, according to Hegel, neither good nor bad. They are directed at reason in human nature. This directedness, however, points to universality (cf. Hegel 2010: § 474, 211).

The ethical concerns the content, which as such is the *universal*, an inactive thing, that has its activating agent in the subject; the immanence of the content in the subject is interest and, if it lays claim to the whole efficacious subjectivity, passion. (Hegel 2010: § 475, R., 213)

³⁷ In this sense Hegel uses the term “universality” as well in the Introduction of the *Philosophy of Right*, when he describes the possibility of humans to abstract from everything, so that they can form the idea of purely empty and negative freedom. Hegel himself clearly criticizes this empty freedom (cf. Hegel 2008, § 5, 29). I find it rather misleading to use the logical term “universality” or “generality” for the capacity of abstraction.

³⁸ Cf. Siep 2004: 355-357.

³⁹ Cf. Hegel 2010: § 511, 227.

The moral connotation of the purpose of the will seems to diminish, though, in the discussion of the reflected will and of happiness. In the last paragraph of the *subjective mind* Hegel comments on the meaning of freedom, which is achieved in the *free will*. The meaning of freedom implies ethical consequences, since an “individual as such has an infinite value” – an idea which Hegel finds at the core of the Christian religion. Thus, the universality of the will has an ethical and a moral impact.

How then are we to understand the relation between universality and morality? Why does Hegel think that mere universality has moral significance where it is related to the will? Despite its implicit form, for the post-Kantian philosopher the answer becomes audible in Hegel’s allusion to Kant. The *moral law* or the categorical imperative require that *the maxim of the will could be valid as a general law*. Thus, the will is supposed to be the faculty of universalizability. And this is what Kant calls the *free will*, as does Hegel.⁴⁰

6. Conclusion

My reading of Hegel proposes integrating the *moral law* into the conception of the human nature. From this follows that it is a resolution of the tension between the practical reason and the empirical character. For the entirety of emotional and volitional capacities form a totality, which is teleologically directed at the moral law. This does not imply that the purpose of the will is always or even often achieved. The tension between particularized interests and the general law does not simply vanish. As Hegel conceives of it, however, it is now reconceptualized as part of human nature, not part of two different realms – the transcendental and the empirical. Thus, it becomes apparent *ex negativo* from his assessment of Kant’s practical philosophy what Hegel is after in the *Subjective Mind* in general and the practical mind in particular:

It is not said what is moral; and no thought is given to a system of the self-realizing spirit. For really, as theoretic Reason stands opposed to the objective of the senses, so practical Reason stands opposed to the practical sensuousness, to impulses and inclinations. Perfected morality must remain a Beyond; for morality presupposes the difference of the particular and the universal will. It is a struggle, the determination of the sensuous by the universal; the struggle can only take place when the sensuous will is not yet in conformity with the universal. (1995: 461)

From which Hegel concludes:

⁴⁰ Cf. Hegel states explicitly that the free will is the core principle of the practical philosophy. Cf. Hegel 2008: § 4, 26.

The moral will remains a mere ought[.] (1995: 461; *my translation*)

Hegel wants to transfer the moral *ought* from beyond the human nature into human nature as such. And even if human nature in and of itself is not good, internally it is drawn towards morality, despite having egoistic and particularized feelings and passions. This interpretation of human nature requires a holistic and teleological interpretation of human nature, as has been argued above.

What has not been demonstrated in this paper is just how Hegel thinks the universality of the will to surpass the emptiness of the purely formal categorical imperative. One way of addressing this worry is to argue that the will takes up its contents from feelings and passions and aims at universalizing them. Hegel would not be satisfied with this approach, because it undermines the idea of the self-determination of reason. The self-determination of the will requires further reflections on the import of social practices and institutions. Ideally, this would comprise investigating how the free will can be transformed into character traits, and virtues – a task which exceeds the scope of the present paper.

It may seem, as if Hegel is anthropologizing the practical reason of Kant and, thereby, transfers the tension between the ought of the categorical imperative and the empirical character to the human being. In fact, quite the opposite is the case. Hegel is not anthropologizing the practical reason, but instead he *transcendentalizes human nature*. The descriptions of the *subjective mind*, human mind and the will are not empirical descriptions. They are investigations into, and derivations of what M. Thompson calls *Aristotelian categoricals*.⁴¹ Human nature forms such an Aristotelian categorical. Not only does the categorical imperative have a transcendental status, but the whole of human nature becomes part of a transcendental reflection. In this transcendentalized Aristotelian categorical, the tension between particularized practical feelings or interests on the one hand and a universalized will on the other, is part of human nature. And while the universalized will engenders the end of human nature, it may be surpassed only by the free will, which, however, integrates the universalized will.⁴²

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⁴¹ The connection between transcendental philosophy, ontology and material logic in Hegel is too complex for a brief description. For a detailed discussion, see Melichar, part II.

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