

Teleology and Basic Actions: A reading of the chapter on Teleology in Hegel's Subjective Logic in the terms of action theory

Maximilian Scholz 

Abstract

In this paper I argue that there is textual evidence that the chapter on Teleology in Hegel's *Science of Logic*, read under certain premises, also discusses something that in contemporary analytic philosophy is called a 'basic action'. The three moments of Teleology—(a) 'The Subjective Purpose', (b) 'The Means' and (c) 'The Realized Purpose'—can be interpreted as (a) a certain intentional content in the mind of a subject, which can be expressed in the form of an imperative, (b) the immediate taking in possession of the body, which can be described as a basic action, and (c) the description of the relation of the event brought about by the basic action with other events in the world, which can be described in the terms of event-causality. This reading reveals an astonishing parallel to Donald Davidson's distinction between proper basic actions and their different descriptions in the form of events. In this way we can make Hegel's, at first glance, confusing identification of subjective purpose (intention), means (basic action) and realized purpose (event) comprehensible. Through that, the actual aim is to show that what I call basic actions are in fact an example of a more general thought that Hegel calls a teleological relation.

I. Does the Teleology chapter present a theory of action?

Any reader of the chapter on Teleology in the third part of Hegel's *Science of Logic* easily gets the impression that the issue at stake is a certain type of action.¹ The chapter is divided into three parts, which chronologically listed are called 'The Subjective Purpose', 'The Means' and 'The Realized Purpose' (*SL*: 657–69/160–72).² The text itself describes in which way a subjective purpose is transformed into a realized purpose with the help of a means and a related activity. This has led a number of scholars to either interpret the chapter in terms of action theory or at least to interpret it from the perspective of action theory. To name just two, Dean Moyar and Christopher Yeomans champion this reading.³ In his

discussion of the chapter on Teleology, Moyar claims that it is best understood as a description of actions:

As a model for the analysis of the movement from the subjective purpose via the means to the realized purpose, we shall use the intentional action, which corresponds to the greatest extent to Hegel's own approach and examples. (2018: 631, my translation)⁴

Towards the end of the article, Moyar goes even further and claims that actions represent by far the most important case of Teleology and shed the most light on the logical progression taking place in the chapter on Teleology (2018: 644). In doing so, he explicitly points out that he builds his account on Yeoman's account of action in Hegel (Moyar 2018: 644). The latter believes that Hegel has at least a rudimentary functioning theory of free, intentional action that can explain why an acting subject is a 'locus of responsibility' (Yeomans 2012: 37) without ignoring the influence of external conditions. Hegel succeeds in this because he develops an understanding of productivity in the *Logic*, writ large in the chapter on Teleology, that shows the exclusionary opposition between self-determination and determination by external influences to be false (Yeomans 2012: 187, 192):

The fundamental insight of Hegel's philosophy of agency is the thought that self-determination must be compatible with, and even articulated by, certain forms of external influence. To put it abstractly, internal determination must be compatible with and articulated by external determination. This kind of compatibilism is the fundamental driving force behind both Hegel's practical philosophy and his more abstract discussions in the *Science of Logic*. [...] While it is clear that Hegel's political philosophy grapples with this problem, one looks in vain to his practical philosophy for a detailed conceptual account of how these two forms of determination are compatible; that account is found in his *Science of Logic*. (Yeomans 2012: 4)

Both authors are of course aware of the fact that, due to the task of the *Logic*, the issue at stake must be about more than just actions. Nevertheless, they are guided in their interpretation by the idea that actions are the best way to make clear what the chapter on Teleology is about. In the following, I would like to take this idea up and examine the extent to which one can consistently pursue this reading strategy in the terms of action theory.

So therefore, let us presuppose an interpretation premise that could be summarized as follows:

- *The issue at stake in the chapter on Teleology in the Science of Logic can best be expressed in the terms of a theory of action.*

Let us call this premise the ‘theory of action premise’ or ‘TAP’. The TAP says that Hegel’s quite abstract logical considerations in the *Science of Logic* are best understood if we suppose they describe a certain type of action. Therefore, we will try to elucidate the meaning of the thoughts expressed there by comparing it with the vocabulary of the theory of action. In the following I suggest that Hegel actually is dealing with a question that is discussed in contemporary debates in analytical philosophy under the title of basic action.⁵ Furthermore, the discussion of the ‘Realized Purpose’ will show that Hegel, similar to Donald Davidson, claims that there are actually only basic actions in the sense of body movements. The question about any other actions, besides body movements, is then only the discussion of different descriptions of the event produced by an action. Hegel thus would describe the basic moments of action in the *Science of Logic*.⁶

Contrary to what both Moyar and Yeomans say, it is not the means that expresses the external conditioning of actions (Moyar 2018: 635; Yeomans 2012: 245–47) but the resolution on the one side and the mediation with the object taking place in the section on ‘The Realized Purpose’ on the other side. By that I am not suggesting that the interpretations of both authors are inaccurate. Certainly, it is an aspect of Hegel’s theory of executing activities that such activities, in so far as they are genuinely performed, take account of the external conditions of their realization. It is, therefore, true if one reads the chapter on Teleology in the terms of action theory that it is also concerned with the external conditioning of actions. The argumentative point of the section on ‘The Means’, however, consists in the immediate taking possession of the object, i.e., the body. The means expresses the way in which, for example, human agents immediately appropriate their body and by that determine it to be an instrument for their purposes. This is what distinguishes what is called activity in the chapter on Teleology. The question discussed in the section on ‘The Means’ is, therefore, only concerned with the question of the external conditions on our productivity as locus of responsibility in so far as it is our body and the way we appropriate it which determines the way in which we interact with the conditions dictated by the objects surrounding us. Yeomans makes good points in arguing that Hegel’s Teleology contains elements of contemporary interpretative accounts in the succession to Anscombe (Yeomans 2012: 238–57). But the determination of the externality as the reason *why* the agent acts as she does—Yeomans uses the example of interpreting something another person says as an insult and, therefore, as a reason to react with a punch (2012: 195, 249)—is not expressed in the section on ‘The Means’, as Yeomans claims (2012: 245–47), but in the section on ‘The Subjective Purpose’,

where the objectivity to which the means after its appropriation is related is posited as a presupposed one (*SL*: 658–59/161–62).

In the now following sections two to six, I will present Hegel's Teleology as the description of basic actions on the basis of the TAP and prove this with the help of the text of the *Logic*. Through this reading we can make sense of Hegel's, at first glance, confusing identification of subjective purpose (intention), means (basic action), and realized purpose (event). In the seventh and final section, I give an outlook on what form an answer to the question 'Why is Teleology the truth of Mechanism and Chemism?' must take.

II. Qualifying remarks

Before getting *in medias res*, I must make four qualifying remarks.

(R1) First, it ought to be mentioned that the Davidson-like conception of basic actions I refer to has not remained uncriticized. See, for example, Douglas Lavin, who argues that the talk about types or forms of actions obscures the role played by the particular things we do under certain circumstances in order to realize a general action type (Lavin 2013: 285–87, 289). His point is, if basic actions are intentional actions, we must have practical knowledge, i.e., self-knowledge, about how to do them, which in turn involves the knowledge of the things we do at every phase during the undertaking of an action. But if basic actions are something we do without doing anything else, we cannot intentionally do the things which compose the undertaking of a basic action over a course of time. Therefore, he concludes, we would not intentionally act at all if there was anything such as basic actions (Lavin 2013: 292–95). A defence against this charge would require a detailed account of Hegel's understanding of basic actions, which I am not able to provide here. My goal here is to point out that there is textual evidence that, if we use actions as examples to elucidate the theoretical content of the chapter on Teleology, then we have to talk about a specific kind of action, i.e., basic action. To develop a Hegelian solution to the charge raised by Lavin one would have to take into consideration Hegel's account of how we immediately take possession of our body, which is through habit as our second nature.⁷ I do not want to argue that Hegel's account of actions is 'Davidsonian', which definitely would be not sufficiently complex. Yeomans, for example, showed aspects of an 'Anscombeian' account to be present in Hegel's theory of actions (2012: 238–57). Highlighting the conceptual parallel to the 'Davidsonian' account of basic actions serves only to shed light on an element of our contemporary theory of action that is present in Hegel and so far, at least as far as I can see, has not been considered.

(R2) Second, one must not neglect the difference between the *Science of Logic* on the one hand and the *Realphilosophie* on the other hand. Certainly, the former is

not concerned with the specific topics of the latter. Therefore, it can be quite problematic to designate something as ‘the most important case’ of a conceptual scheme developed in the *Logic* because it runs the risk of confusing the example (action) with the ‘paradigma’ (Teleology). Nevertheless, relating the thoughts developed in the *Logic* to their application in Hegel’s system can help us to unravel the meaning of the former. I think there is evidence that Hegel actually, beside other things, had something like basic actions in mind, while writing the chapter on Teleology. Even though we can only understand the *Logic* comprehensively if we can make its content explicit in purely logical terms, grounding our readings of it in the examples of the *Realphilosophie* can serve as a corrective. Therefore, the reading presented in the following is supposed to help us to relate the general conceptual scheme developed in the *Logic* to one of its cases of application and show that the understanding of this case is in fact not at odds with one of our contemporary conceptions of actions. This paper has, then, the function of a hinge between the *Realphilosophie* and the *Science of Logic*.

(R3) Furthermore, one could deny the correctness of the TAP from the outset because it seems to ignore the historical context—to be more precise the Kantian context—in which the *Logic* was composed. In fact, in the introduction to the chapter on Teleology, Hegel explicitly refers to the distinction between external and internal purposiveness (*SL*: 654/157), which Kant made in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (*CJ*: §§63–64/368–72). Starting from this reference one could argue that Hegel’s following thoughts must deal with considerations of biological purposiveness rather than with basic actions. We can call this challenge of the TAP the ‘naturalization premise’—or ‘NP’—since it tries to locate the origin of the teleological conceptual scheme of the *Logic* in the *Philosophy of Nature*. However, this approach falls short if it ignores two points. First, Hegel explicitly points out that the chapter on Teleology is only concerned with external purposiveness (*SL*: 653–54/156–57) and that internal purposiveness is not discussed until the subsequent chapter, that is, Life (*SL*: 654, 680–82/157, 183–85). This means that the reciprocal relationship of an organism and its organs cannot be the issue at stake at this point of the *Logic*. This is not refuted even by the fact that towards the end of the chapter on Teleology, in the section on the realized purpose, Hegel writes that the product of the logical development is in fact not external purposiveness but the objective purpose (*SL*: 667/169). This is because he relativizes this statement a little later by saying that the product is at the same time only a means and the realized purpose (*SL*: 667/170). The story is, therefore, more complex. I will give my own account of why the product of Teleology is at the same time a means and the reality of the purpose below. Additionally, we should bear in mind, that the reference to internal purposiveness at the end of Teleology only serves to motivate the transition to Life and is not identical with its realization.⁸ What is more, a supporter of the NP has to account for the fact that, Hegel, after the

reference to the distinction of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, immediately turns to an extensive exposition of the Kantian Antinomies by stating that ‘the opposition of teleology and mechanism is first of all the general opposition of *freedom* and *necessity*’ (SL: 654/157). This seems to count as evidence that the TAP cannot be completely wrong. I lack the space to elaborate on the meaning of Hegel’s discussion of the third Antinomy at this point. Nevertheless, the points just mentioned relativize the doubt the NP casts on the TAP, in particular if we stress that the TAP has only relative validity constrained by R2. Note that from this it does not yet follow that the NP is wrong. In fact, a comprehensive reading of the chapter on Teleology will have to account for *both* the NP and the TAP. This is because Hegel explicitly interprets the relationship of animals to their environment in the terms of external purposiveness (PS: ¶¶ 254–59/145–48; PN: §370 & R, 177–78/§368, 367–69).⁹ But before being able to account for both premises we first have to understand in which way the content of the *Logic* unfolds under the validity of each of the respective premises of interpretation.¹⁰

(R4) By focusing in this paper only on the conceptual parallel between how Hegel illustrates the means with our contemporary account of basic actions I leave aside the goal of an overarching interpretation of the chapter on Teleology in a broader theory of, for example, determination (Moyar) or productivity (Yeomans).¹¹ Readings of the latter type normally presuppose that actions are an example of what Hegel calls Teleology and use that to argue for their higher interpretative goal. Instead, I want to pursue explicitly that which the scholarship presupposes as implicit. Should we not first see if actions are an example of the Hegelian Teleology, second clarify if a specific type of action is meant and only then determine in a third step, with the help of the proper example, what kind of determination is discussed in the respective chapter of the *Logic*? The interpretative goal of the present paper is to show that what I call basic actions are in fact an example of what Hegel calls a teleological relation (EL: §§205–6, 278–79/211–12). In doing this it will turn out that this is reflected in his characterization of the second moment of Teleology as an immediate subjection of an object under a purpose which he in turn illustrates with an immediate taking into possession of our body as an instrument. The latter fact has, as far as I can see, not properly been considered in the scholarship.

Considering the above, the preliminary answer to the question raised in the introduction of this paper, if the chapter on Teleology presents a theory of action, it is a twofold one. (α) On the one hand, the answer to this question is ‘no’ in so far as the chapter on Teleology is not exclusively concerned with actions and has a broader scope. (β) On the other hand, the answer to the question is ‘yes’ in so far as Hegel’s Teleology discusses something of which particularly basic actions are an example. That (β) is the case remains to be shown. I will now provide a proof of (β).

III. Teleology and basic actions

The chapter on Teleology is part of the section on Objectivity in the third part of the *Science of Logic*, also called Subjective Logic. Objectivity is the sphere of externality of the concept (*SL*: 668, 674/171, 176).¹² Overall, the Subjective Logic deals with the ways in which the moments of the concept relate to each other. While Hegel addresses in the section on Subjectivity the way in which the terms of a syllogism can each represent a moment of the concept and thus express the relationship of these moments to one another, Objectivity expresses their relationship in the form of entities that are external to one another. In Objectivity, distinct entities take on the role of the Universal, the Singular and the Particular and express in their relationship to each other the external ways in which the moments of the concept can enter into a relationship with one another. In Teleology, it is the means which realizes the mediation between the extremes (*SL*: 659–62/162–64). It is therefore not unreasonable to expect to find the actual argumentative point of the chapter on Teleology in the subsection on the means.

According to the TAP, Hegel wants to conceptualize in the chapter on Teleology what happens when we act. The outline of the text suggests that Hegel distinguishes three moments that an action must comprise: (a) ‘The Subjective Purpose’, (b) ‘The Means’ and (c) ‘The Realized Purpose’. I will show that the first moment can be understood as a certain content in the mind of a subject, which can be expressed in the form of an imperative. The second moment is the immediate taking possession of the body, which can be described as a basic action. The third moment is the description of the relation of the event produced by the basic action with other events. The description of this relation with event causality describes the former event as part of the objective world.¹³

IV. ‘The Subjective Purpose’ as imperative

Hegel calls the first moment of Teleology the subjective purpose. He describes this subjective purpose as ‘an essential striving and impulse to posit itself externally’ (*SL*: 657/160). This positing of something external is however ‘neither a force [...] or a cause’ (*SL*: 657/160). Also, through the *Encyclopaedia Logic* we learn that ‘the difference of the purpose as the *final cause* from the merely *efficient cause* (i.e. what is ordinarily called the cause) is of the utmost importance’ (*EL*: §204R, 276/209). Accordingly, the subjective purpose is not something that has an effect. This explicit reference indicates, according to my thesis, that Hegel wants to exclude event causality as an explanatory principle at this point. The striving or impelling that is to be the subjective purpose can be described as a tendency,

drive or demand. Such a drive or demand, which cannot be described in terms of event causality, can also be formulated as an imperative. Hegel goes on to explain that in so far as a purpose or purposiveness ‘is attributed to an intelligence [...] this is done with specific reference to a certain content’ (*SL*: 657/160). The subjective purpose, then, is a specific content that is present in a mind and that calls for being posited externally. John Burbidge proposes to conceive of this content as a specific intention (‘spezifische Intention’) (2002: 237). According to Anthony Kenny, such intentions can also be rendered in the form of imperatives.¹⁴ The respective content present in the mind, which can also be called a propositional or intentional content, is thus an imperative that can be formulated as follows:

➤ *A part of the objective world X is to be brought into a state Y.*

In this I interpret the subjective purpose, following Moyar, as in line with the belief-desire model of intentional actions, where the intention contains a cognitive as well as an evaluative component (or as he puts it: ‘It would be good if the intended action took place’ (Moyar 2018: 631)).¹⁵ It may seem problematic to immediately identify the subjective purpose of the *Logic* with an intention, and of course, this is only legitimate to a certain extent. This identification is only true under the restrictions of R2. This pertains to everything that is said in the following since what is explicated here is just one instance of a more general thought that is called Teleology. Nonetheless, in the introduction to the chapter on Teleology of the *Encyclopaedia Logic* Hegel states that need (‘Bedürfniß’) and drive (‘Trieb’) ‘are the examples of purpose lying closest at hand’ (*EL*: §204R, 276/210). Moreover, in the introduction to the section on Objectivity Hegel states that the Object can also be ‘a subject matter in general for whatever interest [*Interesse*] or activity of the subject’ (*SL*: 629/131). The subjective purpose can, therefore, take the form of a need, a drive or a specific interest. It is, thus, not wrong to interpret it in that way if we are aware that it is not reducible to these forms. Admittedly, a need is not an intention. But I claim that its content can be adequately expressed in an imperative, in particular, because Hegel thinks that every need or drive contains a feeling of lack or deficiency (‘Mangel’) (*PN*: §§359–60, 141–45/358–61) and, thus, contains the evaluation to overcome it. If I feel hungry, this feeling can be expressed in the imperative ‘I should eat something!’. For the sake of the argument, I will restrict my reading to a specific human interest or intention which is expressed in an imperative.¹⁶

The content of the subjective purpose as imperative is then a certain content in a mind in the sense that a person expresses or utters it inwardly. It is, however, irrelevant whether the imperative is actually spoken in thought in the form of words or is present in some other form. Peter Geach and Kenny use the biblical image of speaking in the heart like in such phrases as: ‘The fool hath said in his heart’ (Geach 1957: 80; Kenny 1963/2003: 142–43). In this way, we can illuminate

the aspect of driving that Hegel attributes to the subjective purpose. One could imagine the following example: I am on my way to the station to catch a train. By looking at my wristwatch, I notice that the train will leave in less than a minute, so I immediately quicken my pace. The content present in my mind that leads me to walk faster could be expressed by the following imperative: *If you still want to catch the train, you should hurry!* In this example X is me walking and Y is me walking faster than before.

However, we do not immediately obey every imperative that comes to our mind. Something is required that leads us to obey what is demanded. Hegel calls this aspect the ‘resolution’ (*Entschluß*) (SL: 659/162). In the *Encyclopaedia Logic* Hegel puts it as follows:

The drive is, furthermore, the *implementation* [*Ausführung*] of this, its certainty. It manages to sublimate this opposition—that the subjective dimension would be and remain only something subjective, just as the objective dimension would equally be and remain only something objective—and [to sublimate] this finitude of them. (EL: §204R, 277/210–11)

At this point I will skip the passages in which Hegel describes the way in which this resolution comes about. This would involve us in a discussion of the extent to which the inadequacy of the purpose according to the concept should explain what happens in a resolution. It is sufficient and helpful, I think, to contend that Hegel wants to express something similar in his account, as Kenny does in the following passage:

Desire manifests itself not only in the utterance of commands and wishes, but also in behaviour; one obvious manifestation of *wanting* X is *trying to get* X, and the will that *p* shows itself in efforts to bring it about that *p*. (Kenny 1963/2003: 164)

We tend not only to have desires or utter wishes or imperatives inwardly but do normally take action to bring about a state in the world that accords to our wishes or the uttered imperative. Similarly, Hegel’s thesis seems to be that an action is connected with an inwardly expressed or harboured wish or imperative. But the mere utterance of an imperative, whether in the heart, in thought, or in spoken words, does not make an action. In addition, there must be an actual attempt to realize the content demanded in the imperative. Accordingly, the person must decide to take action.

Hegel summarizes both aspects, the imperative as well as the resolution, under the title of ‘Subjective Purpose’. This is justified in so far as both aspects, at least in our example, are something that takes place within the mind of a person. Thus, although they cannot be separated from an associated action, they can be

summarized and distinguished as the moment of action that does not take place, so to speak, in the external world, but within us. Hegel himself attributes an '*extra-mundane* concrete existence' (SL: 658/161) to the purpose. This existence can be expressed as existence in a mind and as the purpose not yet being realized in the external world. Imperative and resolution thus form the subjective part of an action. This also becomes clear once again when we consider how Hegel describes this subjectivity. Because of the subjectivity of the determinate content, Hegel calls it '*finite*' (SL: 658/161). The content is finite because it is related to 'an *objective*, mechanical and chemical world to which its activity is directed as to something *already there*' (SL: 658/161). Therefore, this objective world can be called a '*presupposition*' (SL: 658/161) of the subjective purpose, which he must eliminate by determining this external, objective world according to the content of the imperative. In this process, Hegel tells us, 'a sublation of the subjectivity of purpose' is accomplished, which, however, positively formulated, equals 'the realisation of purpose' (SL: 658/161). When we now turn to the second section of Teleology, 'The Means', we will see that for Hegel an action which realizes the content of an imperative involves an appropriation of our body. My focus will be on the question how Hegel understands this kind of appropriation.

V. 'The Means' and the activity as basic action

The second section of the chapter on Teleology is entitled 'The Means'. This moment is characterized by the fact that the subjective purpose connects or merges with external objectivity in the form of an object qualified as a means. It is precisely this connection, Hegel explains to us, that makes the purpose a real activity. Central to this is that the relationship between the subjective purpose and the means is described as a kind of immediate taking in possession, immediate subjection or appropriation. I argue that it is precisely with this aspect of immediate taking in possession or appropriation that Hegel wanted to discuss something of the nature of basic actions.

Hegel writes that the purpose requires a means because it is finite, that is, subjective according to what has been said above. The means is something 'that has at the same time the shape of an external existence indifferent towards the purpose itself and its realization' (SL: 659/163).¹⁷ Thus, although externality is to be eliminated as a presupposition, it is essential that the means continues to retain the form of something external to the subjective purpose, which is why this movement is referred to by Hegel as 'a reflection outwards' (SL: 660/163).

This external relationship between external object and internal, subjective purpose is what Hegel calls an 'immediate relationship' (SL: 660/163).¹⁸ Here two central aspects can be distinguished. The first aspect is that the subjective

purpose, because it is directly connected with the externality of the object, ‘is at the same time also activity’ (*SL*: 661/164). It is therefore precisely this connection with the externality of the object that turns the finite subjectivity of the purpose into an activity, i.e., makes it an action, and distinguishes it from a pure imperative or a pure intention and the corresponding resolution.

The subjective purpose is therefore only ‘activity, no longer mere impulse and striving, because in the means the moment of objectivity is posited in its determinateness as something external’ (*SL*: 661–62/164). This is also confirmed by the introductory paragraph of the chapter on Teleology in the *Encyclopaedia*, when Hegel writes in the Remark that the next examples of purpose are indeed need and drive, but about which he then goes on to say that these ‘enter into the activity’ (*EL*: §204R, 277/210). Also, in §208 the activity is described as one ‘turned outwards’ (*EL*: §208, 280/212). The activity of realizing what is demanded in the imperative, i.e., its content, must therefore be something that is explicitly connected or merged with genuine externality. To be sure, the imperative present in the mind does contain a reference to the external, objective world, but this externality remains something immanent to the mind and thus something subjective and inward.¹⁹ It is helpful to translate the Hegelian technical terminology in the vocabulary of our contemporary philosophy. The content of the imperative corresponds to that which we temporarily call—in phenomenology—intentional, or—in analytical philosophy—propositional content. Whereas his distinction between inwardly subjective and externally objective can be translated with the terms ‘mental’ and ‘physical’. Inwardly subjective, then, is everything that happens within the mind of a person, whereas externally objective refers to everything that is physical in a broad sense. This broad sense includes the physical aspects of our bodies as well those of the objects outside of our bodies.

It should be noted that the identification of the activity that Hegel here is talking about with an action again is only valid under the restriction of R2. Certainly, activity in the *Logic* has a more general meaning. Put more adequately, it is a determining activity of the subjective purpose which determines an external object and the ‘object so determined is now the *means*’ (*SL*: 659/162; see also Pierini 2006: 157). In the *Logic* this activity belongs to the Concept which—not like in the section on the Idea—in the means is only externally linked to Objectivity (*SL*: 660/163). But that does not mean that this activity is not displayed by examples found in the *Realphilosophie*. Quite the contrary, in the way in which Hegel illustrates the immediate relationship between the subjective purpose and the means, he suggests that this determining activity can indeed manifest itself in the way we take possession of our body as an instrument for our purposes. And in fact, as it will turn out, in Hegel’s eyes we determine our body as an instrument by simply using or trying to use it to perform an action.

The second aspect to consider consists in the immediate relationship of the subjective purpose and the means to each other. Hegel describes the object qualified as a means as being to the purpose ‘utterly penetrable, and it is receptive to this communication’ (*SL*: 661/164). The object possesses this penetrability or openness for receptivity because ‘it is in itself identical with it [the subjective purpose]’ (*SL*: 661/164). Because of this identity, the object has, vis-à-vis the subjective purpose, ‘the character of being powerless and of serving it [the subjective purpose]’ (*SL*: 661/164). Hegel also describes the subjective purpose as the ‘subjectivity or soul’ (*SL*: 661/164) of the object, which in turn has its ‘external side’ (*SL*: 661/164) in the object.²⁰ The recurring element in the text is the description that the object as a means is ‘immediately subjected to purpose’ (*SL*: 661/164). How this is to be understood can be clarified by looking at §208 of the *Encyclopaedia Logica*. In the section itself,²¹ as well as in the accompanying Remark,²² Hegel emphasizes the immediacy with which the subjective purpose takes possession of the object. This is explained in more detail in the Addition to the section:

The process of carrying out the purpose is the mediated manner of realizing the purpose; just as necessary, however, is the immediate realization of it. The purpose seizes the object immediately because it is the power over the object, because in it the particularity is contained and, in the latter, the objectivity is also contained.—The living entity has a body; the soul takes control of it and has immediately objectified itself in it. The human soul has a great deal to do in making its corporeal condition a means. A human being must first take possession of his body, as it were, so that it may be the instrument of his soul. (*EL*: §208A, 280/364–65)

Only by taking possession of a body can the soul use it as a means and instrument for its purposes. Hegel thus gives us an example for the taking in possession of an object by the subjective purpose, i.e., the soul of a living being taking possession of its body.²³ In doing so, he seems to distinguish two ways in which the subjective purpose can be executed or realized, one mediated and one immediate, both of which he emphasizes as necessary. The closeness of this passage to what analytical philosophy calls basic action becomes clear when we look at how Arthur C. Danto introduces basic actions:

That is, if there are any actions at all, there must be two distinct *kinds* of actions: those performed by an individual *M*, which he may be said to have *caused* to happen [i.e., a mediated way of realizing a purpose]; and those actions, also performed by *M*, which

he cannot be said to have caused to happen [i.e., immediate way of realizing a purpose]. The latter I shall designate as *basic actions*' (1965: 141–42).

If it is true that the chapter on Teleology is—among other themes—about actions, Hegel seems to allude precisely to this distinction, with what Danto calls basic actions being addressed in the section on 'The Means', and those actions which are caused to happen by the acting individual being addressed in the subsequent section on the 'Realized Purpose'.²⁴ Basic actions are those actions that we do not perform through something else. We do them immediately. This also justifies Hegel's exclusion of event causality as an explanatory principle for Teleology. Basic actions are not caused by other events. At the same time, however, they are basic actions with which we perform other actions. Let us consider an example. Lifting my arm is a basic action. When asked what I do when I lift my arm, it is difficult for me to give an answer other than: 'I just lift my arm'. According to several scholars in the debate on the theory of action, it is absurd to respond that one is moving certain parts of the muscle (1965: 103–5), changing the ATP concentration in the muscle cells (Kamp 2016: 73–74) or causing processes in the brain (Davidson 2015: 13). In contrast, I can give my friend across the street a sign by raising my arm. In this case, the basic action of raising my arm is the means to the purpose of giving a sign. Similarly, when I ask someone what I have to do to give a sign to my friend on the other side of the street, they can give me the answer by referring to a basic action: 'You could raise your arm'. This also connects to the first aspect we identified above. The connection with externality that makes a subjective purpose an activity in the first place is the connection with a body.²⁵ Only with our body can we actively intervene in the world. In today's debate, our immediate bodily movements are also understood as basic actions.

I think it is evident to what extent Hegel might refer to something like basic actions here. His insistence that the subjective purpose cannot be called a cause that brings something about, in connection with the immediate taking possession or subjection of the object, supports the reading I have proposed. Active intervention in the world only works if there is such a thing as basic action. In the last section of the Teleology, 'The Realized Purpose', Hegel deals with the question of the way in which the means now enters into a relationship with the other external objects. This takes the form of event causality. We will see how Hegel eliminates the distinction introduced above between basic actions, i.e., the immediate realization of the purpose, and the other actions, i.e., the mediated ways of realizing the purpose. This reveals an astonishing parallel to Davidson's distinction between actions and their different descriptions in the form of events.

VI. 'The Realized Purpose' and the proliferation of means

In the section on 'The Realized purpose', Hegel describes how the subjective purpose enters into a relationship with the external objects of the world through the means. The result of this section will be, on the one hand, that the original means, in our case the basic action, turns out to be the actually realized purpose. On the other hand, the relation of event causality of the means to the external objects generates an infinite proliferation of further means, i.e., supposed actions. Hegel's explanations, according to the thesis I would like to put forward in this section, bear a resemblance to Davidson, according to whom the only actions that exist are our basic actions in the form of our bodily movements and all speech about supposed further mediated actions is actually only speech about various descriptions of the basic actions and their consequences.

Hegel also calls the relation 'of the activity of purpose with the external object through the means' an 'immediate relation' (*SL*: 662/165),²⁶ because in it an object directly acts on another object.²⁷ Hegel qualifies this form of influence as 'mechanical or chemical' (*SL*: 662/165). Hegel writes explicitly at this point that the 'means is effective' (*SL*: 662/165). This allows us to describe the relation between the means, i.e., the physical basic action, and the states of the external, objective world in the terms of event causality.

Hegel now goes on to explain how 'the product of teleological activity' (*SL*: 664/167), i.e., the state of the objective world brought about by the basic action, is to be considered more closely. According to Hegel, a main characteristic of mechanical processes is that they produce only indifferent, external determinations in the entities on which they take place (*SL*: 631/133). Accordingly, the means can only produce such an external determinacy in the other object itself, since it acts on it in a mechanical way.²⁸ For example, I can only open a door by applying a mechanical force to it with my hand and thus changing its position in space. This leads to the fact, as stated in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, that the purpose has come about only in 'a form posited externally in the material found before it' (*EL*: §211, 281/214), which is why the product itself is 'in turn a means or material for other purposes and so on ad infinitum' (*EL*: §211, 281/214). The regress, or progress, if one wants to put it like this, for Hegel seems to be that in this way we never achieve a genuine realized purpose, that is, genuine mediated actions. In the *Logic* he says in this regard:

Since the two [the subjective purpose and the object qualified as means] are thus posited as *diverse*, a means for their connection must be interjected between this objectivity and the subjective purpose; but such a means is equally an object already determined by purpose, and between this objectivity and the

teleological determination a new means is to be interjected, and so on to infinity. The *infinite progress of mediation* is thereby set in motion.—The same happens as regards the other premise, the connection of the means with the yet indeterminate object. Since the two terms are utterly self-subsistent, they can be united only in a third, and so on to infinity. (SL: 665/168)

This infinite progress of mediation is, as we learn, also relevant for the immediate relation discussed in the section on ‘The Means’. The relations both between the subjective purpose and the object qualified as means and between the means and the other external objects do not seem to be clearly distinguishable. The relation between subjective purpose and means is identical with that between subjective purpose and external object through the means. The product of the purposive activity, Hegel concludes, thus is ‘*the same as what the means is*. In such a product itself, therefore, *only a means* has been derived [*ist herausgekommen*], not a realized purpose’ (SL: 666/168). The distinction between means and realized purpose seems to be undermined here. Hegel says that in this sense it is ‘entirely a matter of indifference [*ganz gleichgültig*]’ (SL: 666/168) whether one regards something that is determined by an external purpose as a realized purpose or as a means. That is, the arm movement with which I open a door is nothing other than the opening of the door.

After this ambivalent statement, Hegel proceeds to record the ‘result’ (SL: 666/169) of the entire reflection. Hegel reaffirms that in the sphere of Teleology only an ‘external purposiveness’ has been achieved, which ‘only goes so far as to be a means, not to be an objective purpose’ (SL: 666/169). At the same time, seemingly contradicting this result, he claims that ‘being a means is the reality itself of purpose’ (SL: 667/170). The means, Hegel tells us, ‘disappears’ (SL: 667/170) in the executed purpose, ‘because it would be simply and solely the objectivity immediately subsumed under that purpose’ (SL: 667/170). But with its disappearance ‘further, there also disappears with it mediation itself, as the relating of an external; it disappears into both the concrete identity of objective purpose, and into the same identity as abstract identity and immediacy of existence’ (SL: 667–68/170). Shortly afterwards, Hegel emphasizes the identity of means and realized purpose once more: ‘The realized purpose is also a means; conversely, the truth of the means is just this, to be the real purpose itself’ (SL: 668/170). Hegel seems to assert an identity—or at least an indistinguishability—between the mediated way of carrying out a purpose and the immediate way. If our analysis so far is correct, that the immediate way corresponds to basic actions and the mediated way to actions that we perform through something else, then Hegel asserts an indistinguishability of basic actions and other actions.

Hegel explains this ambiguity by saying that it is ‘doubly difficult and intricate’ (SL: 668/171) to present the movement of what takes place. This movement is

'itself immediately doubled and a first is always also a second' (*SL*: 668/171). I argue that this doubling can be interpreted as a reference to the distinction between what is done in the basic action and cannot be interpreted as an event and the state of the world brought about by the basic action, which, on the other hand, can be interpreted as an event. This doubling is actually contained in a unity in Hegel's view. The identity he claims can be better understood if we compare it with the identity of actions as presented by Davidson in his famous essay on *Agency*. Davidson also argues that event causality is not the explanatory principle for understanding what basic actions are. At the same time, he distinguishes from what happens in the action the states of the world that the particular action has produced and in what way these states of the world can be described in terms of event causality:

Not every event we attribute to an agent can be explained as caused by another event of which he is agent: some acts must be primitive in the sense that they cannot be analyzed in terms of their causal relations to acts of the same agent. But then event-causality cannot in this way be used to explain the relation between an agent and a primitive action. Event-causality can spread responsibility for an action to the consequences of the action, but it cannot help explicate the first attribution of agency on which the rest depend. (Davidson 2015: 13)

According to Davidson, different descriptions of an action, which are formulated in the terms of event-causality and which are apt for describing different consequences of an action, must not be confused with further actions that correspond to these descriptions and would also have to be attributed to the agent (2015: 17, 19). This confusion would result in a multiplication of actions, which Davidson rejects. Instead, he endorses Joel Feinberg's concept of the 'accordion effect' (Davidson 2015: 15; Feinberg 1964/2014: 146). Like an accordion, which remains the same despite it being squeezed or stretched our description of an action and the events it brought about can be squeezed or stretched depending on how many aspects we include in it. Including more consequences of one action into its description makes the latter wider and, formulated with the words of the metaphor, equals a stretching of the action. The wider description, however, is still a description of the same action just like an accordion stretched and squeezed together are the same object (Davidson 2015: 17). This multiplication corresponds to the infinite multiplication of interpolated means that Hegel describes in the above-cited quotation. Let us illustrate this with an example. When I open the door, this can be described by long chains of means: I open the door by moving my arm, by pushing down the doorhandle, by removing the latch from the strike plate, etc.

However, just as it does not make sense in the case of basic actions to ask whether I do not first perform the action of muscle contraction before I perform the action of raising my arm, it makes no sense to ask whether I do not actually perform several, different actions when I open a door, the arm movement, the pressing down of the doorhandle, the removal of the latch from the striking plate, etc. The latter means can be described in terms of event causality. I move my arm, by means of which I cause the doorhandle to move downwards, by means of which I cause the latch to remove itself from the striking plate, etc. Hegel denies the relevance of the event-causal descriptions for the identification of the action itself. This is why he writes of a ‘*certainty of the unessentiality*’ of the external object’ (SL: 669/171) and that the mediation is lost in the unity of the objective purpose. To identify the action, it is not relevant which aspects of the event we include in our description. The only relevant thing is the basic action, that which cannot be explained in the terms of event-causality, i.e., in the example above, me moving my arm. The event brought about by my basic action and the events causal relations with other events in the world—that is, what I call events in this case is the same as what Hegel calls the external object—are unessential. That is, they do not create the action. Characterizations of the event and its relation to other events in the world may equal different descriptions of the action, but these just add some details to the picture. In fact, my movement of my arm is the action of opening the door. That this action also contains moving the doorhandle downwards is just a stretch on the accordion. This reading can help us to understand, why Hegel identifies the subjective purpose, the means and the realized purpose (SL: 661, 664, 666, 669/164, 167, 168, 171), since this identification is simply an identification of the intention, the basic action and the event as one action. Even if all of them form different moments of an action, they are not to be confused with different actions. Subjective purpose, i.e., the intention, means, i.e., the body movement, and realized purpose, i.e., the event and its causal relations with other events brought about by the body movement, are but one action unified in the middle which is the basic action. Including those moments in the description of an action adds more details to it and thereby enriches our picture of it, however, the action remains the same, just like the accordion remains the same regardless of if we stretch or squeeze it.

When Hegel previously emphasizes in the section on ‘The Means’ that the activity only becomes an activity when it is connected with externality, this expresses a relation that has been described by Kent Bach. The latter claims that actions are not themselves events, but merely represent the relation between an actor and an event. Actions, more precisely, instantiate the bringing about of events (Bach 1980: 114). From this Bach concludes: ‘Since actions are not events, they do not enter straightforwardly into causal relations—they are neither causes nor effects’ (1980: 120).

This indirect entry into causal relations is what produces the doubling addressed by Hegel.²⁹ In order to be an active action, and not just a harboured

wish or uttered imperative, an event must be produced by this action that changes states in the world. But the description of these states and the event-causal relations they contain are not to be confused with actions distinct from the basic action. Coming from similar assumptions, Davidson also formulates it as follows:

We must conclude, perhaps with a shock of surprise, that our primitive actions, the ones we do not do by doing something else, mere movements of the body—these are all the actions there are. We never do more than move our bodies: the rest is up to nature. (2015: 18)

What Davidson leaves up to nature—but dependent from the first attribution of agency—is what Hegel means when he writes that the processes that take place between the means and the external objects are nothing other than mechanical or chemical ones but ‘under the dominance of purpose’ (*SL*: 662/165). Davidson’s nature and Hegel’s mechanical and chemical processes share that they both are only indirectly the deed of the agent and can be described without explicit reference to the latter. The process taking place between doorhandle and strike plate can be described only through, for example, pressure, which for Davidson would be a description according to the laws of nature and for Hegel in mechanical terms (*SL*: 643/145; *EL*: §195 R, 270/205). What happens in the external, objective world, to what extent the action changes states of the world, follows the laws of mechanism, i.e., my arm moving the doorhandle downwards. What is actually done in the action is merely the movement of the body. By adding that the mechanical or chemical processes happen under the dominance of the purpose Hegel means that they can be described as events or part of the events produced by the basic action. Hegel’s analysis thus reveals that our subjective purposes are actually carried out only by moving our bodies. These bodily movements are basic actions, and these constitute our actions.

VII. Consequences for the secondary literature

Through my analysis, I have tried to show that in the chapter on Teleology Hegel outlines a theory of basic actions, arguing that there are only basic actions in the form of our bodily movements. This reading is capable of illuminating Hegel’s identification of the subjective purpose, the means and the realized purpose, since this identification is simply an identification of the intention, the basic action and the event brought about by the action as one action. These assertions are only justified under the validity of my interpretative premise TAP. This itself would require a more detailed justification and an

account in which the TAP relates to the NP. Both would require more space than I have here.

Before I conclude, I would like to make two final points. On the one hand, if it is our bodily movements that realize our purposes in the objective world, an answer to why Teleology is the truth of Mechanism and Chemism, will involve an answer to the questions why and in which sense we have immediate access to our body. Because it is with our body that we can interact causally with the objects in the world and thereby determine them to be the means and conditions for the realization of our purposes. This points to a different approach than that taken by Moyer and Yeomans, who argue that the (proto-)teleological character of mechanical or chemical objects is the reason why Hegel states that Teleology is the truth of Mechanism and Chemism (Moyer 2018: 648; Yeomans 2012: 224–34). I lack the space to elaborate on this here since this would require another paper. However, the answer to why we have immediate access to our bodies lies in the way in which the immediate relationship between subjective purpose and means is no longer a premise (*SL*: 660–61, 655/163–64, 168), but a conclusion. This is the case in the chapter on Life, where the living being determines its own externality, in this case its body, only as a moment of its negative unity:

The first premise of the syllogism of external purposiveness, where the purpose immediately refers to objectivity and makes it a means, was earlier taken in the sense that although in it the purpose remains self-equal and has gone back into itself, the objectivity has not yet sublated itself within, and consequently the purpose is not in it in and for itself but becomes such only in the conclusion. The process of the living being with itself is this same premise, but in so far as the premise is also the conclusion, in so far as the immediate reference of the subject to the objectivity, by virtue of which the latter becomes means and instrument, is at the same time the negative unity of the concept within itself, the purpose realizes itself in this externality by being the subjective power over it and the process in which the externality displays its self-dissolution and its return into this negative unity of the purpose. (*SL*: 681/184)

For Hegel, the reason why we can immediately appropriate our body and, therefore, why there can be basic actions is based on the fact that our body is not only simply a physical entity, but a living organism which produces its own externality. This produced externality is dependent from the organism's activity, which is why the former is accessible for appropriation.

On the other hand, I would like to point out one consequence of my interpretation. The secondary literature has often confined itself to treating Hegel's

theory of action in the context of the *Philosophy of Right* and the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. This is justified in so far as Hegel there develops a concept of intentional, human action in the context of social, normatively regulated practices. Yeomans and Moyar are an exception to this, as they both explicitly refer to the presuppositional framework of the *Science of Logic*. They therefore stand for a new tendency to read Hegel's theory of action in a metaphysical sense as well.³⁰ Also Edgar Maragat has recently argued for a metaphysical reading of Hegel's concept of action, justifying this by reference to the *Logic* (Maragat 2019). If the result presented here is correct, then I understand it as a contribution to this metaphysical reading.

Maximilian Scholz 
Munich School of Philosophy, Germany
maximilian_scholz@gmx.de

Notes

¹ It should be pointed out at the outset that I am not using the term 'action' here in the sense of Michael Quante, who examines how Hegel himself uses this term. He does so in the context of morality (Quante 2004). I use the term 'action' more generally in the sense of an intentional, executive activity that produces a new or changes existing states in the world.

² Abbreviations used:

A = Hegel, *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit Vol. 2: Anthropology*, trans. M. J. Petry (Dordrecht: Reidel Publishing Company, 1978)/*Enzyklopädie der Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830)*, in *GW* 20. The Additions (*Zusätze*) are cited as contained in *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse. Dritter Teil, TWA* 10.

AA = Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 29 vols. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1900–).

CJ = Kant, *Critique of Judgment. Including the First Introduction*, trans. W. S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publication Company, 1987)/*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft. Kritik der Urtheilskraft, AA* 5.

EL = Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline. Part I: Science of Logic*, trans. K. Brinkmann and D. O. Dahlstrom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)/*Enzyklopädie der Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830)*, in *GW* 20. The Additions (*Zusätze*) are cited as contained in *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse. Erster Teil, TWA* 8.

GW = Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*, 31 vols. (Hamburg: Meiner, 1968–).

PN = Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature Vol. 3*, trans. M. J. Petry (London: George Allen & Unwin,

1970)/*Enzyklopädie der Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830)*, in *GW* 20. The Additions (*Zusätze*) are cited as contained in *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse. Zweiter Teil, TWA* 9.

PR = Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)/*Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, in *GW* 14,1. The Additions (*Zusätze*) are cited as contained in *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse, TWA* 7.

PS = Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977)/*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *GW* 9.

SL = Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. G. di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)/*Wissenschaft der Logik. Zweiter Band. Die subjective Logik*, in *GW* 12.

TWA = Hegel, *Theorie Werkausgabe*, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K. M. Michel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980).

³ See for example Franco Chiereghin: ‘As is evident from the essential features of the teleological relationship [...] what Hegel took as a model for the elaboration of the “teleology” section is mainly the technical-practical human action’ (1990: 185; my translation); Friederike Schick: ‘The chapter on teleology deals with the relationship of external purposefulness, the realisation of a purpose on and with the help of non-living natural objects’ (1994: 266; my translation); Tommaso Pierini: ‘Through technology, self-determined identity is related to externality and shows freedom a side of external determination. Furthermore, through technology, purposeful actions are bound to nature, are also initially in contradiction to it. These are some aspects and implications of Hegel’s theory of purpose’ (2006: 118–19; my translation); Anton Friedrich Koch: ‘We find the finite, external purposiveness in the planning and the action of discursively thinking, finite subjects’ (2014: 184); Edgar Maragat: ‘the logic of Hegel discusses very precisely the concepts of metaphysical profiles that are the basis of Kant’s philosophy of action’ (2019: 435).

⁴ Actually, it is not entirely correct for Moyar to claim that the examples Hegel uses suggest this. For the examples Hegel gives in the *greater Logic* mention artefacts such as ploughs (*SL*: 663/166), houses and clocks (*SL*: 666/169) rather than proper, genuine actions.

⁵ I am not suggesting that Hegel anticipated the complexities of a decades-long debate. I am merely claiming that such comparisons help to give the reader interested in Hegel access to the meaning of the text. Incidentally, it would be a requirement of the Teleology, should it really discuss a specific type of action, that it not falls completely short of the requirements of our contemporary theories. For an overview of the concept of basic action, see (Kamp 2016).

⁶ For this, I draw from both the ‘*greater Logic*’ of 1816 and the ‘small *Encyclopaedia Logic*’ of 1830.

⁷ Hegel seems to address at least a similar problem which Lavin has in mind in the Addition of §410 of the *Anthropology*. For Hegel, we are not capable of simply performing basic actions from birth. Instead, we have to acquire this capacity through training and thereby learn to intentionally do singular things only as moments of action types under particular circumstances whereby we only focus on the universal character of the former: ‘We can see that this is so in the case of writing, for example. When we are learning to write we have to attend to every singularity, to an extraordinary number of adjustments. However, once the practice of writing has become habitual, our self has so completely mastered all the requisite singularities, so infected them with its

universality, that they are no longer before us as *singularities*, and we are aware only of their *universal* aspect. In *habit*, therefore, we have certain contrasts. Our consciousness is *present* and *interested* in the business, but at the same time *absent* from and *indifferent* to it; our self *appropriates* the business while to an equal extent *withdrawing* from it; and while on the one hand the soul *enters* entirely *into* its expressions, it also *abandons* them, shaping them into something *mechanical*, into a merely *natural effect* (A: §410A, 407–9/TW4 10: 191). Lavin also mentions Aristotle's habit and skilfulness (Lavin 2013: 284), but Hegel obviously thinks of it differently as the former since the singular actions which are unified in a habitual action are 'infected', that is, transformed and by that lose their singular character.

⁸ In the same way do Causality and Reciprocity in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* motivate the transition to the Concept but in that are not an adequate expression of the latter.

⁹ In (Scholz 2020) I have shown in which way Hegel in these explanations was influenced by the methodologies of the life sciences of his time, which in turn applied a general kind of functionalism. Hegel also makes explicit reference to the paragraphs of the chapter on Teleology in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* in the context of digestion (PN: §365R, 154–55/§365R, 364–65).

¹⁰ I am not able to show this here, but I hold that the connection of the TAP and the NP lies in the way how, for example, body parts have a function in the sense of serving our individual purposes. While the NP focusses more on the functional interpretation of the body parts the TAP emphasizes the immediacy in which we need to have access to our bodies in order to use them as instruments for our particular purposes. What speaks in favour of a reading in this direction is that it can appreciate the strengths of readings of Hegel's Teleology in the terms of action theory as well as of those in the terms of biology. This approach then faces two further challenges. 1. In which way is the functionality of certain body parts in fact a case of external purposiveness in Hegel's sense? 2. In what way does this functionality differ from the internal purposiveness of organs discussed in the section on Life?

¹¹ To be more precise, Moyar tries to demonstrate that Hegel's Teleology, on the one hand, forms the actual conclusion of the 'Doctrine of Syllogism', through presenting the syllogism of the concept ("Schluss des Begriffs"), and, on the other hand, unites two models of determination, the relation condition-conditioned ("die Beziehung Bedingung-Bedingtes") and the relation genus-species ("die Beziehung Gattung-Art") (Moyar 2018: 560). Yeomans wants to show, that Hegel provides an answer to the question of the extent to which a free will can be understood as a locus of responsibility, which at the same time is acting internally self-determined and is subject to the influence of external factors (Yeomans 2012: 36–37). Hegel succeeds in this by explicating the productivity of the locus of responsibility as creative 'expression' (Yeomans 2012: 192). Also, Tommaso Pierini reads Hegel's Teleology as a theory of self-determination and, therefore, as a theory of freedom (Pierini 2006: 17, 20–21).

¹² 'Since the concept is here, in the sphere of objectivity where its determinateness has the form of *indifferent externality*' (SL: 668/171). On the section on Objectivity, see both Burbidge (2002) and Moyar (2018).

¹³ For the sake of clarity, I will refrain from tracing in detail the extent to which it is the Hegelian concept that manifests itself in the moments of Teleology. For a reading of the chapter on

Teleology that traces the individual movements of the concept, see the commentary in Pierini's book on freedom and self-determination (2006: 75–207).

¹⁴ I am guided here by Kenny's proposal to formulate desires as imperatives, which he designs on the basis of Geach's approach of rendering a person's thoughts metaphorically in the form of the *oratio recta* (Kenny 1963/2003: 142–67).

¹⁵ Moyar thereby follows deVries (Moyar 2018: 631, n.41; deVries 1991: 55–59).

¹⁶ Due to the inferential structure of Hegel's Teleology (*SL*: 656/159; *EL*: §206, 279/212) it is possible to describe the subjective purpose or its content in the form of a proposition or judgment (*SL*: 657/160; *EL*: §207, 279/212), even if the subjective purpose only manifests itself in a drive and not a consciously willed proposition. Describing it in that way, however, does not mean that this judgment must be uttered in words by an agent.

¹⁷ Conversely, this would mean that, for example, God's purposes (i.e., what God wants), because they are infinite, would have to be immediately real.

¹⁸ Di Giovanni translates the German term 'Beziehung' as 'reference' which, in my opinion, is not quite adequate in this context.

¹⁹ This is emphasized by Hegel at the beginning of the chapter on 'The Means': 'The first immediate positing in purpose is equally the positing of something *internally* determined, that is, determined as *posited* [...]' (*SL*: 659/162).

²⁰ Michael Quante explains convincingly Hegel's talk of a purpose being the soul of an action as follows: 'Hegel's locution that the "soul" of the action "is the end" can be understood to mean that through the description (that has recourse to the subjective end) of the event as an action, the known and willed consequences are picked out from the totality of the consequences of an event. The subjective end is the criterion for the selection of these events; it serves as the organizing principle of this subset, and is thus the soul of the action, manifesting itself in the totality of the effects as their shape' (Quante 2004: 123).

²¹ 'The entire middle term is now this inner power of the concept as activity, with which the object is immediately unified as means and under which it stands' (*EL*: §208, 280/212).

²² 'The relation of the purpose as *power* to this object and the latter's being conquered by it is *immediate*' (*EL*: §208 R, 280/212).

²³ deVries thus seems to be right when he associates the Teleology with the term 'embodiment': 'Hegel insists that we must abandon that fruitless distinction [the Cartesian between mind and body] and see the relation between thought and action, mind and body, in terms of expression and embodiment, not in terms of the interaction between two substances' (deVries 1991: 61).

²⁴ That this is not only a free association but reflects how Hegel saw the issue is confirmed by the fact that the appropriation of the body is also discussed in the *Anthropology* as well as in the *Philosophy of Right*. In the former Hegel states, that through habit our corporeity is transformed into 'a particular possibility [...] with a determinate purpose'. Through that we gain the possibility to use our body as tractable instrument 'in a ready and fluent manner [*widerstandlos und flüssig*]' (*A*: §410R, 395/418). In the associated addition Hegel specifies this process of making our body immediately accessible for our purposes several times as a taking into possession, subjection, or mastery of it (*A*: §410A, 403, 405, 407/*TW*A 10:189, 190). In the section on property

in the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel specifies in which way we make something our possession. He first states that in order for my body to be an instrument, ‘it must first be *taken into possession* by spirit’ (PR: §48, 62–63/59) and later on adjusts that ‘I take into possession no more than what I touch with my body’ (PR: §55A, 68/TWA 7: 121). For the sake of the argument of highlighting the conceptual parallel between Hegel’s Teleology and a certain strand of our contemporary theory of action I refrain from giving a comprehensive account of Hegel’s conception of either habit (see for this Laurentiis 2021: 177–91) or property (see for this Houlgate 2017).

²⁵ The externality of the purpose addressed here is thus different from that in the section on ‘Morality’ of the *Philosophy of Right*, which is a reference to other wills (PR: §113, 114/102–3).

²⁶ Di Giovanni this time translated the German term ‘Beziehung’ with the term ‘connection’. For the sake of continuity, I will keep on talking of an immediate relation.

²⁷ The subjective end, on the other hand, enters ‘in a *mediate* [*mittelbar*] connection with the object’ via the means (SL: 663/166).

²⁸ I am guided here by the fact that Hegel subsumes Mechanism and Chemism as opposed to Teleology under the term Mechanism (SL: 652/155).

²⁹ Note that Hegel himself states that the subjective purpose via the means enters only in an indirect, mediated relation with the external objects, something which he calls ‘*cunning* of reason’ (SL: 663/166).

³⁰ For non-metaphysical readings see, for example, Pippin (2008) or Brandom (2019).

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