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## The Body of the Other: Hegel on the Relational Structure of Corporeality

What role does the body play in the subject's formation and in interpersonal exchanges? Does the body merely perform an instrumental function, or can it claim to be a subject of freedom? Thinking of the body within the framework of intersubjectivity requires reassessing the bulk of the philosophical Western tradition. From the first-person's perspective endorsed by this tradition, the exteriority of the body has been reduced to a weakness of human nature. Starting from Hegel's account of the soul-body relation, as presented in the *Anthropology*, as well as some interpretations of "Lordship and Bondage" on the role of the body in self-doubling (Butler, Malabou, McDowell, Stekeler-Weithofer), I argue that embodiment is a process of (inter)subjectivation. The- matizing the predicative structure of corporeality, Hegel turns the constitutive exteriority of the human body into a potentiality of openness. Hence, Hegel's dialectic of immediacy and mediation leads to thinking of the body's universality in opposition to a monadic conception of subjectivity.

Keywords: corporeality, anthropology, doubling, intersubjectivity, Lordship and Bondage

As recently pointed out by Judith Butler and Catherine Malabou in a co-authored study on the role of the body in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Butler and Malabou 1807),

[t]o think of the body as a vexed relation (...) is to suggest that it is of the structure of the body to be outside itself and that this imperative or demand—you be my body for me—can only ever be partially fulfilled. Indeed, the demand produces a perpetual bind: although there is no body that is mine without the other's body, there is no final expropriation of one's own body, and no final appropriation of another's body. (Butler and Malabou 2011, 611)

This claim grasps the wider relevance given to corporeality also in Hegel's mature system—something that, except for rare cases, was long neglected by the majority of Hegel scholars.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, Hegel does not reduce the human body to its extended, mechanical, chemical or biological dimension. Instead, he recognizes that the exteriority of the body might be grasped within the dialectic between the identity and non-identity of soul and body, which supports the subjectivation process. On the other hand, he links the “intrinsic exteriority” of the body with the intersubjective frame of subject-formation that accompanies the issue of recognition.<sup>2</sup>

In my interpretation, Hegel's account of the body must be contextualized within his critique of the first-person perspective as the innate and prime scaffolding of the I and of self-consciousness. Roughly speaking, we might observe that—at least since Plato—to speak about the body has been tantamount to speaking about the boundaries of human nature and the constraints of knowledge. In the wake of this tradition, the Cartesian theoretical model as a disembodied *res cogitans* stands for an egological conception of mind and consciousness. For instance, according to Descartes, giving an account of oneself meant essentially self-reflecting or self-relating. According to this perspective, the body was seen mostly as an enclosed, individual structure and an obstacle not only to self-relation, but also in relation to the Other, i.e., in the intersubjective exchange.

However, the function that Hegel attributes to the body for the subject's self-reference in some pivotal places of his work appears quite

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1 These exceptions include: Wolff 1992; Russon 1997; Achella 2012; Nuzzo 2007; 2013; Mowad 2019.

2 For the *querelle* on the role of intersubjectivity, see e.g. Höslé 1987, which claims there is a lack in Hegel's system. Conversely, Pippin (1989; 2011), Pinkard (1994), Honneth (1996) and Brandom (1998) argue for the intersubjective character of Hegel's philosophical project.

different, especially in the account of corporeality given in the *Anthropology*. In the present essay, I will analyse the “perpetual bind” implied by the constitutively alienated structure of human corporeality. For this purpose, I will develop my argument as follows: 1) I will start out from the portrait of the living body outlined in the *Anthropology* in order to show what it means for Hegel to assess that the body has a predicative structure; 2) then I will comment upon some recent interpretations of the role assigned to the body in “Lordship and Bondage,” where my aim will be to expose the possible relation between an allegorical reading of this phenomenological figure and the intersubjective issue included at the end of the anthropological development; and 3) lastly, I will argue that, according to Hegel, due to the constitutive openness and otherness of corporeality, human embodiment is individuation through both subjectivation and intersubjectivation.

### The Eccentricity of the Body

In the *Anthropology*, Hegel defines human corporeality as the sign of the soul (GW 20, 419; 136),<sup>3</sup> inasmuch as it is the product of a process of development and formation. Thereby, the living body (*Leib*) owns a unitary relational scaffolding able to relate inside and outside, as well as to mediate between the human being and the world. As stated in § 410 *Zusatz*, “[T]he [living] body is the *middle term* by which I come together with the external world in general” (GW 25.2, 1057; 135). By identifying the structure of the formed body with that of the sign, Hegel is implicitly declaring that corporeality (*Leiblichkeit*) is capable of self-reference as an autonomous subject provided with full meaning. This is possible because he takes a processual or, as we could say, “*bewusstseinsgeschichtlich*” perspective on the study of the body and its states.

A biological or natural body (*Körper*), in fact, always refers to or predicates about something else rather than being defined as an autonomous subject *per se*. In current philosophical language we can consider the body’s capacity to relate to others in terms of a predicative function, i.e., not only as a disposition to mean, but as a process of realising meaning. In Hegel’s vocabulary, for the body to own a predi-

In Hegel’s vocabulary, for the body to own a predicative structure means that it performs a second nature: by mediating its natural and sensible immediacy, the body exhibits human habits, will, and actions.

3 Throughout the text I cite Hegel’s works from the historical-critical edition *Gesammelte Werke* with the abbreviation GW followed first by the volume number and the page number of the German edition, and then (after the semi-colon) by the page number of the English translation.

cative structure means that it performs a second nature: by mediating its natural and sensible immediacy, the body exhibits human habits, will, and actions.<sup>4</sup> The *Anthropology* considers the process that leads from the body's disposition to signify to the realisation of meaning in the body (i.e., the process from an ante-predicative to a predicative body state) as a dual process: on the one hand the body distances itself from biological and organic life, on the other hand the body recognises itself in the process.

These two processes—distancing from organic life and self-recognition—shape the core of Hegel's "*argument of second-nature embodiment*" (Testa 2009, 348; Testa 2008; Novakovic 2017). It is thus not surprising that in the *Anthropology* the habit of the body is identified with a second nature:

Habit has rightly been called a second nature: *nature*, because it is an immediate being of the soul, a *second* nature, because it is an immediacy *posited* by the soul, incorporating and moulding the bodiliness that pertains to the determinations of feeling as such and to the determinacies of representation and of the will in so far as they are embodied. (GW 20, 416; 131)

We can say with Italo Testa that here "Hegel shows the logical structure of mediated immediacy as proper to second nature, thus equating first nature with first immediacy and second nature with second immediacy" (Testa 2009, 356). If habit is oriented towards the acquisition of a skill or competence (second immediacy), and therefore if it is not considered as mere repetition (first immediacy), it represents the realisation of spirit in human corporeality, i.e., the liberation of the body from biological or merely organic life and its recognition as an autonomous subject.

Reading the preceding paragraphs, the definition of the living body as a sign proves that the body, when considered naturalistically in its organic and biological life, cannot constitute the *principium individuationis* of the human being. The I, according to Hegel, is not an innate feature but the product of *Bildung*, whose original material is solely provided by the biological body. Thus, corporeality is the abstract form of universality that belongs to the "macrocosm of nature as a whole." In contrast, the unity of soul and body is "the microcosm into which the macrocosm compresses itself and thereby sublates its asunderness" (GW

4 For Hegel's account of "second nature" as a predicate, see Gregoratto and Ranchio 2013.

25.2, 951; 35). In natural life, the spirit sublates in a unitary dimension what was previously presented in its “asunderness.”

At this level, corporeality corresponds to the natural qualities of human dispositions and idiosyncrasies (such as talent, character, race, and gender), as well as to biological relationships linked to reproduction and affection. Whereas the biological body and its differences are *gemein* (common) to all members of the human species, in their natural immediacy they can constitute neither a true *Gemeinschaft* of single individuals nor a signifying structure in themselves.<sup>5</sup>

The biological life of the body (and of the soul) is both an impersonal state and a closed, monadic singularity. A biological body forges only natural bonds with other bodies, which are produced in a situation of immediate physiological necessity by an unaware *conatus* and by the satisfaction of immediate needs. In the *Anthropology*, human corporeality is understood both as an organic, pre-given structure and as the process of embodiment (*Verleiblichung*),<sup>6</sup> thus representing the terrain of the conflict between biological and cultural life in human beings. If, according to Hegel, the human body does not represent an essential place just for anthropogenesis, but also for the development of subjectivity and spirit (Achella 2019, 254), we need to explain how the formation of the subject turns out to be bound to that of corporeality.

Firstly, it might be important to further highlight Hegel's conception of the dialectical unity of soul and body as a dynamic process. *My* body as a counterpart of subjective individuality (consciousness) is an outcome,

5 It is true that here Hegel draws a problematic correlation between race and nationality. See for example the controversy between Bernasconi and McCa- rney on the question of Hegel's racism, which starts from the placement of Indian religion and culture within the history of philosophy (Bernasconi 2000; McCa- rney 2003; Bonetto 2006). However, it should be noted that Hegel's argument not only appears very controversial, but also remains out of the systematic role played by the *Anthropology*. As a matter of fact, at the beginning of the *Anthro- pology*, it is not yet possible to speak of subjective or national identity since, at its very core, there is the soul in its development towards consciousness (individua- tion) and not the *Volksgeist*. Diving deeper into Hegel's account of race would require a more thorough analysis. Here, however, I would like to point out that Hegel takes up some famous theories of the eighteenth century on the relation between the development of human societies and the environment, climate, geography (i.e., the natural life of the body) that must be sublated within the framework of his system.

6 For the general idea of embodiment in Hegel, see Taylor 1975; on the different specific meanings of embodiment throughout his works, cf. Mowad 2019; for the connection between embodiment and self-reference, see Magri 2017, 187–226.

namely the product of its negative interaction with natural life. The very beginning of the *Anthropology* is still the impersonal dimension of the natural soul, from which consciousness awakes (GW 20, 386; 25) through a twofold process: the soul's individualisation in the body and its appropriation of the body. Thus, after it is formed, the living corporeality (*Leiblichkeit*) appears only at the end of the anthropological development as the leading element of individuality. As a result, even though the individual soul is always incorporated, it must also acquire awareness and control of this body, "by rendering the body the soul's external expression of its subjective inwardness" (Greene 1972, 60).

In other words, subjectivation consists in the appropriation of the body that can occur only at a distance. Corporeality enacts a decentralization that is overriding for individuation. Hence, the moment of the body's *Vorstellung*—i.e., the moment in which it is objectified—is of great importance for Hegel. Representing the body does not mean in any way separating ourselves from it, but rather establishing a distance that allows the body to be objectified and therefore to become meaningful. Consequently, despite acting as a pivot in the constitution of the individual, the body remains, to a certain extent, always decentralized, always outside itself as a sign. As already noticed by Hegel (1807) in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*:

The individual is in and for itself; the individual is *for itself*, or he is a free doing. However, the individual is also *in itself*, or he himself has an *original* determinate *being* (...). Opposition thus emerges *in its own self* as twofold. There is a movement of consciousness and the rigidly fixed being of a phenomenal actuality, the kind of actuality that in the individual is immediately *his own* (*seinige*). This *being* (*Seyn*), the *body* of the determinate individuality, is its *primordially*, its own "what-it-has-not-done." However, while the individual is at the same time only what he has done, so is his body also the expression of himself which is *brought forth* by him. At the same time, it is a *sign*, which has not remained an immediate matter but is that in which the individual only makes known what he *is*, in the sense of putting his original nature into practice. (GW 9, 171–172; 180)

If the I cannot exist without its body, it is likewise true that the I cannot settle for the organic, immediate body. The body needs to receive a suitable spiritual existence. For this reason, in the passage quoted above, Hegel, playing on the assonance between the two terms "*Seyn*" (to be) and "*Seinige*" (his), underlines the human longing for remaining not what we are immediately (i.e., pure ante-predicative

being), but rather to transform the body in a mediated immediacy, a second nature—that is, a property of the self. This appropriation takes place only within a sort of estrangement (*Entzweyung*) or doubling (*Verdopplung*) of the I and its body, in which the body no longer stands for itself, but for something else.

Assuming that the body has a relational constitution, it is neither *res extensa* as opposed to *res cogitans*, nor a *modus* of finite existence of the infinite substance. In its eccentricity, the body is the condition of possibility of self-reference, which cannot overlook or precede a form of hetero-reference. To get in touch with the world and other living bodies through a praxis guided by the motivational action of the will is a requirement for self-determination. There is an anthropological need concerning the life of the body, that is, the need to relate oneself to others in the light of a principle of subjectivation. From this point of view, to take into account the correlation between human corporeality and a work of art, as presented in § 411 of *Encyclopaedia* (GW 20, 419; 136), might be of great importance.

In Hotho's transcript of the 1823 Berlin *Lectures on Philosophy of Art*, it is emphasized that the need to mediate immediacy involves consciousness in its experience of the external world. In this respect, human beings *need* to transform the externality and themselves as natural beings in order to be able to recognize themselves. They need “to place their own stamp upon themselves.” As an example of this longing, we could refer to Hegel's description of the child's impulse to throw stones into the water with the aim of recognizing the concentric circles formed on the surface as his own work. But scientific practices and habits of bodily care and adornment, which are widespread across cultures—such as body tattoos and piercings—are also emblematic examples of this universal human need. These practices “involve not leaving oneself as one is by nature. (...) So this rational feature of human beings expressing themselves as consciousness, of doubling themselves, of exhibiting themselves for themselves and for others, is a universal need” (GW 28.1, 230; 193).

Unlike natural things, which simply *are* and *exist*, human beings can *double* their existence. Standing for oneself in art, science or life in general implies standing for others. We might say that self-objectivation or self-determination is always inserted in a context of inter-relationality. Otherness is already involved in the life of the body due to its externality, that is, its disposition to relation. Subjectivation requires a reflective distance between one's self and one's body: only through this form of *Entfernung* can the body be owned by the self. What is more, a reflective

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distance characterizes the reference to the Other. In self-distancing, the subject puts its own body and the body of the Other before (*vorstellen*) oneself.

The distancing required by embodiment is possible because of the hetero-reference leading in the body. I believe that to justify this priority it is not enough to assume an expressivist reading along the phenomenological line drawn, for instance, by Charles Taylor. Indeed, Taylor holds that the pivot of an expressivist anthropology is the “manifestation of an inner power” and therefore the self-determination of an inner state through its external expression (Taylor 1975, 15). Expressivist theories stand in antithesis to the Cartesian soul-body dichotomy, but they do not explain why self-manifestation should not presuppose a dualism between content and form. I think that if we understood embodiment as an expressivist activity, the exteriority of the body would end up being merely a vehicle for expressing meaning, with no constructive value for the spirit.

In my view, the overriding point of Hegel’s anthropology is that the distancing of the body produces meaning as a reflection which takes place in a context shared by different actors. Reflexivity is to be understood neither as a kind of folding of the self back upon itself, nor as a manifestation of an inner state, but as self-realisation through openness. Reflection of this kind is then a critical and interpretative work constitutively directed towards otherness; a hermeneutics of the self, based on mutual recognition between content and form.

Consider, for instance, how in hermeneutic processes the history of the criticism of a text—i.e., the history of its reception—is part not only of the exegesis, but also of the formation and transformation of the text itself. Similarly, the formation of the body is always open to the integration of the Other’s perspective as a formative, self-critical and potentially transformative task. This is possible because the exteriority of the body is the activity of hetero-reference and not merely the outer and passive surface of the content. The exteriority of the body is itself a “message” or spiritual meaning. We could therefore say that embodiment is marked from the very beginning by a strong “hermeneutic charge,” namely the perspective of distancing that guides every interpretation as a self-realisation process: the interpretation of the self as well as the interpretation of the Other.

As I will point out below, due to the priority of hetero-reference in the body we can read the notion of recognition as the complementarity of subjectivation and intersubjectivation, thus overcoming the dichotomy between monadic and intersubjectivist readings of Hegel’s concept of

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*Anerkennung*. In other words, distancing oneself means doubling oneself, which produces value for both the self, in its subjectivation, and the Other, in intersubjectivation.

## Human Embodiment between Lordship and Bondage

At the end of the anthropological path, the I emerges as consciousness through a doubling. As is widely known, in Chapter IV of the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and more specifically in the context of the master-servant struggle for recognition, Hegel problematizes doubling as the duplication of self-consciousness. This duplication is also maintained in the more concise version of the *Phenomenology* following the thematization of the soul-body relation in the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, which has been discussed above in its crucial aspects. More recently, and notwithstanding the classical interpretation of “Lordship and Bondage”—which recognizes the clash between two self-consciousnesses in the self-consciousness’ doubling—the struggle for recognition is grasped as a monadic relationship, namely as a doubling taking place within a single (self-)consciousness. This is the interpretative hypothesis put forward by John McDowell and Pirmin Stekeler-Weithofer, among others.

The theoretical perspective embraced by both authors should be regarded as Hegel’s radicalization of Kant’s transcendental argument. In this respect, Hegel’s *Phenomenology* would start from the problem of the subjective conditions of individual experience (see McDowell 2003; 2007; Stekeler-Weithofer 2016, 37). Therefore, in the doubling of self-consciousness, we would find ourselves faced with an empirical self and a transcendental self. According to McDowell, for instance, the master-servant struggle describes the attempt to integrate, “within a single individual, a consciousness aiming to affirm itself as spontaneously apperceptive and a consciousness that is conceived as immersed in life in the world” i.e., as both cognitive and practical experience of the individual consciousness (McDowell 2003, 12).<sup>7</sup> The struggle would thus be allegorical, and the recognition would not stand as a social relationship between individuals, but rather as an intrapersonal self-reference (see also Kelly 1966).

<sup>7</sup> For a comment on McDowell’s Hegel, see Corti 2018; 2014, 59–110; in relation to his interpretation of the master-servant relationship in the *Phenomenology*, see also Magri 2016.

Stekeler-Weithofer maintains such a monadic reading of “Lordship and Bondage” also regarding the *Phenomenology* in the *Encyclopaedia*, focusing on the passage from consciousness to self-consciousness. The empirical I is the individual body and the transcendental I is an immediate I that is determined within the body, and executes, asserts, controls, acts thanks to the body. In other words, the body would represent the servant who works and puts the lord’s intentions into action. The immediate relationship between the I and the body—according to Stekeler-Weithofer—allows Hegel to go beyond the dualistic point of view, so that eventually the body will always win. In the struggle between master and servant, there is no autonomous self-consciousness opposed to an always heteronomous body (see Stekeler-Weithofer 2008, 186–187).

Concerning such intrapersonal readings of (self)consciousness, however, some clarifications are required. Firstly, it should be noted that while it is true that the relationship between consciousness and the body (from which self-consciousness arises) is immediate, it is also true that in the *Philosophy of Spirit* this immediacy must not merge with the given. As long as immediacy and mediation are involved in a dialectical dynamic, the former may be seen as a process of negation and sublation of itself in mediation. The I is thus a result, not a condition. Furthermore, even though—according to Hegel—there is no opposition between consciousness and the body that resembles the opposition between autonomy and heteronomy, the embodiment is a heteronomous process in itself. The being-predicative of the body, as well as the fact of having a heteronomous framework, does not exclude the possibility of conceiving it as a subject of freedom near the I. This, in turn, does not imply that its freedom cannot include a “bond” with the Other.

Based on these considerations, it would appear that the crucial issue for Hegel does not concern the autonomy of the I, but rather the emancipation (*Befreiung*) from nature of both consciousness and the body. This entails thinking about the heteronomy of human corporeality not as a limit but as a condition of possibility for *Befreiung*. Having said that, the question to be answered is: what does it mean to live in accordance with a body whose intrinsic exteriority always implicates a constitutive eccentricity? In taking the otherness and the predicative character of the body seriously, the first crux to untie would concern the doubling. As I have argued above, Hegel seems to pose this issue within a hermeneutic perspective. Accordingly, the exteriority of the body would stand for its openness or disposition to interaction. These are characteristics of the *Geist*, whose development in the *Anthropology* consists in its self-distancing from nature.

With the *Phenomenology*, the exteriority of the body is sublated into consciousness, but this implies that exteriority is now constitutive of consciousness. Due to its embodied nature, consciousness now has a relational scaffolding. The monadic reading of the master-servant dialectic spells out a tension that can be found in Hegel's phenomenological argument between the first-person perspective (*Ich=Ich*), the rights of an embodied individuality, and the pluralistic perspective (*Ich=Wir*) of an individual subject among other subjects. However, it is precisely for this reason that the monadic argument can be overturned. Interpersonal interactions are already thematized in the body and in sensibility (in the proto-subjectivity of the *Anthropology*), and therefore conflict, struggle for recognition, labour and emancipation would constitute moments of the shaping of the body.<sup>8</sup>

Due to its embodied life, the individual is always on the move, actualized in the interaction with the world. Hence, we should not understand the doubling of self-reference as a differentiation between an empirical/bodily and a transcendental form of consciousness. Borrowing Malabou's words, "[c]ontrary to Kant, Hegel (...) does not consider consciousness to be the site of the permanence of self-identity within the changing flow of succession, a permanence that generates the basic sense of *ipseity*" (Malabou 2013, 205). Conversely, at the very beginning there is no self, but rather a disposition to be "hetero-affected." In the human body and habits, the master-servant struggle coincides with the "plasticity" of the spirit or its disposition to give and to receive forms.<sup>9</sup> If the body is constitutively "*außer sich*," hetero-affectedness is yielded by the eccentricity of the body, which is the disposition to potentially be faced with the Other.

Therefore, since the structure of the body is hetero-affected there can be no ipseity pre-existing subjectivity, but rather an unceasing self-production of the self. According to Malabou, however, this also leads to the overcoming of a unified perspective of the mind-body relation, whereby the spirit only exists insofar as it is unbound from corporeality (Malabou 2013, 207). In response to Malabou's disembodied identity,

8 The body "supports the master-servant dialectic (...); it speaks, it gives birth to the word as recognition, it is therefore the summit of liberation, of oneself and of the object, of oneself in the world and of the world in itself. It draws the organizational lines of the spectacle of life and unfolds the encounters, the rejections, the placing oneself for one another, of society" (Formaggio 1977, 97–98; my translation).

9 On the concept of "plasticity" as "hetero-affected structure" in Hegel, cf. Malabou 2005; 2013, 206.

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Judith Butler has resorted to the issue of “delegation” to account for the dialectic of detachment and attachment in the doubling of the self.<sup>10</sup> By delegating the request of one’s own recognition to another—one’s own body or another consciousness, the subjectivation process cannot overlook its relational framework, as both self-relation and hetero-relation. From this perspective, corporeality constitutes a bond for subjectivation; it is the process of the real embodiment of meaning in the subject’s actions, habits and will.

Moreover, if we consider, for example, Hegel’s description of mental illness, it is undeniable that a decoupling from the body as permanent detachment is impossible. The subject’s insanity is outlined in the *Anthropology* as the mental state of a schizophrenic personality, whose doubling cannot be traced back to the synthetic principle of self-feeling or self-affection. In the pathological state or in mental disease, the doubling is radicalized in a split that involves body and soul in equal measure and prevents the subject from establishing productive interactions with the external world. The case of mental illness is emblematic of subject formation. The process of subjectivation does not coincide with the glorious path leading to the autonomization of consciousness. Instead, it is marked by the uncertainty of *praxis* since it is inserted in the framework of the second nature. Subjectivation fails when detachment from the body is exasperated.

Nevertheless, between Malabou’s and Butler’s position, as pointed out by the latter, there is no “chasm,” but rather a “chiasm.” Insofar as an absolute detachment is impossible, an absolute attachment is also impossible:

[I]f we can fully escape neither attachment nor detachment, then perhaps we are referring to a chiasm that gives shape, as it were, to the problem of life. This figure might be important, might be, in fact, the ultimate shape, since it suggests that attachment and detachment are bound by “life” at the same time that they exceed and oppose one another. In other words, there is a zone of encounter and repulsion, which we might actually call *the life of the body*, understood as propulsion to and away from persistence as such. (Butler and Malabou 2011, 637)

Negating the immediate externality of the body produces a “perpetual bind” with the body, where we can find a space for the freedom of

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10 Butler’s interpretation of Hegel’s dialectic regarding the problem of subjectivation is also extensively debated in Butler 1999; 2005.

corporeality. The delegation to the Other as a relationship between body and (self-)consciousness is nothing more than the emergence of referentiality or relationality as a *principium individuationis*. In this sense, not only does the body refer to the self as much as to others, but the self is also formed within this relational field.

The *Wir*-perspective is inseparable from the *Ich*-perspective. Perhaps the term “hetero-affectation” might be brought back to the term hetero-reference. If the former recalls the context of *Gefühl*, which for Hegel primarily belongs to the solipsistic dimension of being, the latter presupposes a relational field, a space that we can designate as the “sociality of reason” (cf. e.g., Pinkard 1994). Even though the body is a constellation of relational practices that are not already social in the sense of objective spirit, it is a prerequisite for human sociality and intersubjectivity. Subjectivation can be understood as the appropriation of my body in relation to the body of the Other.

As already discussed, despite their divergent interpretation, Malabou and Butler choose the terms “attachment” and “detachment” to account for this process; this might depend on their interest in investigating the life of the body from the phenomenological starting point of “desire” (see also Butler 1999). However, attachment and detachment concern a much broader dynamic involving the body and the I, which begins with the discussion of the “actual soul” presented in the *Anthropology*:

The soul, which has set its being in opposition to itself, sublated it and determined it as its own, has lost the meaning of *soul*, of the *immediacy* of mind. The actual soul in the *habit* of sensation and of its *concrete* self-feeling is in itself the *ideality* of its determinacies, an ideality that is for itself; in its externality it is *recollected* into itself (*erinnert in sich*), and is infinite relation to itself. This being-for-self of free universality is the soul’s higher awakening to the *I*, to abstract universality in so far as it is *for* abstract universality, which is thus *thinking* and *subject* for itself, and in fact determinately subject of its judgement in which the *I* excludes from itself the natural totality of its determinations as an object, as a world *external to it*, and relates itself to that world so that in it is immediately reflected into itself: *consciousness*. (GW 20, 420–421; 140)

The most important thing noted here is that consciousness has a history. Consciousness (the I) is the work of both the soul and the body turning back to themselves. The actual soul, understood as the outcome of habituation and formation of bodily practices, is an embodied soul in a trained and living body. In the exteriority of this living

body, the complementary movements of *Er-innerung* and *Entäußerung* converge; externalization proceeds hand in hand with internalization (taking-the-inward-turn or self-reflection). As clarified by the § 412 *Zusatz*, consciousness emerges from the natural life by making the bodiliness “something *alien (Fremdes)*” (GW 25.2, 1063; 140), i.e., by denying its first natural, biological immediacy. The appropriation of the body, however, demands that the bodiliness should not remain foreign to the spirit. The individual soul “becomes more and more *at home (heimischer)* in its *expressions* and consequently achieves a continually growing capacity for immediately embodying its inner determinations and accordingly transforms the body more and more into its own property” (GW 25.2, 1058; 136).

Once again, Hegel employs the lexicon of hermeneutics to describe the *Bildung* of the body as a process of transforming foreignness into familiarity and *vice versa*. In such a hermeneutic space outlined by the soul-body relation, the body can make claims that are no longer only biological, i.e., requests for recognition that cannot be ascribed exclusively to natural qualities and/or needs (natural environment, reproduction, etc.). The individual exists and lives in a body that becomes a sign, a work of art, i.e., a body that is determined and shaped—one that we could define, using a modern terminology, as an *embodied mind* (see Nuzzo 2007; Achella 2012; Testa 2020). Since the spirit or mind is embodied, it is never solely an individual subject, but rather the “*I that is we and the we that is I*” (GW 9, 108; 108).

The body becomes the subject of freedom within the mediated dimension of the relation with the Other. This does not mean that the emotional and motivational dimension, both natural and physiological, must be removed from corporeality, but rather that this dimension must be interpreted and translated<sup>11</sup> into a body care practice. Precisely when “I conduct myself in accordance with the laws of my bodily organism, then my soul is free in its physical body.” I am an individual, if I treat my body not just as something that I have (which is nevertheless the first step to relate to myself), but as something that immediately coincides with myself,—although this immediacy is not *first* immediacy, as it entails an interrelationship with others and with the external world. Indeed, “I have to maintain myself in this *immediate* harmony of my soul and my body; (...) I must give my body its due, must take care of

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11 Stefania Achella writes about a *Wiederverkörpern* in the sense of re-interpretation or re-embodiment that should be opposed to the idea of an absolute detachment from the body: see Achella 2019, 269.

it, keep it healthy and strong, and must not therefore treat it with contempt or hostility” (GW 25.2, 1057; 135).

### Corporeality, Recognition and Hetero-reference

In conclusion, to sum up the relation between corporeality and (self-) consciousness, I would like to briefly return to Hegel’s critique of the egological perspective. The *Bildung* of the body is marked by a conflict that shapes each interpersonal exchange as twofold. There is a recognition that characterizes the anthropological doubling in terms of self-reference or self-feeling, and it constitutes an appropriation of the body. Furthermore, there is a recognition that is given as a hetero-reference, as a relation to a world constituted primarily by other living bodies. The pivot of conflict and recognition is the body as a predicative structure:

The process [of recognition] is a *combat*; for I cannot be aware of myself as myself in the other, in so far as the other is an immediate other reality for me; I am consequently bent on the sublation of this immediacy of his. Equally I cannot be recognized as an immediate entity, but only in so far as I sublimate the immediacy in myself, and thereby give reality to my freedom. But this immediacy is at the same time the bodiliness of self-consciousness, in which, as in its sign and tool, self-consciousness has its own *self-feeling*, as well as its being *for others* and its relation that mediates between itself and them. (GW 20, 430; 157)

Hegel replaces the distinction between empirical and transcendental consciousness in Kant’s apperception with the doubling of the self. In doing so, he is opposing the Cartesian model of a monadic and dualistic individuality and he is proposing a conception of individuality as an intersubjective unity. If in the *Phenomenology* of the *Encyclopaedia* the recognition seems not to involve the interrelational praxis and the linguistic issue, which in the 1807 *Phenomenology* represented the conditions of recognition (Ferrarin 2016, 257), it is because these issues are already addressed in the *Anthropology* at the level of the embodied mind. As a result, corporeality and language have a similar relational framework. Language is briefly presented in the *Anthropology* as the “more perfect expression” of the spirit (GW 20, 420; 137), i.e., the summit of the appropriation of the body. We might even say that in the *Anthropology* embodiment performs for consciousness the same function of “existence” (*Daseyn*) which in the 1807 *Phenomenology* is performed for self-consciousness by language: “In language, the *singular individuality* of self-

-consciousness *existing for itself* comes into existence so that it is *for others*” (GW 9, 276; 294).

Hetero-reference as openness and disposition to be hetero-affected is a formative task because the body is shaped when it becomes the property of a self. As we read in § 57 of the *Outlines of Philosophy of Right*, the “*Ausbildung*” of the body coincides with taking possession of it. Hegel specifies that the property of my own body is such only “as distinct from that of others” (GW 14.1, 64; 86).<sup>12</sup> We might view the act of appropriation of my body as something that excludes the Other and therefore distances subjects rather than connects them. A possessive conception of corporeality distinguishes us from one another, but it also allows us to enter into relation with otherness—setting a distance is a prerequisite both for the relationship with myself and for the relationship with others.

This does not entail overlapping recognition, self-consciousness and intersubjectivity,<sup>13</sup> but rather means placing subjectivation and intersubjectivation as two correlated, mutually dependent processes already within the life of the body. We can then perhaps speak of the homeomorphism of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Since intersubjectivity and subjectivity are both to be explained in terms of processes of recognition, they are complementary and mutual irreducible. In other words, intersubjectivity and subjectivity are both species of the genus of recognition,<sup>14</sup> whose more basic structure is hetero-reference. From a Hegelian viewpoint, hetero-reference is the *speculative reflection par excellence*: a reflection that is not merely the manifestation or expression of one’s inner self in an outer Other, but an actual realisation and appropriation both of oneself and of the Other through the interaction between oneself and the Other.

That the body is the point of contact between the subject and the world means that by virtue of its constitutive exteriority it is the *Mitte* of both the subject’s relation with itself and with others. A double mediation is thus a condition for subjectivation and intersubjectivation: “the self has (...) *actualized* itself in the soul’s *reality*, in its *bodiliness*, and,

12 As pointed out by Nuzzo and more recently by Achella, the body can be a subject of right due to the connection between will and freedom in the ownership of the body. See Nuzzo 2000 and Achella 2021. I note in passing that the possessive conception of the body is one of Hegel’s arguments against slavery. Cf. GW 14.1, 64–65; 86–88.

13 See Ferrarin 2016 for a comprehensive review of this issue.

14 Concerning the current discussion about recognition and its different species, see at least Ikäheimo 2002; Ikäheimo and Laitinen 2007.

Since intersubjectivity and subjectivity are both to be explained in terms of processes of recognition, they are complementary and mutual irreducible. In other words, intersubjectivity and subjectivity are both species of the genus of recognition, whose more basic structure is hetero-reference.

conversely, has posited being within itself; so that now the self or the I *intuits its own self* in its *Other* and is *this self-intuiting*" (GW 25.2, 1064; 141).

In the *Philosophy of Spirit*, the kind of property or ownership that the spirit achieves over the body and sensibility is in fact the property of a second nature. The spiritualized body is still a body to the extent that its exteriority is not eliminated. The sublated exteriority of a body that is the property of (self-) consciousness, as well as the sublated exteriority of the spiritualized body of a community and its institutions, consist in the relation to the Other.<sup>15</sup> Since the spirit is *per se* and therefore free only in what it is other than itself, and since the body is both owned by the spirit and structurally other than itself, the spirit can find itself at home in the exteriority of its own body. The bond to otherness goes through my body, thereby its exteriority stands for opening up to otherness, which is to say that human corporeality has a relational structure.

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15 "The theory of second nature, in its dual subjective and objective aspect, also requires a dual aspect of embodiment. In fact, it is not only the forms of individual intentionality but also the forms of collective intentionality that manifest themselves in interindividual spiritual relations of a recognitive type that will have to be embodied in habits. If this were not the case, then life and death struggle would be the only possible form of relation between individuals. Spirit will have to be embodied both in the organic body of individuals and in the inorganic body of institutions. But then again, also social and institutional bodies—ethical substance—are not something merely artificial but manifest a certain continuity with nature in so far as they present the form of a social second nature, which has the stabilized configuration of the mechanism of habit, sedimented in social practices, and which acts on individuals with a first-nature appearance of necessity" (Testa 2009, 364).

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**Tytuł:** Ciało innego: Hegel o relacyjnej strukturze cielesności

**Abstrakt:** Jaką rolę odgrywa ciało w kształtowaniu się podmiotu i w wymianie międzyludzkiej? Czy ciało pełni jedynie funkcję instrumentalną, czy też może pretendować do bycia podmiotem wolności? Intersubiektywne myślenie o ciele wymaga przewartościowania znacznej części filozoficznej tradycji Zachodu. W przyjętej przez tę tradycję perspektywie pierwszoosobowej zewnętrznosc ciała została zredukowana do ułomności natury ludzkiej. Wychodząc od Hegłowskiego ujęcia relacji dusza-ciało, przedstawionego w *Antropologii*, a także od niektórych interpretacji „Pano- wania i poddaństwa” dotyczących roli ciała w samo-podwojeniu jaźni (Butler, Mala- bou, McDowell, Stekeler-Weithofer), argumentuję, że ucieleśnienie jest procesem (inter)subiektywizacji. Rozważając predykatywną strukturę cielesności, Hegel prze- kształca konstytutywną zewnętrznosc ludzkiego ciała w otwartą potencjalność. Stąd Hegłowska dialektyka bezpośredniości i zapośredniczenia prowadzi do myślenia o uniwersalności ciała w opozycji do monadycznej koncepcji podmiotowości.

**Słowa kluczowe:** cielesność, antropologia, podwojenie, interesubiektywność, pano- wanie i poddaństwo